

Torkham border reopened

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Remaining suspended for three days due to shifting of immigration office, Torkham border was resumed for pedestrians' movement on Monday. FIA official in Torkham said that as part of the export and import terminal project, the shifting process of immigration office to the new building had been completed and exit and entry of pedestrians' crossing via Torkham was recommenced.



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Iranian President Raisi dies in copter crash

Tehran orders probe into death; declares 5 days of mourning

DUBAI (Reuters): Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his foreign minister were killed in a helicopter crash in mountainous terrain and icy weather, an Iranian official said on Monday, after search teams located the wreckage in East Azerbaijan province.

Iran's military chief of staff Mohammad Bagheri also ordered on Monday a probe into the cause of a helicopter crash that killed President Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage.

"President Raisi, the foreign minister and all the passengers in the helicopter were killed in the crash," the senior Iranian official told Reuters, asking not to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter. Later, the development was confirmed by Vice President Mohsen Mansouri in a statement on social media and on state television.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, East Azerbaijan Governor Malek Rahmati and Friday prayer leader of Tabriz Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Ale-Hashem were also aboard the copter. Iran's Mehr news agency confirmed the deaths, reporting that "all passengers of the helicopter carrying the Iranian president and foreign minister were martyred".

An Iranian official earlier told Reuters the helicopter carrying Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian was completely burned in the crash on Sunday. State TV reported that images from the site showed the aircraft slammed into a mountain peak, although there was no official word on the cause of the crash. State news agency IRNA said Raisi was flying in a US-made Bell 212 helicopter.

Raisi, 63, was elected president in 2021, and since taking office has ordered a tightening of morality laws, overseen a bloody crackdown on anti-government protests and pushed hard in nuclear talks with world powers. Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who holds ultimate power with a final say on foreign policy and Iran's nuclear programme, had earlier sought to reassure Iranians, saying there would be no disruption to state



affairs. Khamenei said on Monday that First Vice President Mohammad Mokher is in charge of the executive branch and has a maximum period of 50 days to hold elections following the death of Raisi, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported, as he also declared five days of national mourning. In a related development, Iran's government cabinet appointed Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani as acting foreign minister following the death of Amirabdollahian. Following the official announcement, the Iranian cabinet held an emergency session headed by Vice President Mohammad Mokher.

In a statement, the cabinet assured the "loyal, appreciative and beloved" Iranian nation that President Raisi's path will continue and not even a slight disruption will be caused in administering the country's affairs. Rescue teams fought blizzards and difficult terrain through the night to reach the wreckage in the early hours of Monday.

"With the discovery of the crash site, no signs of life have been detected among the helicopter's passengers," the head of Iran's Red Crescent, Pirhossein Kolivand, told state TV. Earlier, the national broadcaster had stopped all regular programming to show prayers being held for Raisi across the country.

In the early hours of Monday, it

showed a rescue team, wearing bright jackets and head torches, huddled around a GPS device as they searched a pitch-black mountainside on foot in a blizzard. Several countries expressed concern and offered assistance in any rescue. The White House said US President Joe Biden had been briefed on reports about the crash. China said it was deeply concerned. The European Union offered emergency satellite mapping technology.

The crash comes at a time of growing dissent within Iran over an array of political, social and economic crises. Iran's clerical rulers face international pressure over Tehran's disputed nuclear programme and its deepening military ties with Russia during the war in Ukraine. In Iran's dual political system, split between the clerical establishment and the government, it is Raisi's 85-year-old mentor Khamenei, supreme leader since 1989, who holds decision-making power on all major policies.

For years many have seen Raisi as a strong contender to succeed Khamenei, who has endorsed Raisi's main policies. Raisi's victory in a closely managed election in 2021 brought all branches of power under the control of hardliners, after eight years when the presidency had been held by pragmatist Hassan Rouhani and a nuclear deal negotiated with powers including Washington.

PM visits Iranian Embassy to condole deaths in tragic incident

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the Embassy of Iran in Islamabad to condole the deaths of President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in a tragic incident on Sunday.

"I am deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic news of the martyrdom of my brother, President of Iran, Dr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir Abdollahian and other senior Iranian officials, in a helicopter crash," the prime minister said during his visit.

He expressed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the time of sorrow and grief. "Our sympathies and prayers are with the family members of the martyrs and the people of Iran." The prime minister said Dr Seyed Ebrahim Raisi was a brilliant scholar and a visionary leader. "Today, Pakistan has lost a friend like Dr Raisi, a sincere brother with high qualities."

PM Shehbaz said that his services to his own nation as well as to the strengthening of Pakistan-Iran relations and regional cooperation would always be remembered. He said President Raisi's visit to Pakistan last month helped further strengthen bilateral relations.

May Allah grant the departed souls a high place in paradise, the prime minister prayed. Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Pakistani nation for standing with his country during the difficult time. President Dr Raisi also considered Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as the best human being and a friend of Iran, he remarked.

He said he respected the sentiments and words of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the late President



Pakistan announces a day of mourning

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressing condolences and sympathies to the Iranian nation on the death of President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, announced a day of mourning in the country.

"They were good friends of Pakistan. Pakistan will observe a day of mourning and the flag will fly at half mast as a mark of respect for President Raisi and his companions and in solidarity with Brotherly Iran," the prime minister said in a statement after a helicopter carrying President Raisi along with Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and others crashed in the Varzaqan region in the northwest province of East Azerbaijan. The prime minister said that he had been anxiously following developments regarding the reported crash landing of President Raisi's helicopter. "Was hoping for good news. Alas, this was not to be," he remarked. He recalled that Pakistan had the pleasure of hosting President Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian on a historic visit, less than a month ago and remembered them as "good friends of Pakistan." Prime Minister Shehbaz prayed to Allah Almighty for the martyred souls' peace, and for the Iranian nation to overcome this tragedy with customary courage.

Raisi. The late President Ebrahim Raisi's vision of strengthening and promoting Pakistan-Iran relations would continue, the ambassador said. Broadcasting Ata Tarar, SAPM Tariq Fatemi and the Foreign Secretary.

Will spy agencies run this country or law? IHC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Irked at authorities' failure to recover missing Kashmiri poet and journalist Ahmed Farhad Shah, Islamabad High Court's Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani on Monday questioned whether spy agencies would run the country or the law.

The poet was allegedly abducted from his house last week. On May 15, his wife moved the IHC seeking his recovery. She also requested the court to identify, investigate and prosecute those responsible for his disappearance. At the outset of today's hearing, a representative of the Ministry of Defence apprised the court: "Hostage [Shah] is not with the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)."

The official further said that the ISI was refuting the allegation about its involvement in the enforced disappearance of the poet. At this, the judge remarked: "Now the matter has gone beyond the jurisdiction of the ISI and the Military Intelligence (MI). They are telling about their failure." Justice Kayani directed the defence secretary to submit its report to the high court in writing. The judge ordered the defence and interior secretaries to appear before the court today.

The judge further said that he would also summon Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the cabinet members in the case later. "This matter is not so simple and easy. An example has to be set in this case." The judge further stated: "They [spy agencies] are sending messages [to the family] but on the other hand they were saying that

'Not your mandate', Law Minister tells court

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar Monday told the judiciary, albeit with "all due respect", that it did not have the mandate of dragging senior military officers and government officials to the court in the case of a missing poet.

"This is not the mandate of the court, the court is a platform for providing justice in line with the law and Constitution," Tarar said during a press conference in Islamabad, as the rift grows between institutions. The minister noted that when a "habeas petition" is filed, then the court seeks answers, and it is the government's job to ensure that it responds "with all seriousness".

"If the issue isn't resolved, then the law that's been applicable for the past 50 years [...] that the matter is then handed over to the police and an FIR is lodged to ensure the person's recovery," Tarar said the case of Shah's disappearance is subjudice and he did not want to speak much on it, but said that the court's remarks caused "hurt" him. Terming the remarks "inappropriate", the law minister said they could spread "unrest". He said that a representative of the defence ministry had already informed the court that the poet was not in their custody. "It is not the court's mandate to say that these issues 'will not be resolved like this'.

the person is not in their custody."

The law enforcement agencies have failed to recover the abducted person, he added. "Does the sector commander live on the moon? What's his stature? He's an 18th-grade officer, who should stay within his [constitutional] limits. Do not follow them, the country can run without them." The court directed the investigation officer to record the sector commander's statement and submit it to the court on Tuesday.

Justice Kiyani further said that he would dismiss the petition if the missing poet was a terrorist or nominated in any case. Meanwhile, an additional attorney general apprised the court that an FIR had been lodged and the police

were carrying out investigations. At this, the judge reminded the additional attorney about the police's duties and asked if lodging an FIR was a favour.

According to media reports, during the previous hearing, Justice Kayani noted that "there is a dire need for a law that entails the death penalty" for those behind enforced disappearances. During his interaction with journalists in the IHC, AAG Munawar Iqbal said that it was a case of abduction but not about illegal confinement. The police were investigating the matter. "In the Shehnaz BiBi case, the court had set a rule that it would not interfere in the investigation." The court will be further assisted in this regard, he added.

Great loss for Ummah, says Zardari

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday expressed profound shock and sorrow over the tragic death of Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, calling it a great loss not only for Iran but for the entire Muslim Ummah.

"Today, Pakistan mourns the loss of a great friend. Just last month, we had the honor of hosting him in Pakistan. During our discussions, I found him very keen on strengthening our bilateral relations. Agha Raisi always had a special place for Pakistan and its people, in whichever position he served whether as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran or as Custodian of Imam Raza's (A.S) Shrine," President Zardari said in a statement.

He described Raisi's passing as a great loss not only for Iran but for the entire Muslim Ummah. President Zardari extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of the Iranian president, the foreign minister, and others who lost their lives in the accident. He paid tribute to late President Raisi's dedicated services to the Islamic world, highlighting his steadfast advocacy for the unity of the Muslim Ummah.

He emphasized that the Islamic World had lost a remarkable leader who always supported the Muslim cause and deeply felt the sufferings of the Muslims globally, particularly the Palestinian and Kashmiri people. President Zardari remarked that late President Raisi would be dearly missed and fondly remembered in Iran, Pakistan, and the Islamic World for his efforts to enhance relations with regional and Islamic countries.



PESHAWAR: KP Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur called on by former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser and ex-CM Gilgit Baltistan, Khalid Khursheed.

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فیڈرل بورڈ آف ریونیو

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ٹیکس سال 2023 کا

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Sindh Excise Dept to have Rapid Response Force

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Senior Minister of Sindh and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control Sharjeel Inam Memon presided over a high-level meeting of the Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control Department in Karachi.

In the meeting, it was decided to establish a Rapid Response Force within the Excise Department for operations against tax evaders and drug dealers.

While presiding over the meeting, Senior Minister of Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon instructed the Excise officials to set up checkpoints to prevent all kinds of drug-smuggling.

In the meeting, it was also decided to finalize the SOPs regarding the auction of premium number plates and to commence the issuance of premium number plates immediately after Eid-ul-Azha by the Excise Department.

Speaking in the meeting, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stat-



ed that initially there will be an auction of 7 premium number plates in each category. However, there will be a strict procedure for using these premium number plates, and strict action will be taken against those using fake plates. He said that an event will be held immediately after Eid-ul-Adha regarding the auction of premium number plates, and automobile manufacturing companies

will also be invited.

He said that other steps would be taken, including installing machinery to facilitate the production of new and duplicate number plates.

Senior Minister of Sindh, Sharjeel Inam Memon, instructed the officers of the Excise Department to ensure the achievement of various tax targets. It was also decided to end the weekend leave

of the officers until the tax targets are achieved.

Additionally, in the meeting, it was decided to publish advertisements in newspapers as part of a public awareness campaign regarding taxes.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Excise Saleem Rajput, DG Excise Aurangzeb Panhwar, directors of various departments of the Excise Department, and others.

Punjab CM vows to raise living standard of people

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed her resolve to make people's lives easier, stating that all necessary measures would be taken to address public issues.

The CM said in a meeting with the members of National and Provincial Assemblies from Lahore, including Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and MPA Mian Marghoob Ahmed, here on Monday.

The CM said streets of every city, including Lahore, would be paved. Urban sanitation and sustainable solid waste management systems were on the cards, she mentioned.

Earlier, both the visiting public representatives discussed development issues of Lahore in the meeting. They particularly apprised the chief minister about public issues and development needs of their respective constituencies.

Moreover, general situation of the province also came under discussion.

Both visiting members of the national and provincial assemblies appreciated various initiatives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for welfare of people. They reiterated their determination to work together for development of Punjab. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan acknowledged

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision and speed to solve public problems. He added the launch of Nawaz Sharif IT City project could be a game changer for the province.

Mian Murghoob Ahmed said the fate of Lahore's slums and suburban settlements was changing. Senator Pervaiz Rashid and Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik were also present.

Maryam condoles death of Iranian President

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed a deep sense of sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in a helicopter crash.

She offered condolences and expressed her heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved families and the Iranian people in this hour of great national loss.

The CM said the martyrdom of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi was an irreparable loss for Iran. She added, "We share the grief and suffering of people of Iran". Ebrahim Raisi's services for the promotion of Pakistan-Iran relations would never be forgotten, she remarked.

Appointment of judges LHC gives Punjab govt last opportunity

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday gave the Punjab government a final opportunity to appoint judges to special courts.

LHC Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan issued the orders while hearing a petition filed by the provincial government seeking the transfer of certain cases from Anti-Terrorism Court-I Rawalpindi to another court.

During the proceedings, Advocate General Punjab Khalid Ishaq told the court that the cabinet committee tasked with finalizing the

appointments of judges had consulted with the chief minister on the issue. He submitted that the chief minister asked that the issue of judges' appointments be placed as Agenda No. 1 in the next cabinet meeting.

However, the chief justice remarked, "You should have called a special meeting of the cabinet or done it through circulation," adding, "You should have done it and come today." He questioned when the next cabinet meeting would be held.

At this, the advocate general submitted that they would call a cabinet meet-

ing on Friday to resolve the issue. The chief justice pointed out the absence of the members of the government committee from the proceedings.

To this, the advocate general submitted that the committee members would appear within half an hour if the court ordered.

He further submitted that the government did not have any objections to the names provided by the LHC for the appointment of judges. Subsequently, the court gave the government a final opportunity to appoint judges.

IGP for improvement of medical facilities

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon on Monday chaired a meeting regarding the enhancement of medical facilities in police hospitals and dispensaries at the Central Police Office in Karachi.

According to spokesman for Sindh Police, the session was attended by senior officials, including the Additional IGP-Finance and Welfare, DIGPs of Headquarters, Finance, and Traffic, as well as the Medical Superintendent (MS) of the

Police Hospital Garden and the Project Director of IT. Participation also extended through video link to DIGP Hyderabad and the MS of the Police Hospital in Hyderabad.

A comprehensive briefing on the current state of medical facilities was presented by the AIGP-Welfare. The briefing highlighted that the Police Hospital in Karachi serves around 1,000 patients daily through its outpatient department (OPD), while the Police Hospital in Hyderabad accommodates 250 patients per day.

TENDER OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL DISTRICT & SESSIONS JUDGE-IV KOHAT

The Chairman procurement committed Sessions Court, Kohat invites sealed bids from reputed authorized dealers, firms/companies for the purchase of following items under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public procurement of goods, works and services rules 2014 amended till date.

#	Items Description	Bid evaluation procedure	Specifications
1	Stationary	Single stage two envelopes Rule 6 (2) (b) of KPPRA Rules, 2014 amended till date.	Details/particulars of required documents are available in bid / solicitation documents which can be obtained from Budget & Account Office during office timing before closing date.
2	Hardware		
3	I.T Equipment's		
4	Plant & Machinery		
5	Furniture & Fixture		

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- The sealed bid / tender documents should reach to the office of District & Sessions Judge, Kohat through registered post or personally by the bidders on or before 06.06.2024, 09:00AM which will be opened in presence of bidders on same day at 10:00 AM or their representative, however it will be noted that supply order will be subject to the availability of fund. The envelopes shall be marked in bold letters as technical proposal and financial proposal.
- Tender must be accompanied with bid security 5% in the shape of CDR only in the name of District & Sessions Judge, Kohat.
- The successful bidders must deposit 8 % performance guarantee of the total amount under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement of goods, works and services rules 2014 amended till date.
- Incomplete, ambiguous and conditional or below specification bid shall not be entertained.
- The firm / vendor should be registered with sale tax and income tax department and FBR, having valid NTN. Valid document of the above must be attached with bidding documents.
- The successful bidders will be strictly bound to supply the items according to specification within fifteen days after the issuance of supply order. Failure in supply within stipulated period or below specification shall entail in cancellation of bid or forfeiture of the earnest money/ call deposit return (CDR) and in case of cancellation of supply order, new supply order will be issued to next lowest bidder.
- Quantity can be increased/ decreased according to the available budget. The subject purchase will be made subject to availability of funds.
- The bidder must submit an affidavit that they are not blacklisted with any Government or Semi Government organization.
- The firm should include GST and all other applicable while submitting rates.
- The firm will be bound to replace the items damage during supply. Moreover, approved rates will be valid for thirty days from date of bidding and will not be changed.
- The competent authority reserved the right to reject all or any of the bid or may also cancel tender at all, at any stage subject to any reason being communicated to bidder upon proper under Rule 47 (1) of KPPRA Rules, 2014.
- The sample of items so supplied will be provided to the office of undersigned before pre-bid meeting or opening of tender for technical evaluation.

OFFICE OF THE
ADDITIONAL DISTRICT & SESSIONS JUDGE-IV KOHAT
Phone No. 0922-920041

Governor Punjab meets Murad

KARACHI (APP): Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider met the Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah at chief minister House here on Monday. During the meeting, the CM Sindh congratulated Sardar Saleem Haider on assuming the post of Governor of the Punjab. They also discussed the matters of mutual interest on the occasions.

Vehicle with 67 e-challans apprehended

LAHORE (APP): The traffic police apprehended a car having 67 e-challans during its on going crackdown against traffic violators here on Monday. According to a spokesman for the department, the driver of the vehicle paid fine Rs 33,300 on the spot.

Police teams had been deputed on major city roads, including The Mall, Jail Road, Main Boulevard Gulberg, Ferozepur Road and Wahdat Road, to apprehend errant vehicles. A crackdown is also under way against those tampering with vehicle number plates.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Shahid Hussain Abbasi with regards to the movable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Ghous Rahman Abbasi citizen number 1310108939175 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs: 1. Sadiya (Daughter) 2. Maryam (Daughter) 3. Ghous (Son) 4. Ghous (Son) 5. Ghous (Son) 6. Ghous (Son) 7. Ghous (Son) 8. Ghous (Son) 9. Ghous (Son) 10. Ghous (Son) 11. Ghous (Son) 12. Ghous (Son) 13. Ghous (Son) 14. Ghous (Son) 15. Ghous (Son) 16. Ghous (Son) 17. Ghous (Son) 18. Ghous (Son) 19. Ghous (Son) 20. Ghous (Son) 21. Ghous (Son) 22. Ghous (Son) 23. Ghous (Son) 24. Ghous (Son) 25. Ghous (Son) 26. Ghous (Son) 27. Ghous (Son) 28. Ghous (Son) 29. Ghous (Son) 30. Ghous (Son) 31. Ghous (Son) 32. Ghous (Son) 33. Ghous (Son) 34. Ghous (Son) 35. Ghous (Son) 36. Ghous (Son) 37. Ghous (Son) 38. Ghous (Son) 39. Ghous (Son) 40. Ghous (Son) 41. Ghous (Son) 42. Ghous (Son) 43. Ghous (Son) 44. Ghous (Son) 45. 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PESHAWAR: Director General Audit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Siraj ul Haq called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday.

Kundi announces open kacheri for public at Governor House

Thanks Zardari, Bilawal for assigning him responsibility

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has stated that Governor House Peshawar has been turned into a public Governor House. He mentioned that a specific day will be allocated in the Governor House for open courts so that the people of the province can visit without any hassle and inform him about their issues and problems.

"We will not just talk like the provincial government but will also work practically to solve the problems of the people," Kundi said.

He was addressing the public representatives from the Peshawar and Mardan divisions during separate meetings at the Governor House Peshawar.

The delegation included Asma Arbab Alamgir, Shazia Tehmas, Zulfiqar Afghan, Provincial President Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, former Provincial President Najmuddin Khan, Shuja Khan, Nawabzada Omar Farooq, Dr. Ghazala Ata, and Sahibzada Haji Gul, among other political and social personalities, religious leaders, youth, and students from various classes of society.

The members of the delegation congratulated Faisal Karim Kundi on assuming responsibilities as Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and expressed sincere wishes.

The members informed Governor Kundi about the education, health, electricity, and other issues in their respective areas.

While addressing the occasion, Faisal Karim Kundi thanked President Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for trusting him and assigning responsibilities as the Governor of the province.

He pledged to make every effort to reduce the widening gap between the province and the federal government as a federal representative and to open paths for the prosperity, development, and well-being of the people of the province.

He said that he would strive to earn the trust of the people of his province and its leaders. President Asif Ali Zardari issued an EF award for the province, recognizing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and granted powers to the provinces in the 18th amendment, for

which the people of the province are grateful to Asif Ali Zardari.

He said that during the war against terrorism, the province was given an additional 1% in the EF award, which amounts to approximately 50/60 billion rupees, but due to the incompetence of the previous provincial government, neither the police were provided with modern weapons nor was there an improvement in their salaries.

He said that discussions would be held on all forums for the rights of the people of the province, and it is expected that the people of the province will also fully cooperate with him. Our collective social goal is to move the province towards progress and prosperity.

Total 65 tourism schemes worth trillions of rupees included in ADP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 35 ongoing and 20 new mega schemes have been proposed for you inclusion in the annual development program of the new financial year in various sectors of tourism, culture and archeology, the cost of which is estimated at trillions of rupees. However in view of the meagre financial resources of the province, most of the projects will be completed through public private participation.

While under the AIP program that was launched with the support of the federal government for the merged districts, five ongoing and new schemes are being included in the new annual development program for which three billion rupees are being allocated.

This was disclosed in Peshawar in a meeting chaired by Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism and Culture and

Archeology Zahid Chinzeb, wherein the preparation of the annual development program (ADP) in tourism, culture and archeology sectors was taken into stock as well as suggestions and recommendations were discussed and certain necessary decisions were also made thereof.

Secretary Tourism Muhammad Bakhtiar Khan, Chief Planning Officer Zainullah Khan, Director General Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) Barkatullah Marwat, Director Archives Dr. Abdul Samad and other concerned high-ups attended the meeting.

On this occasion, the Adviser Tourism while highlighting the priorities of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led provincial government under the dynamic leadership of Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur clarified that only viable schemes should be included in the new ADP like all other sectors of which can be

ensured timely and quality completion and have direct and maximum results in all aspects of public and economic interests, even if such mega projects are dozens instead of hundreds in number, he added.

Zahid Chanzeb said that in the future, instead of wasting valuable resources on the construction of buildings and rest houses in tourist areas, eco-friendly tourism should be promoted in which make-shift camping pods and fireproof tents and wash rooms for the boarding and lodging of tourists. He said that launch of helicopter service for tourist places (starting for Chitral with CM's helicopter presently), establishment of theme and adventure parks in the most important tourist centers, construction of link roads for new tourist areas and installation of modern chairlifts in the mountainous areas are measures that involved interest of tourists, create attraction

and enhanced the opportunities of entertainment and creativity for the tourists, especially children and youth. "This will also increase the income of the province and the employment opportunities for the local people", he maintained. The Tourism Adviser directed to keep Chitral on top priority in the ADP where there is a wide range of tourism opportunities and there is a possibility of round the year tourism activities after the Lowari Tunnel remained open.

Similarly, he emphasized on the inclusion of substantial schemes for the development of tourism in the southern and merged districts and asserted that there are not only serene touristic places but also religious buildings and archeological sites existed there, where by developing the infrastructure, tourism, employment opportunities and The revenue of the province can be significantly increased, he concluded.

Ex-PHC Justice Sher Muhammad passed away

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former Justice of Peshawar High Court and prominent lawyer Sher Muhammad Khan Advocate has passed away while his funeral prayer was offered at Grassy Ground, Swat.

According to details, his Fatiha Khwani will be held at Hayatabad area of Mingora, Swat. His survivors include his son, Zigar Sher Advocate.

Former Chief Justice PHC and retired judge of Supreme Court of Pakistan Dost Muhammad, President of Peshawar High Court Bar, Vice Chairman of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council, and President of Peshawar High Court Mingora Bench, Shamsul Hadi Advocate, have consoled the demise of Sher Muhammad Khan Advocate, terming it a great loss for the legal fraternity.

ICS teaching staff announces strike

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Islamia Collegiate School (ICS) Self Support Scheme teaching staff announced a strike from 22nd May as they are deprived from salaries for the past five months. Despite repeated reminders to the authorities, no action has been taken so far.

The Self Support Scheme teachers have given an ultimatum to the university administration, warning that if their demands are not met and their salaries are not paid by May 22, they will be forced to go on a complete boycott of second shift classes starting from May 23.

The strike will continue until their issues are resolved.

KP petrol pumps, dealers call off strike

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Petroleum Dealers & Carriage Association called off their strike after holding successful negotiations with the district administration on Monday.

On the directives of the Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsud, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Afaq Wazir held a meeting with the office bearers of the association. Those who participated in the negotiations

include Chairman, KP Petroleum Dealers & Carriage Association, Abdul Majid Khan, general secretary Gul Nawaz Afridi and other members of the association.

During the meeting, the office bearers of the association presented their reservations in detail to the Deputy Commissioner, which was followed by a consensual decision of initiating operation against illegal petrol pumps and sale points to ensure their eradication as soon as possible.

On this occasion, the association also agreed to extend full cooperation to district administration against all illegal petrol pumps and sale of Iranian petrol and will test the samples of their petrol pumps through a laboratory to present a certificate to the district administration.

The Deputy Commissioner also heard other reservations of the association with keen interest and assured them full cooperation.

KPBC to observe strike today

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) announced boycott from court proceedings across the province on Tuesday, expressing strong protest against the registration of FIR against Ali Zaman Advocate, on Monday.

Vice Chairman of the KP Bar Council, Sadiq Ali Momand, and Chairman of the Executive Committee, Syed Timur Ali Shah, terming the First

Information Report (FIR) against Ali Zaman Advocate as "unconstitutional and illegal". They demanded that the provincial government immediately withdraw the FIR against him.

According to the KP Bar Council, no lawyer will participate in court proceedings. The council has pledged its support to the legal fraternity and demanded the withdrawal of the FIR, terming it an attempt to intimidate and harass lawyers.

Information Report (FIR) against Ali Zaman Advocate as "unconstitutional and illegal". They demanded that the provincial government immediately withdraw the FIR against him.

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Qasim launches 6-Day Measles Response Campaign

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah inaugurated a six-day special campaign measles elimination campaign in 11 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at the Molvi Ji Hospital on Monday.

Director General Health Services, Dr. Saleem Khan, Director EPI, Dr. Muhammad Arif Khan, Medical Superintendent Molvi Ji Hospital, Dr. Akram Shah, Dr. Inamullah Khan UNICEF KPHealth Team Lead and

other relevant officials were present on the occasion.

Addressing the media representatives during the inauguration ceremony, the Health Minister informed that the measles eradication campaign is being conducted in Swabi, Hangu, Kohat, Bannu, DI Khan, Tank, Dera Ismail Khan, Malakand, Charsadda, Nowshera, Dir Lower and Upper. He stated that the target of the campaign is to vaccinate 882,000 children against measles. While more than 1,000 teams have been formed for the campaign.

The Health Minister emphasized that the measles eradication campaign is being taken as a challenge. He mentioned that if needed, the campaign can be expanded, and arrangements have been made to maintain cold chain management by providing refrigerated vans.

He further highlighted the impact of vaccination services being affected during the previous two years of the interim government, including the disruption of routine immunizations due to the initiation of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

Dr. Muhammad Arif, Director EPI, mentioned on the occasion that the campaign will span six days, during which all children aged from 6 months to 59 months will be administered measles protection doses.

The campaign particularly focuses on the 11 districts where the incidence of measles was higher. The six-day campaign will involve the mobilization of 180 union councils across the 11 districts, with all necessary arrangements made by the EPI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

PID holds seminar for journalists to counter fake news, misinformation



PESHAWAR (APP): Press Information Department (PID) Peshawar, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting here Monday organized a two-day workshop for journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on countering of fake news and misinformation in present era of social and digital media.

Day 1 of the workshop titled 'truth in the digital era: strategies for countering fake news in Pakistan' held here at a local hotel, comprised of two sessions by senior journalist Asif Nisar Gayasi and Maarij Farooq. President Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik also addressed the participants at the occasion. Information Officers Khushal Khan Khattak and Naila Nazar were representing the regional information office of PID in Peshawar.

On the first day of the

workshop, the participants were engaged in an extensive interactive session to help them identify and combat challenges of negative propaganda, fake news and disinformation; which is spreading fast over social and digital media before even being verified by journalists.

PPC President, Arshid Aziz Malik said that journalism was a sacred profession and 4th pillar of the state and credible news and accurate information is the right of people of Pakistan.

He said that fake news and misinformation have posed serious threats to society in the present era of digitalization and great responsibility rests on media outlets, journalists and editors to ensure that the provided information was true before its publication or airing on TV channels.

The speakers highly

appreciated the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in general and PID Peshawar in specific for conducting such a significant workshop on such a pertinent and key topic for journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Asif Nisar Ghayasi, with much experience under his belt, enlightened the participants on the need and significance of countering fake news and negative propaganda. He said that journalists are eyes and ears of society and for the sake of honour and prestige of the profession, reporters/ anchors should ensure that their filed stories are based on facts, accurate and authentic. He urged the journalists and writers of Pakistan not to tilt towards any specific political party leader and avoid emotionalism.

He highlighted the importance of verifying facts and

figures before publication of a news story or column in newspapers, journals, air news or documentaries; besides keeping national interest and its impact on society in mind.

While highlighting the prevailing trends of negative propaganda and fast spread of misinformation in society, he said that propagandists impose their own opinion on others and urged journalists to verify their news stories after they surface on digital or social media.

The journalists thanked PID Peshawar for organizing such an important workshop for journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and expressed hope that more such events would take place in Peshawar soon as well as in other divisional headquarters for education and information of young media professionals of the province.



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Traffic Police Officer Saud Khan has stated that despite a decrease in traffic violations, the traffic situation remains challenging due to the population exceeding fifty million in the city and more than five hundred thousand vehicles plying the roads.

Speaking at the 'Meet the Press' program at the Peshawar Press Club yesterday, CTOPO Saud Khan informed that Peshawar Traffic Police is making efforts to control traffic issues.

He mentioned that the Traffic Police has been operational since 1870, and while the city's infrastructure is improving rapidly, there hasn't been an increase in the manpower

of the Traffic Police.

Controlling traffic in a congested city like Peshawar and coping with the shortage of traffic police personnel is indeed a daunting challenge.

Saud Khan highlighted that there has been an increase in violations of traffic laws over time. Wardens are tasked with issuing tickets to violators, and there is a discussion underway to increase the fines for violations. Requests have been made for additional traffic signals and underpasses, and efforts are being made in collaboration with trader organizations to address traffic issues in Qissa Khwani Bazaar. Actions are being taken against vehicles emitting smoke in violation of court orders.

Saud Khan mentioned

that traffic police are working in three shifts to address traffic issues.

SSP Traffic SSP Traffic, addressing concerns related to traffic wardens' issues, informed that a weekly heart-to-heart meeting is held to listen to the grievances of traffic personnel regarding their health and other issues, and practical steps are being taken to resolve them.

In a special ceremony at the Peshawar Press Club, President Arshad Aziz Malik and General Secretary Arfan Musa from Peshawar Press Club, along with other senior journalists, appreciated the efforts of SSP Traffic and his team. Shields were presented by Peshawar Press Club to SSP Traffic and his team for the effective enforcement of traffic rules.



PESHAWAR: Customers selecting and purchasing 12 volt fan from a local vendor at Shoba Bazaar.



In brief

Two killed for honour in Bolan

BOLAN (INP): Two including a woman were gunned down for honour here, police said on Monday. According to details, the incident took place in Dhadar area of Bolan district of Balochistan where armed men shot dead two including a woman over 'karokari' charges. The bodies were shifted to civil hospital Bolan for postmortem and police after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

Warm weather to prevail

QUETTA (PPI): Meteorological Department Quetta Regional Center today forecast that mainly hot and dry weather is expected in most districts of the province with gusty winds during the next 24 hours. Weather forecast for next 48 hours: Mainly hot and dry weather is expected in most districts of the province during the next 48 hours. Weather forecast for the last 24 days: The weather remained hot and dry in most parts of the province. While rainfall (mm) occurred in Kalat=5.0 during the last 24 hours. Maximum temperature recorded on Monday were" Barkhan 37, Dalbandin 39, Gwadar 37, Jewani 35.5, Kalat 26.5, Khuzdar 36, Lasbella 39, Nokkundi 42, Ormara 34.5, Panjgur 38, Pasni 36.5, Quetta 31, Samungli 30.5, Sibbi 45, Turbat 42 and Zhob 35.5.

Woman killed, five injured

GUJRAT (INP): A woman was killed and five other persons were wounded when a car hit a roadside tree in Gujrat. According to details, the accident occurred at the Tanda Road area of Gujrat when driver of the car lost control of the vehicle due to over-speeding and it skidded off the road and hit a roadside tree. The accident was so severe that a woman died on the spot while five other persons sustained critical wounds. Rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead and injured to a nearby hospital.

Facilities to patients priority

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Medical Superintendent (MS) Doctor Muhammad Ijaz of Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Kamalia said that all the facilities including medicines are being provided to the patients coming to the hospital and our doctors check the patients comfortably. Apart from this, the nursing staff of the hospital takes good care of the patients. This he said while talking to The Frontier Post and added that Eye specialist Doctor, ENT doctor's seat is vacant due to which we face problem in checking patients. Inshallah, my effort is to fill the empty seats of doctors. He said that the facility of checking heart patients is also available in the hospital and kidney dialysis is also done for kidney patients. Dr. Ijaz said that due to non-availability of insulin in the hospital, diabetic patients face a lot of problems because insulin is not available in all the hospitals of Punjab.

Accused held

SUKKUR (INP): The police arrested an accused involved in stealing valuables of train passengers here on Monday. According to details, a suspect jumped out of moving 9-UP Allama Iqbal Express at Rohri platform and attempted to flee. Head Constable Muhammad Makki and two other cops chased and held the accused identified as Ali Raza.

Construction work on police station yet to be completed

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The elected representatives of local government and the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz district secretary information Bahramand Syed have demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa inspector general of police and chief minister to take notice of the deliberate delay in construction of the three-storied Timergara police station.

Talking to local journalists at the Timergara press club, they pointed out that construction work on the Timergara police station was initiated in 2028 with a cost of Rs 70 million. They said that Rs 95000 was being spent on a rented building wherein the police force felt insecurity as well. They said that work on the project had been halted due to unavailability of funds. The activists said the construction work was not completed during the last six years.

Meanwhile the concerned contractor Nizamud Din told this scribe on contact that 98 per cent of the work had been completed while only two percent was yet to be done. He said that the government had to pay him Rs 25 million for his work done on the project. The contractor said that due to delay in funds' release,

his work like whitewash and painting was also at stake. He pointed out that he had deposited Rs 8 million as security amount and the remaining work could be completed if his security was released to him. The local LG representatives and political activists demanded the chief minister Ali Ameen Gandapur to take notice of the matter and release the funds as soon as possible.

English language importance: Speakers at a function held at Chakdara have asked graduated students and youths to learn English language for getting jobs abroad. A private educational institute arranged the function at Chakdara for students and youths of the area here the other day.

The speakers including Azhar Abbas, Osama Sheikh, Ms Pulwasha and Mazharul Islam said that English was spoken and understood almost in all countries of the world. They said that qualified youths having the ability to speak and understand English could only get better jobs in foreign countries. Shields were also distributed among the male and female trainees of the institute.

IHF to participate in paramedics elections: The Insaf Health Forum (IHF)

backed by the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf announced to take active part in the upcoming general elections for the paramedical association. The announcement was made during a meeting of the forum held at the district headquarters hospital Timergara with its president Muhammad Iqbal in the chair. The meeting was attended by health workers affiliated with the PTI. The IHF vice presidents Nasrud Din Jan, Muhammad Zubair, information secretary Aziz Khan and others addressed the meeting.

The speakers said that IHF was a key forum and its workers performed duties in all health units. They said the forum had decided to take active part in the upcoming elections for the Paramedical staff association. A seven-member committee was also formed to negotiate an alliance with other groups in the Lower Dir district.

IHF district president Muhammad Iqbal said that they respected the paramedic's leadership and believed in serving the community. He said the IHF had invited the provincial health minister to visit the DHQ hospital Timergara and during his visit the IHF would apprise him of the problems faced by paramedics.

Lady cop writes to CJP against harassment

KHAIRPUR (INP): A lady police officer has written a letter to the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faiz Isa to get justice against harassment by two police officers and accountant at the SSP Office Khairpur.

Lady police officer Mehak Buzdar wrote in her letter that Accountant Riaz Billu and two other police officers were harassing her and repeatedly transferring her. She said in her letter that despite multiple complaints to SSP Khairpur Zubair Nazir Shaikh, former SSP Samiullah Soomro, and former DIG Abdul Hameed Khoso via WhatsApp, no action has been taken against the harassers.

The lady police officer

said she faced frequent transfers between the Sukkur DIG Office and Khairpur over the past three months. The sources in Sindh police said, lady police officer Mehak Buzdar is being pressured to withdraw her petition from the Sindh High Court (SHC) and has been instructed by SSP Khairpur to avoid media contact.

Mehak Buzdar has filed a harassment petition against Riaz Billu and two police officers in the SHC and claimed that the accountant asked to meet her personally and upon refusal, she was transferred multiple times over three months. She also exposed the WhatsApp chat messages between her and the

accountant Riaz.

In these chat messages, SSP Khairpur Office Accountant Riaz harasses lady police officer Mehak Buzdar by accusing her of not working and only showing off. He threatens to replace her with another officer, Asma in the chat messages.

In response, Mehak reminds him that she reported to him yesterday, yet he still replaced her as he had mentioned. She questions why this is happening, asking if it matters whether she performs her duty inside the women's police station or outside. Civil society has demanded that SSP Khairpur remove the accused officers and conduct an inquiry.

MNA urges public servants to serve masses

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Member National Assembly from NA-27 Iqbal Afridi urged the line departments to serve the masses by addressing issues being faced by them. Addressing on the occasion in 'Kuli Katchehri' (open hearing) held in Loye-Shelman area of tehsil Landi Kotal, district Khyber last day he said that the people voted them to ease their problems and they will leave no stone unturned to work for the welfare of the masses.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Khyber Haseeb-ur-Rehman, Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Irshad

Mohmand, local Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders, officials of line departments and a large number of locals attended the open court. MNA instructed the officials concerned to resolve the issues in respective areas on immediate basis and to provide facilities in the remote area in accordance with their complaints.

Inefficiency, negligence and compromise would not be tolerated by them while dealing public matters; he warned and called an enquiry against all absent teachers, posted in state-run schools in Loy-Shelman. He assured that necessary measures were being taken to provide all basic amenities to people at their

doorsteps in the respective area.

He vowed that more Kuli Kachehris will be initiated in far-flung areas who have short of approach to the government offices to file their problems. The parliamentarian also distributed Zakat funds among deserving residents of the area.

Earlier, residents put heaps of complaints in front of officials and said since the creation of the country, the area had been ignored of basic rights. They said that Loy-Shelman lacked facilities of education, health, link roads besides other basic services and they demanded a sub-tehsil status for Loy-Shelman of Landi Kotal.

KP museums join Chinese public welfare organizations

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: In celebration of the International Museum Day, the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums of the KP Government in Pakistan collaborated with Chinese public welfare organizations, Gandhara Guardians and the China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Community, to host an educational event centered on museums.

Children were invited to the Peshawar Museum and the Swat Museum to engage in interactive displays that highlight the cultural heritage of Gandhara, an ancient civilization in Pakistan's history. The initiative aimed to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of local cultural relics among the youth, attracting about 100 children from the local community.

A key feature of the event was the "Gandhara Heavenly

King Tug-of-War Competition," a traditional game inspired by relief sculptures found at Gandhara archaeological sites. These sculptures, which date from the 1st century BCE to the 3rd century CE, depict locals engaging in competitive sports such as tug-of-war during festivals.

Participants emulated ancient Gandhara youths by taking up the ropes and recreating a scene from the reliefs known as "youths carrying floral garlands." These reliefs symbolize festive scenes in a utopian world, and the tug-of-war ropes today connect the young participants, fostering a bond of friendship that complements the spirit of the International Museum Day.

The Gandhara Guardians team works to promote awareness and conservation of cultural relics throughout KP province. They actively engage local communities,

particularly youth, in learning about and preserving their cultural heritage.

As part of the festivities, the China-Pakistan Youth Exchange Team gifted each child a new pair of shoes, a gesture that was warmly received by the participants and their families. These shoes symbolize the commitment of the Chinese Youth Exchange Group to support the development and welfare of Pakistani children.

The event was overseen by Director General A. Samad of the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government, along with Saqib, the director of the Peshawar Museum; Nawaz, the director of the Swat Museum; and Huma, the principal of the Nobel Peace Prize Malala Foundation School (Khushal School & College).



SARGODHA: A motorcyclist covered his head and face to protect himself from scorching heat.

Two serial rapists killed in encounter

NAROWAL (INP): Two suspects accused of black-mailing and raping women were killed by their own accomplices' gunfire during an alleged police encounter in Narowal, reported on Monday.

According to the details, the suspects named Muhammad Zubair and Muhammad Majid were accused of kidnapping of several girls and committing gang rape. The police officials said, the suspects along with their accomplices forcibly abducted girls and subjected them to gang rape. The gang also made videos of the victims to blackmail them and their families for extortion.

The suspects had multiple cases registered against them at Badomali and Nadoke police stations. They extorted money from various families by showing them the videos of sexual harassment. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif took notice of the sexual assault, harassment and blackmailing of the girls and directed the police to arrest the suspects.

Following the orders of the CM Punjab, police arrested five members of the gang involved in sexual assaults, blackmailing and extortion. During a raid to arrest other members of the gang, two of them were killed by the gunfire of their own accomplices.

In a separate incident, angry young accused opened fire on the mob during the Kabaddi match on the annual Urs of Baba Chirri Sain in Reb village of Narowal. The suspects became angry and started firing over the physical abuse from the opponent after a verbal sparring during the match. According to the police, the accused escaped from the spot by giving threats to the opponents. Luckily everyone remained safe and there was no loss of life in the firing, police said.

Levies apprehends four POs

KOHLU (PPI): Levies Force Kohlu claimed to have apprehended four proclaimed offenders in different operations conducted in Kohlu area on Monday.

Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner, Kohlu, Nageebullah Kakar, the staff of levies station Sufaid under the supervision of Risaldar Major, Shair Muhammad Marri arrested two proclaimed offenders namely Azeem son of Nudhan and Rehmatullah alias Rehmatan son of Azeem nominated in FIR No.7/023-324-354-452-148 in an operation conducted in Sufaid area of Kohlu.

Similarly, staff of levies station Sadr Kohlu arrested proclaimed offender Bijar son of Sheru wanted in FIR No. 7/024 under section 364-A, 342-34 in an operation conducted within the jurisdiction of levies station Sadr, Kohlu. The accused was shifted to levies station, Sadr Kohlu. Moreover, staff of levies station, Tambao under the supervision of Risaldar levies station Tambao, Jaffar Khan arrested proclaimed offender namely Bijar Khan son of Wali, wanted in FIR No. 8/024 under section 380-411-34, in operation conducted in the precincts of levies station Tambao.

SIC govt to work for public welfare: Minister



Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Finance and Law Aftab Alam Afridi said that unprecedented support of the nation for Imran Khan in difficult times is basically a voice against the system of oppression, excesses and injustice in the country adding that Inshallah we should work for the change of the system in line with the Imran Khan vision.

This he said while addressing large public gatherings in Shadikhel and Togh Bala Kohat along with senior PTI leader Shehryar Afridi MNA during his public campaign.

The Minister said that he will not make empty promises like the past rulers rather he will work with

everyone to make life easier for the people. He expressed with sorrow, what is the fault of party leader Imran Khan saying his only fault is, his stance about the existing system, talk about the poor and the discriminate law which is unacceptable to the powerful forces.

Law's minister said that the Provincial government is working on bringing changes in the system. Referring to the hydel power, the Finance Minister regretted that the federal government is taking cheap electricity from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and then giving us the same on high rates furthering that the federal government is not paying the hydel power profit.

He said that he is well

aware of the problems of Police and Patwar system but people will not be placed at their mercy and those humiliating the people will be made symbol for others.

The provincial minister said that the next development plan will be devised in each area with mutual consultation of the local party leadership and the public interest will be taken into consideration in all sectors including water, electricity, communication, irrigation, education and health. He while stressing for promotion of technical education, said that efforts are underway to producing skilled people and Oil and Gas Companies working in Kohat will also be taken on board in this regard.

Oldest state era GPS Pacha operates from rented building

F.P. Report

BUNER: "Government Primary School Gadezai Pacha Kalay", the oldest educational institution that started educational activities in the era of then ruler of Swat period, has resumed educational activities in a new and spacious rented building. The school management has asked parents to enroll their children here.

It should be noted that the building of this school was demolished for reconstruction purposes in the previous government of PTI due to deterioration condition and the students were accommodated in other distant schools. But in years this school building could not

be constructed.

The MPA Riaz Khan after being re-elected took practical steps to get a new building for this school and start classes by getting a rented building at the same location, for which the parents have paid tribute to him besides appreciated the efforts of PTC and encouraged the school principal, staff members to start the classes.

BQJ postpones protest: Buner Qaumi Jirga President Mian Syed Laiq Bacha has announced the postponement of the protest against the implementation of the Tax and Customs Act in Malakand Division which was scheduled in Swari on Thursday, May 23. He has argued that the Malakand Division Grand

Jirga members were meet the representative of federal government the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Fazal Karim Kundi at WAPDA House in Malakand district and discussed the issue in detail.

BQJ added there has been very good progress regarding the issue of implementation of Tax and Customs Act in Malakand Division, so it has been agreed to continue the discussion and give time to take up the matter with the Federation. Therefore, later Malakand Grand National Jirga will take a decision and accordingly the further course of action will be decided and it will also be implemented in all the districts including Buner, he concluded.

Farmers to obtain subsidy for Super Seeder Machines purchase

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Punjab government will provide more than Rs.250 million subsidy to farmers of district Hafizabad to purchase 417 Super Seeder Machines for discarding residues of crops to overcome issue of burning residues of crops and spread of smog.

In this connection, belting was held under the supervision of Assistant General Revenue Sagir Ahmad Bajwa, Deputy Director Agriculture Muhammad Yousaf, Deputy Director Engineer Agriculture Hafiz Muhammad Zubair and Agriculture Officer Fraz Ahmad.

Deputy Director Agriculture told that 494 famers were participated in the draw and 417 farmers were selected through belting eligible for subsidy and government would provide Rs.6 lakh subsidy on purchase of machine each. There would not be need to burn remains of crops with provision and use of Super Seeder Machines to discard residues of crops which would be helpful to overcome smog and environmental pollution in the great

extant.

Benevolent fun releases heirs: District Benevolent Fund Board Hafizabad have accorded approval to release Rs. 9541000/- for 301 cases of monthly grant for heirs of deceased government employees, marriage grant for daughters of employees, funeral grant and educational scholarships for children of government employees.

DC Sundas Irshad presided over the meeting. ADCG Hamadullah, Incharge Benevolent Fund Branch Tariq Khan, CEO Health Dr. Umer Sharif, DEO Samina Yasmeen and other members of the Board also attended the meeting.

GGHS elects council: Taiba Yousaf and Khadija Bashir elected president and general secretary of Student Council government girls high school No. 1, Hafizabad respectively. On the direction of the Secretary School Education Punjab, election of students councils of the government girls high school No. 1, Hafizabad was held under the supervision of Headmistress Sadaf Khanum in free and transparent manners.

Shifting of district judiciary to Waziristan urged

F.P. Report

WANA: 'A Century of Tyranny' persists for the tribesmen of Wana, who had hoped the merger would restore basic human rights. Instead, they are now disillusioned due to the government's decision not to transfer judges to the newly merged districts.

Tribal sources revealed that poor tribesmen in Lower Waziristan are entangled in legal cases that have drained their resources, forcing some to spend thousands of rupees on a single case in distant courts in district Tank. Amidst an era of inflation, tribesmen are forced to take loans to pursue their cases, with many unable to afford repeated trips to Tank.

The odds are stacked against them, as a poor person's case against a wealthy individual inevitably ends in defeat due to lack of resources.



Russia's glide bombs devastating Ukraine's cities on the cheap

KYIV (BBC): Russia is increasingly using "glide bombs" - cheap but highly destructive ordnance - to advance its offensive in Ukraine. More than 200 of them are thought to have been used in just a week to pound Ukraine's northern town of Vovchansk during Russia's current cross-border advance near Kharkiv. President Volodymyr Zelensky said 3,000 such bombs were dropped on the country in March alone.

Vovchansk police chief Oleksii Kharkivsky has seen the impact of glide bombs up close. "There are no words to describe the aftermath of a glide bomb attack," he says. "You arrive to see people who are lying there, torn apart." The mass use of glide bombs by Russia is a relatively recent development, one that has proven devastating for Ukrainian forces in recent months. Glide bombs are built by adding fold-out wings and satellite navigation to old Soviet bombs. They are cheap but destructive. A recent report by the Centre for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) said they were decisive in February's capture of the once heavily fortified key eastern town of Avdiivka. Russian forces are now using glide bombs to attack the northern city of Kharkiv. Ukraine has so far struggled to counter them. The Vovchansk police chief has been helping to evacuate front-line border villages in the Kharkiv region, where Russian forces have recently been advancing. Parked up in his police car, he tells us the scale of attacks has increased dramatically. "Over the past six months, we were hit by glide bombs quite often, maybe five to 10 bombs per week... but this month we've had far more than ever," he said. Russia is able to stockpile glide bombs in high quantities because they are quite easily produced. "The explosive part is essentially a conventional freefall iron bomb, of which Russia has hundreds of thousands in storage from the Soviet period," says Prof Justin Bronk, airpower and military technology specialist at the Royal United Services Institute (Rusi). "They are fitted with pop-out wings which, after the bomb is dropped, will flick out to allow it to glide much longer distances." Their attached satellite guidance system allows targeting of a sta-

tionary position with relatively high accuracy. According to Prof Bronk, the mechanism of the bombs gives the Russians much of the functionality of a multi-million dollar missile, but for a fraction of the cost. He says that glide kits - which are mass-produced and pretty mechanically simple - are added to Soviet bombs, of which the Russians have a plentiful supply - meaning the cost per weapon can be "somewhere in the region of \$20,000 to \$30,000 (£15,700-£23,600)". The concept is not new. The Germans deployed the Fritz-X during World War Two. In the 1990s the US military developed the Joint Attack Direct Munition, or JDAM, which added steerable tail fins and GPS guidance to traditional free-fall bombs. They have been used extensively since, including in Iraq and Afghanistan. The destruction that the glide bombs create is extraordinary. The ordnance thought to be most commonly used for glide bombs is the FAB-1500, which weighs 1.5 tonnes. For comparison, a Russian 152mm shell contains about 6.5kg of explosive material. Even the smallest glide bomb, the FAB-500, contains more than 200kg. They turn even well-fortified Ukrainian positions into vulnerable targets. Because glide bombs create far greater explosive power, they are more likely to cause cave-ins or fatalities even in quite well-fortified positions, Prof Bronk explains. The powerful blasts also have severe effects on the human body. Glide bombs "are making Ukraine's defensive strategy more difficult because the Russians can just continually bombard fixed positions until they're gone", Prof Bronk says. Ukrainian security analyst Mariia Zolkina tells the BBC that the use of glide bombs is a worrying development, and that the bombs are creating a "new era" for the military situation on the ground. "They allow Russia to wipe out Ukrainian defensive lines without using their infantry," Ms Zolkina says. "They have a completely different effect to artillery fire or even missile strikes." George Barros from the US-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) says that while Ukraine's situation is difficult, another worrying development could be just around the corner. He notes there is evidence that a fac-

tory about 400km (250 miles) east of Moscow is setting up a production line capable of churning out glide bombs weighing more than three tonnes. If glide bombs of that size were to start being routinely dropped on Ukrainian positions, the impact would be vast - both on fortifications and the morale of the people trying to hold them. So what can be done to counter glide bombs? Prof Bronk says that intercepting the bombs mid-flight is not a viable solution because of the sheer number the Russians have at their disposal. "You would blow through all the available air defence ammunition too quickly," he says. The only solution, bar a ground incursion, is to target the planes that drop them, either in flight or on the ground. But that comes with significant risks. The US Patriot surface-to-air missile launcher system can shoot the fighter-bombers down - but only if it is positioned near the front lines. This carries the risk of being spotted by Russian drones and hit with ballistic missiles, Prof Bronk says - something that happened to two launchers earlier this year. This leaves the option of using long-range missiles or drones to target Russian air bases.

It is a method Ukraine has been employing. In April, Kyiv claimed to have used a barrage of drones to destroy at least six military aircraft and badly damage eight others at an airfield in Russia's southern Rostov region. This solution, however, is not without its problems. The US - a biggest provider of Ukrainian military aid - prohibits Kyiv from using any of its weapons systems on international territory. While this does not include Crimea or occupied Ukraine, it does mean that airfields inside Russia are off-limits. So, for now, it seems there is no easy answer for Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelensky has repeatedly called for more air defence missiles and the supply of modern fighter jets. But for now, Mariia Zolkina says morale has been affected by the increased use of glide bombs. "The military do not feel safe because their fortifications can't protect them, while civilians living in Kharkiv, people used to living under shelling, can't escape a bomb which can destroy a seven-storey building."

Europe's far right groups launch drive for EU polls

MADRID (AP): Europe's far-right political parties unofficially launched their campaign for European Union elections in Spain with strong messages against illegal migration and the bloc's climate policy while declaring their support for Israel in its war against Hamas.

French National Rally party leader Marine Le Pen and Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni tried to rally voters at an event organized by Spain's far-right Vox party in Madrid ahead of the European Union's parliamentary elections June 6-9. Analysts say the vote across the bloc's 27 nations could see a strong rise of the far right. "We are in the final stretch to make 9 June a day of liberation and hope," said the French presidential candidate. "We have three weeks left to convince our respective compatriots to go out and vote."

Meloni, whose Brothers of Italy party has foundations in Benito Mussolini's fascism, spoke in Spanish via video conference and called for young people to vote. "You are the only possible future for Europe," Meloni told them. The defense of the EU's borders was another main theme of the last of two days of a meeting organized by Vox in an arena in the outskirts of the Spanish capital. "We are not against human rights, but we want strong borders in Europe... because it is ours," said André Ventura, leader of Chega, a party that won the third largest number of parliamentary seats in Portugal earlier this year.

"We cannot continue to have this massive influx of Islamic and Muslim immigrants into Europe," he added. Meloni defended her country's policy of reaching agreements with third countries to try to curb illegal immigration, while Le Pen advocated for reform of the Schengen area - which allows free movement of people within most of the bloc's borders - so that "Europe allows each country to choose who enters and who leaves its territory."

Bring Julian home: Campaign launched

MELBOURNE: At home in Australia, Julian Assange's family and friends are preparing for his possible extradition to the United States, ahead of what could be his final hearing in the United Kingdom on Monday.

Assange's half-brother Gabriel Shipton, who spoke to Al Jazeera from Melbourne before flying to London, said he had already booked a flight to the US. A filmmaker who worked on blockbusters like Mad Max before producing a documentary on his brother, Shipton has travelled the world advocating for Assange's release, from Mexico City to London and Washington, DC.

Earlier this year, he was a guest of cross-bench supporters of Assange at US President Joe Biden's State of the Union address. The invitation reflected interest in his brother's case both in Washington, DC and back home in Australia. Biden told journalists last month he was "considering" a request from Australia to drop the US prosecution. Assange rose to prominence with the launch of Wikileaks in 2006, creating an online whistleblower platform for people to submit classified material such as documents and videos anonymously. Footage of a US Apache helicopter attack in Baghdad, which killed a dozen people, including two journalists, raised the platform's profile, while the 2010 release of thousands of classified US documents on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as a trove of diplomatic cables, cemented its reputation. Shipton told Al Jazeera the recent attention from Washington, DC had been notable, even as his brother's options to fight extradition in the UK appeared close to running out. "To get attention there on a case of a single person is very significant, particularly after Julian's been fighting this extradition for five years," Shipton told Al Jazeera, adding that he hoped the Australian prime minister was following up with Biden. — Aljazeera

Uncertain future for thousands after deadly Brazil floods



PORTO ALEGRE (AFP): Rafael Adriano Peres could hardly move as he lay on a mattress in a refuge center in Porto Alegre, after being hit by a car when historic floods swept southern Brazil this month. The 35-year-old suffered two broken ribs but couldn't return home from hospital as water had filled the property he shares with his wife.

"We don't know what tomorrow will bring. We have to start from scratch," said Peres, who worked in waste management in Porto Alegre which is now largely submerged after the Guaiaba River burst its banks. Surrounded by a mountain of donated clothes and toys, almost 800 people were staying in this large hangar in the capital of Rio Grande do Sul. The state has been gripped by a climate catastrophe for almost three weeks which has killed more than 150 people and left around 100 missing.

Some people plan to return to their homes once the high waters subside but

others like 50-year-old Marcia Beatriz Leal, who has suffered three floods, have already given up that hope. "You fight to get it all back and then it's gone again," said Leal, who lived in a rented home in the flood-hit town of Estrela. She spoke to AFP with her seven-year-old son Pietro and her mother, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease, sleeping next to her. Leal, who makes clothes for pets, said she felt better after crying at a talk in the shelter organized by the city council's mental health service.

She hopes to move to another area with her mother and son, hopefully sheltered from increasingly intense rains in the region that scientists say are linked to climate change and the El Nino weather pattern. "This is nature giving back to us what we do to it," Leal said. Huddling in colorful blankets next to Leal, Peres agreed: "It's human beings who are destroying our planet. It's only going to get worse." He worries other cities in Brazil could face

similar flooding, pointing out his concerns in particular about deforestation in the Amazon. Some 13,000 people have taken refuge in the 149 facilities in Porto Alegre, a city of 1.4 million inhabitants, according to local authorities.

Those worst affected may face a lingering fear of floods returning, but most will overcome that feeling, said psychologist Marta Fadrique, who leads the city's mental health service. Problems can include anxiety, insomnia and paranoia, she told AFP outside the center, where clothes dry in the sun and children run around, seemingly oblivious to the tragedy.

Venezuelan cleaner Habraham Elises Gil, 25, left his country six years ago due to its economic troubles and rebuilt his life in Porto Alegre with his wife and two children. He lost everything in the floods but is already thinking about starting over. "The children give us strength. Life goes on. As long as we are alive, everything has to go on," Gil said.

Candidates offer detail to address country's violence

MEXICO CITY (AP): Less than two weeks from national elections, opposition presidential candidate Xóchitl Gálvez hit away on security, one of Mexico's most stubborn challenges, in her final debate with governing party candidate Claudia Sheinbaum.

Sheinbaum, the frontrunner in the race, defended the security record of her mentor, outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, while Gálvez accused the administration of playing nice with the country's powerful drug cartels. "What has been this administration's strategy? Give the country to organized crime," said Gálvez, a former senator and tech entrepreneur.

But Sheinbaum, a former Mexico City mayor and climate scientist, maintained the conservative strategy that she employed in two previous debates, not taking the bait when Gálvez attacked. Gálvez promised to keep and strengthen the National Guard that López Obrador created, but also strengthen state and local police forces. "Hugs for criminals are over," she said in reference to López Obrador's oft-repeated slogan, "Hugs,

not bullets." She also promised to personally lead the meetings of the National Search Commission, which is supposed to help locate the 100,000 Mexicans listed as missing. Both candidates said they would lean heavily on the National Guard, saying they would continue to expand it. In one potential difference, Gálvez said she wants it under civilian leadership. Sheinbaum promised to continue López Obrador's efforts to address the social ills that he says feed cartel recruitment. "The drug war continued until President Andrés Manuel López Obrador arrived and changed the policy of declaring war to building peace," Sheinbaum said. Sheinbaum did not make any major stumbles and it seemed unlikely Gálvez would eat into the comfortable lead that Sheinbaum has maintained in polls in recent months. Jorge Álvarez Máynez of the small Citizen Movement party continued to focus his attention on the country's youth, repeating his promises of a five-day work week and more spaces in public universities.

He has trailed

Sheinbaum and Gálvez who are vying to become Mexico's first woman president in the June 2 election. Mexico is extremely polarized ahead of the June 2 presidential election. López Obrador regularly rails against reporters, the middle class, businessmen and people he calls "individualists" and social climbers. Earlier, tens of thousands of mostly opposition supporters protested against the president in the capital's vast colonial-era main plaza. The protesters carried signs saying "We are Mexicans," referring to what they claim are attempts by López Obrador to divide the country. The protest was originally called to defend independent electoral agencies that the president wants to reduce or de-fund. But many protesters carried banners supporting Gálvez.

Mexican presidents are limited to a single six-year term. Mexico City resident Joel Guerra, 59, carried a sign that read "Reclaim Mexico." "The president says that only his supporters are 'the good people' of Mexico, and the rest of us don't have rights," Guerra said. "We are people, too."

Zuma takes election battle cry to ANC's heartland

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma put on a show of strength in the historic township of Soweto as he campaigned for votes in the build-up to the 29 May general election. Zulu warriors marched around Orlando Stadium with their spears and shields, men in camouflage slang and danced to revolutionary songs, while some of South Africa's famous singers - including rapper Big Zulu - provided entertainment to the near capacity crowd at rally.

For Mr Zuma's supporters a major coup was the presence of the man known as a disco king, Papa Penny. Having announced his resignation from the governing African National Congress (ANC) last week, he has now joined the former president's new party, uMkhonto weSizwe, which translates as Spear of the Nation. "Unite Africa. Unite South Africa," he said in a short

address to the crowd, adding: "Phansi [Down with] tribalism." Mr Zuma's supporters saw Papa Penny's presence - he hails from the small Tsonga community - as significant as it challenged perceptions that the former president's support only comes from his Zulu ethnic group, the biggest in South Africa. But the star attraction at the rally was none other than the 82-year-old former president. The crowd burst into chants of "Zuma, Zuma" as he walked into the stadium, while his increasingly influential daughter, Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla, knelt in front of him and hugged him before he took his seat on the stage. She serves on what is called the "national core" of the party, recently telling The Shady Phodcast: "My father is obviously the head, and I'm the neck." Mr Zuma's decision to hold his biggest campaign rally in Soweto was significant because it is

a stronghold of the ANC in South Africa's economic heartland of Gauteng. Soweto also has deep political symbolism as it was at the forefront of the struggle against the racist system of apartheid, which ended with the ANC's rise to power in 1994. But now, 30 years later, the ANC risks losing its outright majority as it faces a threat from Zuma's breakaway party, as well as other opposition parties. With this in mind, ANC leader and President Cyril Ramaphosa has been hard on the campaign trail in Mr Zuma's home province of KwaZulu-Natal. Addressing voters in Mandeni town, about 100km (62 miles) from the coastal city of Durban, Mr Ramaphosa said creating jobs was his priority, warning "small parties" like MK - the acronym by which Mr Zuma's party is known - that they were looking down on the ANC at their peril.

French security forces work to regain control of airport highway

PARIS (AP): Using armored vehicles and backhoes to shove aside charred barricades, French security forces worked to retake control of the highway to the international airport in violence-scorched New Caledonia, shuttered because of deadly unrest wracking the French Pacific archipelago where indigenous people have long sought independence from France.

An eventual reopening of the Nouméa-La Tontouta airport to commercial flights could allow stranded tourists to escape the island where armed clashes, arson, looting and other mayhem have prompted

France to impose a state of emergency. The airport, with routes to Australia, Singapore, New Zealand and other destinations, closed Tuesday as protests against voting reforms opposed by pro-independence supporters degenerated into widespread violence, leaving a vast trail of destruction.

French Interior Minister Gérard Darmanin, posting on social media platform X, said the "major operation" was "aimed at fully regaining control" of the RT1 highway between the capital, Nouméa, and the airport 60 kilometers (nearly 40 miles) to the northwest. He said more

than 600 gendarmes were deployed. The number spoke to the difficulty of clearing roads of charred debris and barricades erected by pro-independence demonstrators and residents who have banded together to try to protect homes and livelihoods against rioters and looters. The police effort to reopen the airport road cleared nearly 60 barricades on its first day, French authorities in New Caledonia posted on X.

The French High Commission, in a statement, described as "calmer" but still spoke of two blazes and the looting of a gas station, without

giving details. A 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew is in effect and security forces have been granted emergency powers, including house detention for people deemed a threat to public order and expanded leeway to conduct searches, seize weapons and restrict movements, with possible jail time for violators. The High Commission also said 230 people it described as rioters have been detained. Nouméa's mayor, Sonia Lagarde, told French broadcaster BFMTV that fully clearing the airport road could take "days and days" because of "an enormous amount of burned carcasses of cars."

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Tragic Death Of President Raisi

THE sudden death of the Iranian President has sent shockwaves across the region, profoundly affecting neighboring countries, notably Pakistan. As a nation that shares deep historical, cultural, and religious ties with Iran, Pakistan has expressed profound sorrow and solidarity during this unexpected turn of events.

The relationship between Pakistan and Iran extends beyond mere geography. It is a complex tapestry woven with strands of mutual interests, shared borders, and common challenges. The death of Iran's president not only marks a significant political transition in Tehran but also poses critical questions about the future of regional stability and bilateral cooperation.

Pakistan's response was swift and sympathetic, underscoring the close-knit ties that govern interactions between the two countries. Islamabad officially declared a period of mourning, reflecting the profound respect and brotherhood that exists between the nations. Such gestures are indicative of Pakistan's commitment to maintaining strong and harmonious relations with Iran, despite the ebbs and flows of regional politics.

The late president of Iran was seen as a pivotal figure in promoting Iran's interests while navigating the complex landscape of international politics, including Iran's nuclear program and its relations with major powers. His leadership was crucial at a time when the Middle East faced unprecedented challenges, including economic sanctions, the threat of extremism, and the pressures of migration and refugees.

For Pakistan, the stability of Iran is of paramount importance. Both countries are not only neighbors but also partners in various economic and security domains. They cooperate extensively in areas such as border security, counter-terrorism, and narcotics control, which are vital for regional stability. Moreover, economic ties, particularly in energy cooperation, are crucial. Pakistan has long been interested in importing natural gas from Iran, a project that has seen repeated delays but remains a symbol of potential economic interdependence.

However, the sudden demise of Iran's president introduces a period of uncertainty. The transition of power in such a high-stakes environment could lead to shifts in policy and governance. For Pakistan, it is essential that the new leadership in Iran continues to foster a cooperative and stable bilateral relationship. This continuity is crucial not just for political and economic engagements but also for managing shared social and cultural heritages, which have historically transcended political boundaries.

The region is at a critical juncture, with issues such as the Afghanistan crisis and the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East affecting both internal and external policies. Iran's role as a regional player will be significant in shaping the outcomes of these crises. Thus, Pakistan's interest in a stable and friendly Iran is clear: it directly impacts Islamabad's ability to manage its own security and economic challenges.

In conclusion, while Pakistan mourns the loss of Iran's president, it also looks to the future with hope and a cautious optimism. The strength of the relationship between Pakistan and Iran can serve as a foundation for further cooperation, not only in terms of bilateral engagements but also in fostering regional peace and stability. It is in moments like these that the true depth of diplomatic ties and mutual interests come to the forefront, demonstrating the inherent connectivity of nations bound by geography and shared destinies. The coming days will be crucial in determining how these ties will evolve, highlighting the need for thoughtful leadership and diplomacy to navigate this complex and rapidly changing landscape.

Tokyo pushed to front line against Beijing

THE United States and Japan are quickening their steps in pushing ahead with the "Indo-Pacific" strategy aimed at containing China.

To strengthen collaboration in intelligence gathering, the US will deploy an official to the US embassy in Tokyo in July who will be tasked with overseeing the monitoring of Chinese governmental and business activities, US State Department sources said on Saturday. The department has already dispatched about 20 similar officials to US embassies in other capitals, including Bangkok, Brussels, Rome and Sydney, to be in charge of monitoring China. The Tokyo posting will be Washington's first of its kind in East Asia.

In another China-targeted move, US Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel set his feet on the westernmost island of Yonaguni in Okinawa prefecture on Friday, becoming the first US ambassador to visit the island, which is only about 110 kilometers from Taiwan.

The visit comes after the US and Japan agreed to adjust the US troop presence in Okinawa in part to enhance anti-ship capabilities that would be needed to deal with any "emergency" around Taiwan or in the South or East China seas.

Emanuel, a China hawk himself, has defined the US-Japan alliance as one entering an era of "projection" into the "Indo-Pacific". Actually, the strengthened US-Japan alliance, as well as Japan drifting away from its previous position as a pacifist country, has markedly increased tensions in the region. Encouraged by the US, Japan has announced that it will more than double its military spending to 2 percent of gross domestic product in 2027, a major shift in a country whose "pacifist" Constitution has limited its military to self-defense since World War II. Japan has also lifted the postwar ban on exports of weapons, and been active in helping form regional groupings targeting China in collaboration with the US and its other allies. In particular, the US has tried to push Okinawa, which already hosts around 70 percent of the US' military bases in Japan, to the very front line in any future military confrontation with China. Missile bases have been set up on the main and outlying islands of Okinawa, and the US military regularly holds joint exercises there with Japan's Self-Defense Forces, with China being positioned as the enemy. Thus it was no surprise that local residents staged a protest during Emanuel's Okinawa visit, as they worry they may be the first victims in any conflict between the US and China. Washington and Tokyo must drop their Cold War mentality and stop interfering in China's internal affairs or trying to drive a wedge between China and its neighboring countries in the South China Sea, and instead explore ways to make tangible contributions to regional peace and stability.

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New cycle of atrocities in Darfur must be stopped

Belkis Wille

FOR months now, Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF), an independent military force, together with allied armed groups, have been besieging the city of el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur. If the city falls, this would likely kick off yet another wave of killings. This is happening in the total absence of any UN or other international or regional presence mandated to protect the civilian population there.

RSF forces and affiliated armed groups have already killed thousands of mostly Massalit people in el-Geneina, West Darfur, and surrounding areas, forcing more than half a million people, mostly Massalit, to flee into neighbouring Chad. The risk now is that they will take aim at the hundreds of thousands of displaced people who, fleeing the violence in other places in Darfur, have found refuge in el-Fasher.

Reading horrifying new developments in Darfur draws my mind back to July 2023, when my colleagues and I travelled to eastern Chad to gather evidence of mass killings in el-Geneina.

On a hot day in July, my interpreter and I were walking in the arid outskirts of the small town of Adré in eastern Chad, where hundreds of thousands of people, mostly ethnic Massalit women and children, were staying, having fled the violence in West Darfur. Men were noticeably absent.

Families were living in makeshift shelters consisting of four sticks and a piece of tarp, which hardly protected them from the scorching sun or torrential rains. There was almost no access to electricity, running water, or regular food provision.

My interpreter, a leading member of the Massalit human rights community in el-Geneina, knew practically everyone. Every few minutes our walk through this enormous makeshift settlement was punctuated by the chirp of greetings that sounded almost cheerful.

But the raw pain that every family was experiencing crystallised when we reached her close friend, Zahra Khamis Ibrahim.

When the women saw one another, they each held their hands up, palms up and started whispering prayers for the dead. Then they collapsed into each other

and started sobbing.

Zahra's 17-year-old son was brutally executed by armed Arab militiamen as he and his friends were trying to escape the horrific mass killings in el-Geneina on June 15, the same day tens of thousands of civilians fled to Chad.

Despite Zahra's searing loss, she was still documenting instances of sexual violence, a job she had been doing for years as the founder of an organisation supporting survivors. In the camp, she introduced me to a slim, shy, 28-year-old economics student, who asked not to be named.

On a hot day in July, my interpreter and I were walking in the arid outskirts of the small town of Adré in eastern Chad, where hundreds of thousands of people, mostly ethnic Massalit women and children, were staying, having fled the violence in West Darfur. Men were noticeably absent. Families were living in makeshift shelters consisting of four sticks and a piece of tarp, which hardly protected them from the scorching sun or torrential rains. There was almost no access to electricity, running water, or regular food provision.

In a sweltering tent, she sat across from me on a mattress. Beads of sweat gathered on her forehead as she told me that eight armed men, two in RSF uniform and six in civilian clothes, entered her family's home on June 8. They beat her relatives, shot her mother in the leg and one of them raped the student.

When she got to that part of the story, it looked like her whole body was collapsing onto itself, like she was trying to disappear. She physically recoiled when I asked if she thought she might ever return to el-Geneina, and vigorously shook her head.

I interviewed her 24-year-old cousin, who also asked not to be named. An armed man raped her when she tried to retrieve her three children's clothing from her home that had been ransacked by RSF and Arab militia forces several weeks earlier.

Her hands were shaking as she told me that she had not gotten her period yet. "I can't be pregnant again, please help me find a solution," she implored. When she was able to finally access health services the next day, she was told she was indeed pregnant.

A few days later we interviewed the best friend of Zahra's son. He was with her son when armed men aligned with the RSF forced everyone fleeing with them to lie on their chests on the ground. One man said to them, "I have 10 bullets. I am ready to shoot whoever I want

military in 2017, and Palestinians at a hospital in northern Egypt last month, who had been wounded amid atrocities committed by Israeli forces in Gaza.

These three crises have received global attention and outrage, as they should, and yet the abuses witnessed by the Massalit over the last year have been barely mentioned in the news.

From my current base in Ukraine, I also have a front-row seat to the stark contrast between the global outrage at Russian forces' atrocities here, and the muted response to what is happening in Sudan.

The UN fund for the crisis in Sudan has been woefully underfunded even though the victims in this conflict are as vulnerable as one could possibly imagine. As a result, in Adré there are limited medical services, and even more limited psychosocial services despite the immense need for them among the displaced.

Attention from foreign governments, the media and nongovernmental organisations is important. It is needed in order to secure life-saving humanitarian support and bring more scrutiny and ultimately justice to those who commit mass atrocities.

Late in the afternoon torrential rain suddenly began but people did not rush off to their tarp and stick shelters worrying about their possessions being washed away, as one might have expected. Most people did not have anything. RSF fighters and their allies had stolen what little people had as they fled Darfur.

Zahra sent me a message a few days ago, as people fleeing el-Fasher were surging across the border into Adré. She said the situation in the refugee camp has gotten worse as numbers are swelling, and resources dwindling.

As we urge in a report on Darfur we recently published, the UN and African Union need to send a peacekeeping mission to Darfur, mandated to protect civilians, monitor human rights and humanitarian law violations, and lay the groundwork for the safe returns of those displaced.

The real risk is that without forces there to prioritise the protection of civilians, the terrors that Zahra and hundreds of thousands of others have suffered will be repeated not only in el-Fasher, but in other towns and cities in Darfur.

Arab leaders in Bahrain

No peace without Palestinian state

Baria Alamuddin

WHETHER in US capitals or Arab streets, we have been swamped with overheated rhetoric about the Gaza situation — with very little done in practice to ameliorate the situation. That is why last week's Manama Arab League Summit represented a victory for reason over rhetoric — a united effort by Arab states to exploit their combined weight to wield a constructive influence upon the current catastrophic situation.

Consequently, the unanimously agreed Manama Declaration represented a gesture of intent by the bloc of Arab nations, including the demand for an immediate ceasefire and a role for international troops to protect Gazan civilians; the implementation of a two-state solution; unification of Palestinian factions; and a halt to attacks on Red Sea shipping. The communiqué also called for "an immediate and sustainable ceasefire" in Sudan, as well as addressing a multitude of other regional challenges. Opening the conference, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman reiterated Saudi Arabia and the Arab League's long-standing position of advocating "a just and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian issue based on UN legitimate resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative."

Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa demanded "full recognition of the state of Palestine" and led the call for "an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to resolve the Palestinian issue based on the two-state solution," hosted by Bahrain, which holds the Arab League presidency over the coming year.

Speaking from Manama, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the Gaza conflict as "an open wound that threatens to infect the entire region," while stressing that "the only permanent way to end the cycle of violence and instability is through a two-state solution." This comes in a context where multiple European states, such as Ireland, Spain, Greece, Norway and Slovenia, are considering the immediate recognition of Palestine as a sovereign, independent state.

Emphasizing progress toward the recognition of a Palestinian state, Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit noted how dramatically "the compass of international public opinion has shifted," while denouncing Israel's "violations as nothing short of ethnic cleansing." King Abdullah of Jordan urged the world to "shoulder its moral and humanitarian responsibility to end an ongoing conflict that is over seven decades old."

The 33rd Arab Summit was the first such event since the eruption of hostilities in Gaza, with participation by all key expected leadership figures and a record 20 foreign ministers. It was also the first time that the Kingdom of Bahrain had hosted an Arab League summit.

The event ran like clockwork, including regarding the pragmatic manner in which youthful leaders and officials constructively exploited the event for a plethora of side meetings and discussions on the full spectrum of crucial issues. As one of the attendees, it struck me that a major factor in the successful dynamics of this summit was its being

hosted on the islands of Bahrain; the tranquil environment facilitating productive dialogue concerning highly emotive and traumatic issues.

In the event's corridors, there were fertile debates over the Gaza issue — between audience members who supported the Oct. 7 attack and those who viewed it as bringing about a disaster for Palestinian civilians, while questioning Hamas' motives. Many attendees expressed anger at the manner in which the US and multiple European states had reflexively supported Israel, while expressing concern at the polarized situation between global powers, particularly in the context of the Ukraine war, which contributed to the closing off of international mechanisms for conflict resolution and led to geopolitical paralysis. Among attendees, frustration was likewise repeatedly expressed toward entities like Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, whose rhetoric and use of violence have gratuitously inflamed the situation. There was particular concern at how Jordan was being destabilized by pro-Iran militias trying to flood the country with arms and narcotics, using Gaza as a pretext. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas furthermore criticized Hamas for giving Israel the "pretext" to attack Gaza, while calling on regional states to "activate the Arab safety net" in implementing programs of practical support for Palestinians.

Even the attendance of Bashar Assad failed to act as a significant spoiler, particularly as he abandoned his planned delivery of a speech at the last minute; likely a tacit recognition that his pledges to Arab leaders — such as cracking down on the narcotics trade, distancing himself from Iran, facilitating the safe return of refugees and normalizing the Syrian domestic environment — had not come to fruition.

Among the Manama Declaration's many priorities were providing educational services and improving healthcare for those affected by conflicts in the region. These are hugely important aspirations in a region plagued by wars, where millions of children have not been granted regular access to schooling or where those with life-changing medical challenges have no recourse to assistance. In particular, we think of thousands of orphans in Gaza who have not only lost entire families, but also have to cope with the loss of limbs and little prospect of a meaningful future.

Nobody expects the Manama Declaration to change everything overnight. But it does provide an important framework for lobbying Western diplomats, providing funding for educational and health initiatives and compelling Israel to acknowledge that, if it desires a meaningful and comprehensive peace with regional states, the facilitation of a sovereign Palestinian state is paramount. Past Arab League summits have often offered little to meet the aspirations of Arab citizens. However, Bahrain has a distinguished record in bringing different faiths and cultures together and brokering understanding and agreement. Now it is more crucial than ever that leaderships energetically follow through on the promises and ambitions of the Manama Declaration in pursuit of peace for Palestine and the region.

Tragedy will not change Iran's course

LI YANG

THE deaths of Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and some other officials, in a helicopter crash on Sunday has raised concerns about how the tragedy will reverberate in Iran and beyond.

This is not a time for conspiracy theories. Nor for any schadenfreude on the part of those hostile to Iran.

Teheran should waste

no time in verifying the cause of the crash some 20 kilometers south of the Azerbaijan-Iran border, which many have attributed to bad weather and technical problems, so as to ease domestic anger over the incident and prevent it being harnessed by some to their own ends.

Although some Western media have tried to hype up their speculation that the incident will further complicate Iran's relations with United

States and Israel, or trigger domestic regime change, such outcomes are generally considered to be far-fetched and Teheran is confident that the domestic stability and the operation of the Iranian government will not be affected.

With Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei firmly holding the helm of the Islamic Republic, Iran is expected to maintain social and political

stability and the consistency of its diplomatic policies.

That means the death of Raisi, despite him being a hard-liner against Israel, will not change Iran's support for Hamas and Hezbollah in their conflict with US-backed Israel.

President Raisi visited China in February last year, which made positive contributions to sustaining the healthy devel-

opment of Sino-Iranian relations and deepening bilateral economic and trade cooperation that brings tangible benefits to the two peoples.

And it was under his regime that with joint efforts of China, Iran and Saudi Arabia, Iran and Saudi Arabia have achieved reconciliation, bringing greater security and stability to the Middle East.

Also, he saw Iran become a full member of BRICS, a platform

China, Iran and other developing countries can take advantage of to promote multilateralism, common development and a just and fair global system.

Raisi, along with Amirabdollahian and the other Iranian officials who died in the crash, should be remembered for these positive developments that have served the well-being of the Iranian people, but also world peace and stability.

— China Daily

Symbolic Western sanctions will not change Iran’s behavior

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

THE EU and the Australian government last week announced new sanctions that aim to pursue the Western policy of changing the behavior of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Their respective announcements were part of a calibrated political strategy to counter Iran’s destabilizing activities in the Middle East and Europe. These sanctions are a sign of the deteriorating Iranian-Western relations in the context of the Red Sea crisis, the Israel-Gaza war and Iranian support to the Russian war effort against Ukraine.

These sanctions are different from previous ones because they could be a sign that, if Iran does not change its regional strategy, Europe could designate the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization. The trigger of such a designation could be an increase in tensions in the Middle East and military escalation between Iran and Western-based military forces in the region.

Another potential factor behind these sanctions could be the rise of Iranian military support to Russian forces, especially the delivery of missiles that could hit European soil.

If Europe decides to put the IRGC on its sanctions list, the implications could be the closure of European member states’ respective embassies in

Tehran and a rise in the number of EU nationals imprisoned in Iran.

There are currently a dozen EU citizens in jail in Iran, including four French nationals and Johan Floderus, a Swedish national who is an employee of the European External Action Service.

For now, Brussels has decided to broaden the scope of its existing restrictive measures.

This decision was taken in the context of Iran’s military support to Russia’s war against Ukraine and armed groups in the Middle East and Red Sea. The framework of the new sanctions was adopted in July 2023. It already prohibits the export of components used in the construction and production of unmanned aerial vehicles from the EU to Iran and provides for travel restrictions and asset freeze measures against anybody supporting or involved in Iran’s UAV program.

What is new this time is that the European Council has decided that the restrictive measures will now cover not only UAVs but missiles too.

The EU will target persons and entities supplying or selling missiles, as well as those involved in transferring Iran’s missiles and UAVs to support Russia’s war against Ukraine and Iranian armed groups and entities that undermine peace and security in the Middle

East, such as by breaching UN Security Council Resolution 2216.

The targeted sanctions will include an asset freeze and EU travel ban for the persons concerned, along with the prohibition of any financial transactions with legal entities linked to them.

On the same day, Australia decided to announce new targeted sanctions in response to Iran’s destabilizing activities in the Middle East. These sanctions target an additional five Iranian individuals and three entities. They include senior officials, such as Defense Minister Mohammed Reza Ashtiani and Quds Force commander Brig. Gen. Esmail Ghaani. These Australian sanctions are in addition to the Albanese government’s previous actions: Canberra has now sanctioned 90 Iranian-linked individuals and 100 entities. The timing of the new EU and Australian sanctions is important, given the Western fear of a military escalation in the Middle East.

These actions are designed to avoid a regional war following the rise in military tensions between Tehran and Tel Aviv in April. The Iranian reaction to these new sanctions highlighted “the double-standard approach of Australia and its Western partners toward developments in the region.” Tehran

accused Australia of “remaining silent against the Zionist regime’s attack on diplomatic premises and providing it with weapons for the brutal killing of the defenseless people of Gaza.”

Beyond this harsh rhetoric from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ghaani last week stated that “France, Germany and the UK must not deceive themselves into believing that their deployment of aircraft on that fateful night absolved them of responsibility.

The issue may have been concluded on that evening, but they will undoubtedly face consequences in due course.” This threatening rhetoric shows that the IRGC leadership is concerned by the military success of Western countries in intercepting Iranian missiles and drones during Iran’s unprecedented attack on Israel on April 14. This rise in tensions between Australia, the EU and Iran does not mean that the new sanctions will impact Iranian oil exports, which in March reached their highest level since the US’ withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal in 2018.

Nevertheless, the comprehensive Western sanction regimes against Iran will complicate the reconnection between the Iranian economy and the international system in the short term.

Also, the rise of mili-

tary tensions is detrimental to the Iranian economy, as potential non-Western investors will continue to remain cautious given the volatility of the regional context.

In other words, even without any political will to implement sanctions in Brussels, Canberra or Washington, the Iranian economy cannot recover in a volatile regional context.

The key to provoking behavior change in Iran is not through symbolic sanctions targeting specific military institutions, but rather through the implementation of sanctions related to Iranian oil exports that are decisive for the survival of the Iranian political system.

The designation of the IRGC — one of the main economic actors involved in the oil sector — as a terrorist organization could provoke such a behavior change in the decision-making process in Iran. Overall, these new sanctions will raise the cost of Iran’s investments that focus on the military, which the Iranian leadership has prioritized instead of the well-being of the Iranian people.

Today, most of the population is confronted with daily inflation, mismanagement of the economy and degrading living conditions. Poor policies and governance are far more important factors in explaining Iran’s economic difficulties than symbolic Western sanctions.

Getting out of the tunnels

Ghassan Charbel

THE Palestinians have been knocking on the door of the world’s conscience for seven decades. The world has been responding with tranquilizers, bandages and blankets. After that, it forgets about them. A generation of youths refused to consider the Nakba their inevitable destiny. Yasser Arafat, George Habash, Ahmed Jibril and others took up rifles. The injustice persisted and went further, and so the rifles were passed down to more violent and ferocious generations.

This story does not begin with Yahya Sinwar and the tunnel he is said to be sheltered in. Tunnels preceded it. It does not start with the Al-Aqsa Flood. Floods, though they had been less severe, preceded it. It could be said that the foundation of Israel, in and of itself, pushed the Palestinian people into a dark tunnel. An entire nation was uprooted and torn apart, with some languishing under the yoke of occupation and others scraping by in the tents of exile. Israel has done nothing but deepen the unjust and dark tunnel the Palestinians are in. The Nakba pushed the entire Middle East into a tunnel. It is not right to forget that most of the region’s “revolutions” and coups strongly leaned into their stance on the liberation of Palestine in their statement No. 1. It was difficult for the people of the region to step away from this conflict.

In the late 1960s, the fury of the Palestinians aggravated under the shadow of the bitter 1967 defeat. Dr. Wadie Haddad, a leading figure in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who headed its foreign operations branch, put forward the slogan “Behind the enemy everywhere” and launched the plane hijacking operations. This series of operations culminated in 1970, when three planes were hijacked and forced to land at the “Airport of the Revolution” (Dawson’s Field) in Jordan. I heard from Wadie’s comrades that their goal had been to remind the world of the injustice perpetrated against the Palestinians and to liberate captives held in the prisons of the occupying forces.

Two years after the planes were made to land at the “Airport of the Revolution,” Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad), a Fatah leader, became alarmed at the world’s insistence on disregarding the Palestinians’ rights. He engineered the operation to infiltrate the Munich Olympic Games and personally took part in preparing for its execution on the ground. Abu Iyad told me that killing the Israeli athletes had never been the objective; rather, his aim was to remind the world of the Palestinians’ plight and exchange the athletes for captives detained in Israel.

The airplane hijackings did not achieve their objective, but they made a bang, announcing that there could be no stability so long as the Palestinians were deprived of a state. Israel retaliated to this “Munich Flood” with a series of painful assassina-

tions. In both cases, many loudly accused the Palestinians of terrorism and targeting civilians.

Those who have followed the episodes of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict over the past few decades made note of the precedents. Neither the tunnels nor the planes are new. One day, Fadel Shrourou, a PFLP — General Command leader, invited me to join him on a “drive” in South Lebanon. I went expecting the trip to end with a visit to a PFLP-GC base. Somewhere between Sidon and Tyre, he took a turn and drove his car up to a mountainous area.

I was surprised when we parked in a location that suggested nothing in particular. Then, two armed militants came into view. We took a winding dirt road and found ourselves facing a large hole carved into a rock. We used a lamp to light our way inside. It was the first tunnel PFLP-GC had ever dug. Shrourou explained the importance of ensuring that fighters had access to a location where they could protect themselves from Israel’s domi-

colleagues, as I followed last week’s Arab League Summit in Bahrain. Israel’s horrific atrocities in Gaza have left the entire region at a crossroads. The Al-Aqsa Flood did not instigate one war, but a series of wars, albeit of varying degrees of intensity. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s blind policies have deepened the tunnel that Israel and the region are in. The participants’ sense of the gravity of the situation was evident from their responses to questions about the final statement, the Bahrain Declaration, or the next stage.

The Bahrain summit was not expected to produce miracles. The Arab body has been debilitated by its many wounds of fragmentation and interference. The Middle East is home to ancient hatreds and many wars. The state of relations among the great powers portends a new cold war, with the recent Chinese-Russian summit sending many signals and carrying many indications. However, at the end of the proceedings, the Arab League Summit affirmed that there

In the late 1960s, the fury of the Palestinians aggravated under the shadow of the bitter 1967 defeat. Dr. Wadie Haddad, a leading figure in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who headed its foreign operations branch, put forward the slogan “Behind the enemy everywhere” and launched the plane hijacking operations. This series of operations culminated in 1970, when three planes were hijacked and forced to land at the “Airport of the Revolution” (Dawson’s Field) in Jordan. I heard from Wadie’s comrades that their goal had been to remind the world of the injustice perpetrated against the Palestinians and to liberate captives held in the prisons of the occupying forces.

nance of the skies and store weapons and supplies.

Years later, I went to Damascus to meet PFLP-GC leader and founder Jibril so we could flip over the pages of his life together. He told me that the Palestinians had no choice but to use tunnels and that he had been inspired by the experiences of the Koreans and the Vietnamese. He also spoke with pride of how the PFLP-GC had used rudimentary paragliders to carry out the first attack of its kind inside Israeli territory. When the Al-Aqsa Flood operation was launched, I recalled Jibril’s tunnels and paragliders, which have turned into Sinwar’s tunnels and drones. Of course, a long distance separates Jibril’s tunnels from those of Sinwar. The world has changed, Iran has changed and Hamas was born.

Neither Sinwar’s tunnel nor the Rafah tunnels are the story. The entire Middle East is in a dark and dangerous tunnel. That is how I felt in Manama, alongside my

region out of the tunnels it has been pushed into. The region needs a ceasefire, and it must set a political track that leads to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state within a predetermined time frame.

Israel’s political blindness pushed the region to this disaster. Netanyahu squandered the opportunity presented by Yasser Arafat’s acceptance of a realistic solution. He ignored the Arab Peace Initiative announced in Beirut. He took joy in undermining the Palestinian Authority and opening the door to the era of tunnels and floods. The world woke up to the bang of what we see unfolding now. However, for the journey out of the tunnels to begin, the US must unequivocally commit to leaving the tunnel of favoritism and hesitation. With the absence of an independent Palestinian state, it will be difficult to avoid the emergence of another generation of tunnels and floods.

It turns out young people don’t know Joe Biden all that well

IN anticipation of President Joe Biden’s commencement address at Morehouse College on Sunday, Michael Levesque, executive director of the school’s alumni association, invited me to lead a town hall style discussion with current students, faculty, alumni and members of the Board of Trustees last week. Two days before White House adviser Steve Benjamin met with students, I returned to my alma mater to hear directly from various segments of the “Morehouse family” about their priorities, concerns and expectations.

The conversation was off the record, but I can report that students were concerned about the war in Gaza as well as the need to fight anti-semitism. They were mindful of history and desired to speak truth to power while upholding the traditions of the college.

They also don’t know that much about Biden’s background, or his Congressional career. Given that the president’s

story is at the heart of his political appeal, it raises the question: How can they trust a man they don’t know?

Biden should start his speech by telling these young men who he is, what he believes and why, before telling them what he has done in the past four years or what he wants to do if he wins a second term. It is easy to assume Biden’s decades-long political career makes him a known quantity, but these young voters have only been alive for two decades and have been paying attention to politics for maybe just a few years.

To dig deeper, I asked Levesque to pull together another group of students for an informal but on-the-record focus group. The seven young men who joined me on Zoom were just a small sample, but they made up a cross section of the college by age and region of origin.

They get their information in ways quite different from their parents. They consume news from Apple News, Instagram and TikTok, and cited the Guardian, Wall Street Journal and USA Today as news sources. Only

Jamal Simmons

three watched the news on TV and none read actual newspapers.

Only one student knew the tragic story of the president’s first wife dying in a car accident with his one-year-old daughter. They were more familiar with his son Beau Biden’s death from brain cancer in 2015, but barely.

Four out of seven students thought the president was from a rich family. They knew nothing about his ties to Scranton, Pennsylvania, and were surprised to discover he was among the poorest members of Congress before he became vice president.

About half knew Biden was for marriage equality but only one knew he was for it before President Barack Obama.

These students knew little about the warmer parts of Biden’s pre-presidential story, but a lot about the more troublesome aspects.

It seems the online algorithms are still serving up negative news from the 2020 presidential campaign and they’re breaking through.

They were familiar with the president’s work on the 1994 crime bill and its impact on mass incarceration. However, none knew that the bill included the Violence Against Women Act and the federal assault weapons ban.

They didn’t know much more about Vice President Kamala Harris’ background either (except a junior from Oakland, where she is from). However, they did call her the “top cop” and point to her prosecution record as San Francisco district attorney.

Was this indicative of a wider phenomenon? Terrance Woodbury, a renowned Democratic pollster and CEO of the public opinion research firm HIT Strategies, says he sees evidence of the same phenomenon.

“In the absence of their bios, a lot of young people only know the negative info they’re being fed about the president and vice president. That’s what’s giving context to their terms in office,” Woodbury said. “We have to give them positive context on who Biden and Harris are and what they’re fighting for.”

That kind of biographi-

cal layering is tough in a world where voters often get their information from short videos and memes. A speech like the one at Morehouse, therefore, provides a critical opportunity for Biden. Despite concerns about the US’ support for Israel in its war against Hamas, the students I talked to were not ideological puritans, and they will still be interested in what the president has to say. Biden should use the occasion to draw from his life before his presidency.

Adding those biographical layers — and showing them the man he is, rather than just the politician — is how Biden can build some trust. His story might not sway everyone, but it’s a start — especially with young Americans. The president must let these students know he is not just the lesser of two evils, because he’s not evil. He’s doing a lot for people in this country and he’s doing it because of who he is and what he believes about America. If they give him a chance, he might give them something they don’t expect — something to believe in.

— CNN

Gurvinder Singh

‘Why should we vote?’ India’s jute workers blame politicians for woes

A MIRUL Laskar has been out of a job for the past three months, since the jute mill where he was employed shut operations citing losses.

The 40-year-old worked at the Delta Jute Mill in Manikpur village, about 20km (12 miles) from Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal state. Since he lost his job, he has struggled to run his household and pay for food as well as the other needs of his parents, wife and 18-month-old daughter, he told Al Jazeera.

“Such disruptions had happened three to four times last year also, when work was suspended for a few months before resuming again,” Laskar said, adding that things have not improved this year. “The financial situation is pathetic and I am trying to migrate to another state to find work to feed my family.”

Laskar is one of the 4,000 workers of the Delta Jute Mill who have been out of a job, and income, since the mill stopped operations in February.

Jute, known as the golden fibre, is one of Bengal’s largest industries. It provides income to approximately 4.8 million people, including four million farmers, and fulfils 95 percent of India’s jute demand. India is the world’s

largest jute producer and its second-largest exporter, after neighbouring Bangladesh.

The farmers, mill workers and their families also constitute a major voting bloc, with most politicians remembering them mostly only during the election season, the locals complain.

Polls in the jute belt of West Bengal state are scheduled for May 20 as part of the fifth phase of the ongoing weeks-long national election, which pits Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) against the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), a coalition of 26 parties led by the main opposition party, Rahul Gandhi’s Indian National Congress.

In a recent address in Barrackpore, a jute hub in the state, Modi blamed the opposition Trinamool Congress (TMC) — the governing party in the state — for the demise of the once-thriving industry and the misery of its workers. He reminded workers that the federal government has made it mandatory for grains to be packed in jute bags, a guaranteed boost to business.

But workers in Laskar’s area, at least, are not buying that argument and blame both the TMC and the BJP for their run-down state.

Laskar says none of the politicians had ever visited

them to inquire about their conditions after votes were cast. He says the last time a politician checked in on them was more than a decade ago when the Communist Party of India (Marxist), CPIM, was in power in the state. He plans to vote for the CPIM this time. “The management of [the] Delta Jute Mill has stopped sending [cleaning staff] to staff quarters after the work suspension. We are living in the middle of overflowing drains, with water containing human waste entering our houses during heavy rains. The putrid smell makes it difficult to even stand there for a minute.”

Asma Khatun, 25, who is married to another mill worker, told Al Jazeera as she held her daughter in her arms who, she said, frequently falls ill in the unhygienic conditions.

“Yet no politician has ever come to see us. Why should we vote?”

Local leaders claim the poor living conditions are the same in most jute mills.

“The owners of the mills pay scant regard to hygiene. Leaking drain pipes, overflowing drainages and garbage are a common scene everywhere. The management even doesn’t hesitate to snap the power lines after the mills shut operations,” Kayum Sheikh, a CPIM leader in the region, said.

Workers say none of the mainstream candidates has come to seek their vote this time, maybe fearing the workers’ anger. But the CPIM candidate in the area has promised to sort out their problems, they said.

West Bengal has the distinction of housing India’s first jute mill, started in 1855 by a British entrepreneur in the Hooghly district, who brought jute spinning machinery from Dundee in Scotland. West Bengal was chosen to be the home of the Indian jute industry due to the abundant supply of labour coupled with ample availability of coal and river connectivity. Coal was used as fuel to generate steam for the machines, and the finished products were transported via river to the ports.

The industry, currently pegged at about \$1.8bn, primarily manufactures jute bags for packing food grains by the Indian government, and some other items like jute floor covering and raw jute, which is exported to places like the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union and the Gulf nations. In the financial year ending March 2023, India exported jute items worth \$442m, as per data from the Indian Jute Mills Association (IJMA), an umbrella organi-

sation of jute mill owners. From April 2023 to February 2024, according to the latest data available, it exported goods worth \$322m. Despite its contributions to the national and the state’s economies, the jute industry is in a crisis, resulting in mills closing or operating with reduced capacity.

West Bengal has about 85 jute mills, out of which eight have been shut down on account of losses, shortage of raw material and a manpower crisis, while the rest are running at just about 60 percent capacity. The Indian government is the sole and biggest customer of the sector and procured about 3.6 million bales of jute bags (one bale is 500 bags) in 2023-24 for use by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) to pack grains.

In December, the federal government passed an order making it mandatory for all grains and 20 percent of sugar to be packed in jute bags. But mill owners told Al Jazeera that despite that, there have been few supply orders from the federal government.

A letter sent to the federal government by IJMA and accessed by Al Jazeera dated May 14 shows that there had been fewer orders of jute bags from the government in

April and no orders till mid-May. “We received [207,000] bales order in April against the usual order of [216,000] bales during the same period. While in May, the industry gets orders of [303,000] bales every year, there has been no orders, till yet,” said a source privy to the issue.

As a result, mills are working at 60 percent of their capacity and the owners have laid off workers to cut back on costs.

This is in addition to other challenges in the sector in the last few years, including a cyclone in 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic, both of which brought business to a standstill. The sector had barely started to recover, but output was once again hit in 2022 on account of poor rains. There is also “stiff competition” from Bangladesh with the mills there offering jute products at low prices on the back of high government subsidies, Rishav Kajaria, the deputy chairman of the IJMA, told Al Jazeera laying out the industry’s woes.

The crisis in the mills has badly affected the workers, who are dependent on them for livelihood.

As per the latest agreement between mill workers and owners signed earlier this year in January, newly recruited permanent workers

are entitled to 485 rupees (\$5.82) per day and liable for statutory benefits like provident fund, gratuity and staff quarters while contractual workers get 450 rupees (\$5.40) and no benefits.

But permanent workers complain that their statutory benefits have been pending for a long time.

“Our main demand is the clearance of provident fund and gratuities that has been pending for the past several years. Several workers have died waiting for it but the mill owners simply refuse to pay citing financial losses. Workers who raise their voices against the dues are also threatened with dire consequences like forcing them out of staff quarters and snapping their power lines. It is a complete exploitation,” said Rakesh Jaiswal, secretary of the West Bengal Jute Permanent Workers Union.

Mill owners prefer hiring contractors over full-time workers to keep their costs low. As a result, at least 60 percent of the workforce today is made up of contract workers, he added.

Biswajit Mukherjee, a lawyer who has been fighting cases of the retired jute mill workers for outstanding gratuities in various labour courts and the Calcutta High Court, refuses to believe that mills are running in losses.

“It is difficult for any

business to run at a loss for a long time. It is actually a ploy to evade income tax and other duties,” he said.

As per Mukherjee’s math, mill owners owe 4 billion rupees (\$47.9m) in gratuity, of which only 600 million rupees (\$7.2m) have been paid. But they mostly manage to evade the law as they have appointed proxies on the companies’ boards, he said.

The jute workers whom Al Jazeera spoke with said they were fed up with these tactics.

Mohasin Laskar, 62, a retired worker of the Delta Jute Mill, told Al Jazeera that this time he will vote for the CPIM candidate.

“The situation was not so bad during the Left rule as the local administration used to come for cleaning, even after the suspension of work. We at least had a hygienic place to live in. But things have become horrible now. We would like to again cast a vote in favour of the Left candidate this time,” he said.

But with the TMC’s majority in the state and the BJP trying hard to increase its vote share, did the CPIM candidate even stand a chance, Al Jazeera asked Laskar. He smiled and said, “You don’t know when the fortune can turn in politics. Let’s wait and watch.”

— Al Jazeera



PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 258 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 258.34 points, a negative change of 0.34 per cent, closing at 75,084.00 points against 75,342.35 points the previous trading day.

A total of 375,359,048 shares valuing Rs 16.301 billion were traded during the day as compared to 496,699,517 shares valuing Rs 17.631 billion on the last day.

Some 380 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 137 of them recorded gains and 223 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 20 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hum Network with 30,918,735 shares at Rs10.90 per share,

K-Electric Limited with 18,317,678 shares at Rs 6.67 per share and Dewan Motors with 17,860,403 shares at Rs 39.73 per share.

Ismail Industries Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 69.93 per share price closing at Rs 1,618.85, whereas the runner-up was Hallmark Company Limited with Rs 41.33 increase to close at Rs 593.44.

Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 97.78 per share closing at Rs 1,429.19, followed by Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs 34.55 decline to close at Rs 426.18.

Rupee loses 9 paise against dollar: Pakistani Rupee on Monday lost 09 paise against US dollar in the interbank trading and

closed at Rs 278.29 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.20.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.6 and Rs 280.2 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 75 paise to close at Rs 302.59 against the last day's closing of Rs 301.84, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.78, whereas decrease of Rs1.35 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 353.29 as compared to the last closing of Rs351.94.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 02

paise each to close at Rs 75.76 and Rs 74.20 respectively.

Gold rates up by Rs2,300 per tola to Rs250,400: The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 2,300 and was sold at Rs 250,400 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 248,100 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 1,972 to Rs 214,678 from Rs 212,706 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 196,788 from Rs 194,980, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant Rs2,850 and Rs2,443.41, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$25 to \$2,439 from \$2,414, the association reported.



LAHORE: Chairman LGES Major Gen. Saeed Ahmad Nagra and President & CEO BOP Zafar Masud exchanging documents after signing MoU during a ceremony at LGES Secretariat.

Rice valued \$3.282 billion exported

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rice exports from the country during the first 10 months of the current financial year grew by 80.13 per cent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-April, 2023-24, over 5.097 million metric tons of rice worth \$3.282 billion were exported as compared to the exports of 3.270 million metric tons valued at \$1.822 million of the same period of last year, according to the data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

The exports of Basmati Rice grew by 34.01 per cent as 612,086 metric tons of Basmati Rice worth \$699.208 million were exported as compared to the exports of 486,998 metric tons valued at \$521.751 million of the same period last year, it added.

Meanwhile, over 4.474 million metric tons of rice of other varieties worth \$2.583 billion were also exported in last 10 months as against the exports of 2.783 million metric tons valued at \$1.300 billion of the same period of last year, the data revealed.

The exports of other rice witnessed about 98.64 per cent growth during the period under review as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year.

In the last 10 months, the exports of the food group witnessed about 45.61 per cent growth as food commodities valued at \$6.228 billion were exported as against the exports of \$4.277 billion in the same period of the last year, it added.

On the other hand, the imports of food goods into the country during the period under review went down by 12.18 per cent as it was recorded at \$6.817 bil-

Forging pathways to inclusivity: BOP, LGISE unite for special education empowerment

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Bank of Punjab (BOP) remains dedicated to empowering communities and promoting inclusivity in Pakistan. In line with this commitment, BOP has signed an MoU with the Lahore Garrison Institute for Special Education (LGISE) to provide special support for the next three years. This support will allocate funds annually for the education & rehabilitation of special students at LGISE.

The ceremony took place at the Lahore Garrison Education System (LGES) Secretariat in Lahore. Attendees included Major Gen. Saeed Ahmad Nagra (Chairman LGES), Zafar Masud (President & CEO - BOP), Raza Bashir (Chief of Staff & Strategy), Brig. Javed Shahid (Secretary LGES), Mrs. Zaib-un-Nisa (Principal - LGISE), and other senior officials from both organizations.

Major Gen. Saeed Ahmad Nagra expressed his gratitude, stating, "LGISE is a pioneering institution committed to delivering quality education to children with special needs. Our mission is to foster an inclusive and supportive environment, empowering students through education and therapeutic interventions to become independent contributors to society. The Bank of Punjab's invaluable support enhances our services and infrastructure and signifies a shared commitment to inclusive education. Together, we aim to break barriers and create opportunities, ensuring every child, regardless of ability, receives the education they deserve."

Addressing the gathering, Zafar Masud highlighted, "The Bank of Punjab is steadfastly committed to community empowerment. Today marks a moment of pride as we extend our sup-

port to a venture that surpasses traditional banking boundaries. BOP is committed to bolstering LGISE's efforts in enhancing accessibility to special education."

He continued, "Our mission aligns deeply with this endeavor - fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. LGISE has been a leader in advocating for the education and welfare of children with special abilities. We take great pride in collaborating with an organization that echoes our unwavering commitment to driving positive change."

The collaboration between The Bank of Punjab and LGISE underscores BOP's commitment to social betterment and the belief that education is a fundamental right. This partnership aims to create a lasting impact in education, resonating with BOP's motto of "Har Fard Ka Khayal."

CCP conducts hearing in poultry cartelization case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) conducted a hearing in the poultry cartelization case, wherein the Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA) presented its defence against allegations of price fixing. This hearing was fixed after show cause notices were issued to PPA

and eight other entities for cartelization.

The CCP's investigation revealed prima facie collusion and price fixing of day-old broiler chicks by a suspected cartel of eight hatcheries from 2019 to June 2021. These entities include Hitech Group, Islamabad Group of Companies, Olympia Group, Jadeed Group, Supreme Farms (Season's Foods), Big Bird Group, and Sabirs' Group. The enquiry was initiated following a surge in prices and complaints from broiler farmers through the

Pakistan Citizens Portal, alleging cartelization in the sector. Subsequently, search and inspections were conducted at the premises of PPA and forensic analysis of the evidence uncovered that an official of one of the member firms played a central role in the cartel by coordinating mutually agreed prices of day-old broiler chicks.

These rates were communicated daily to other hatcheries and PPA through SMS and WhatsApp, with pricing discussions also conducted through these mediums.

Lucky Core Industries and Pfizer Pakistan sign agreements

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Lucky Core Industries Limited (LCI) is pleased to announce that the Company executed Asset Purchase Agreements with Pfizer Pakistan Limited and Pfizer Inc., a leading global pharmaceutical group, for the acquisition of certain assets.

The assets being acquired by LCI through this transaction include a manufacturing facility owned by Pfizer Pakistan Limited located in Karachi, along with a portfolio of well-established pharmaceutical brands, namely Ansaïd, Ponstan, Ponstan Forte, Basoquin, Deltacortril, Lysovit, Corex-D and Mycitracin, as well as trademarks associated with the said pharmaceutical products (either through an

outright assignment of trademarks or a perpetual license to use the relevant trademarks). These leading brands are primary care products in the therapeutic areas including, pain, skin infections, and vitamin deficiencies, and have strong potential for growth in the market.

Chief Executive LCI, Asif Joona, commented: "This acquisition marks a significant milestone in our journey towards accelerating growth of our Pharmaceuticals business. By adding these established brands to our portfolio, we will further enrich the lives of those around us by continuing to deliver quality medicines and healthcare products, while expanding our manufacturing base, diversifying our product offerings, and implement-

ing synergies to strengthen our position in the market-place."

The transaction is now set to move ahead, subject to requisite approvals and satisfaction of conditions in the Asset Purchase Agreements. We look forward to completing the transaction and integrating these assets into our operations, further solidifying our position as a leading player in the market.

Lucky Core Industries Limited is a leading Pakistan-based manufacturing and trading company consisting of diverse businesses: Polyester, Soda Ash, Chemicals, Agri Sciences, Pharmaceuticals, and Animal Health. Through these businesses, the Company manufactures and trades in a wide range of products, including poly-

ester staple fibre (PSF), soda ash, general and specialty chemicals, pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, animal health products, and agricultural products (including chemicals, field crop seeds, vegetable seeds, and more). In the nutrition segment, the Company's associated company, NutriCo Moringa (Private) Limited locally manufactures, imports, markets, and distributes Moringa Milk Industry Co. Ltd, Japan products in Pakistan.

Lucky Core Industries Limited is part of the Yunus Brothers Group (YBG), one of the fastest-growing and most progressive Pakistani conglomerates with a wide portfolio of businesses, including, but not limited to: cement, textiles, power generation, and commodity trading.

Pakistan earns \$2.283 billion from IT services' export in nine months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$2.283 billion by providing different Information Technology (IT) services to various countries during the first nine months of the current fiscal year 2023-24.

This shows a growth of 17.40 per cent as compared with the US \$1.944 billion earned through the provision of services during the corresponding months of the last fiscal year 2022-23, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During the months under review, the export of computer services grew by

19.99 per cent as it surged from US \$1.567 billion last year to US \$1.880 billion during July-March 2023-24.

Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 7.72 per cent, from US\$ 572.941 million to US\$ 617.183 million this year while the export of hardware consultancy services also surged by 22.07 per cent, from US\$ 4.091 million to US\$ 4.994 million.

The export of repair and maintenance services however decreased by 46.41 per cent from US \$2.713 mil-

lion to US \$1.4564 billion whereas the export and imports of computer software services surged by 3.64 per cent, from \$445.576 million to \$461.795 million.

Meanwhile, the export of information services during the months under review witnessed an increase of 88.21 per cent from US \$3.900 million to US \$7.340 million.

Among the information services, the exports of news agency services surged by 177.31 per cent, from US \$2.287 million to US \$6.342 million whereas

the exports of information-related services decreased by 38.13 per cent, from US \$1.613 million to US \$0.998 million.

The export of telecommunication services increased by 5.76 per cent as these went up from US \$373.310 million to US \$394.800 million, the data revealed.

Among the telecommunication services, the export of call centres services increased by 17.93 per cent during the months as its exports increased from US \$162.471 million to US \$191.599 million.

China property plan: Markets rise as traders cheered

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Equities rose Monday, extending a rally in New York that saw the Dow close at a record high, with sentiment boosted by China's plan to support its struggling property sector and hopes for a US interest rate cut. The announcement out of Beijing on Friday provided a much-needed boost to the country's ailing developers, many of whom are drowning in a sea of debt.

The multibillion-dollar plan -- as well as an easing of deposit requirements for buyers -- fuelled optimism for the outlook on the world's number-two economy, which has been hobbled by the property crisis.

While analysts have warned the package of proposals was still too small to solve the problem and might not go far enough, traders continued to buy up risk assets.

"We believe the policy package is just the beginning of the central government's efforts to turn the sector around," said Nomura Holdings analysts.

"We believe the swift introduction of the policy package with arguably limited implementation details also implies the central government's increasing urgency to alleviate the downward spiral of the property sector."

Hong Kong extended its recent gains, though some Chinese developers fell on profit-taking after soaring

in the previous session. Shanghai, Tokyo, Sydney, Seoul, Mumbai, Wellington, Taipei, Manila and Jakarta also advanced.

Bangkok edged slightly higher as data showed the Thai economy grew more than expected in the first quarter but at a slower pace than the previous three months. London, Paris and Frankfurt also rose.

The positive start to the week came after the Dow ended above 40,000 for the first time on Friday, while the S&P 500 also rose.

Investors are now looking forward to the release Wednesday of minutes from the Federal Reserve's May policy decision, hoping for some insight into the thinking of decision-makers.

The release comes after data last week showed inflation easing in April, of reviving hopes the central bank would cut rates twice this year. That came after inflation rising more than expected in the previous three months.

Analysts forecast two reductions before January, with more over the next two years.

However, Fed governor Michelle Bowman said she thought borrowing costs should remain elevated in order to make sure officials have prices under control, and warned she would support another hike if data came in above estimates.

"My baseline outlook continues to be that inflation will decline further with the policy rate held steady, but I still see a number of upside inflation risks that affect my outlook," she said. "There is also the risk that the loosening in financial conditions since late last year and additional fiscal stimulus could add momentum to demand, stalling any further progress or even causing inflation to reaccelerate."

"While the current stance of monetary policy appears to be at a restrictive level, I remain willing to raise the target range for the federal funds rate at a future meeting should the incoming data indicate that progress on inflation has stalled or reversed."

The prospect of US interest rates coming down boosted gold prices to another record of \$2,440.59 -- topping its previous all-time high seen last month -- as lower borrowing costs make the precious metal more attractive.

The gains have also been fuelled by its safe-haven status after news that Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian had been killed in a helicopter crash.

Copper also hit a record above \$11,000 on optimism over the outlook for the global economy thanks to the expected easing of borrowing costs.

Tokyo stocks end higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks ended higher on Monday, as investors cheered the US Dow Jones index's rise above 40,000 last week while also digesting falls in United States tech shares.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 0.73 percent, or 282.30 points, to end at 39,069.68, while the broader Topix index rose 0.82 percent, or 22.42 points, to 2,768.04.

The dollar fetched 155.67 yen, against 155.71 yen on Friday in New York.

In early trade, the Tokyo market trended lower, with investors spooked by falls of Wall Street tech shares sparked by concerns over rate hikes.

But eventually, the Dow's historic surge past 40,000 "helped boost the confidence of investors", IwaiCosmo Securities said.

This, combined with rising futures, "helped push (the Nikkei) over 39,000 during trading hours for the first time in about a month", it said.

Still, Tokyo investors are expected to keep their hands largely out of the market until Wednesday, when US semiconductor firm Nvidia releases its earnings.

Energy developer Inpex soared 4.20 percent to 2,456 yen, Tokyo Electron added 0.69 percent to 36,340 yen, and heavily weighted Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing advanced 0.85 percent to 41,360 yen.

POL import bill decreased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall petroleum group decreased by 1.53 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The total imports of the petroleum group during July-April (2023-24) stood at \$13,761.071 million, as against the imports of \$13,974.609 million during the same period of last year, according to PBS data.

Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 14.09 percent, from \$6,149.116 million last year to \$5,283.001 million during the time period under review.

However, the imports of petroleum crude increased by 10.40 percent, from \$4,137.725 million to \$4,567.954; natural gas liquefied by 4.56 percent, from \$3,110.837 to \$3,252.812 whereas the imports of petroleum gas liquefied went up by 13.96 percent and reached to \$657.132 million as compared to \$576.619 last year.

The imports of all other petroleum group products decreased by 45 percent and went down to \$0.172 million from \$0.312 million.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports wit-

nessed an increase of 88.09 percent during the month of April 2024 as compared to the same months of last year.

The petroleum imports during April 2024 were recorded as \$1,676.755 million against the imports of \$891.468 million during April 2023.

On a month-on-month basis, the petroleum imports into the country also increased by 11.34 percent during April 2024, as compared to the imports of \$1,506.004 million in March 2024, said the data.

It is pertinent to mention here that the overall trade deficit during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year was recorded at \$19.514 billion against the deficit of \$23.535 billion last year, showing a decline of 17.09 percent.

According to PBS data, overall exports from the country witnessed an increase of 9.10 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The exports during July-April (2023-24) were recorded at \$25.280 billion against the exports of \$23.171 billion.

On the other hand, imports into the country declined by 4.09 percent to \$44.794 billion this year against the imports of \$46.706 billion last year.

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COURT NOTICES

BUNER

IN the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I / Alaqi Qazi Buner at Daggar, Suit No 367/1. Institution 12/4/ 2023. Date of hearing, 21/5/2024. Lal Said VS Amer Jawal etc. Notice to No 20. Dawood Khan s/o Allah Dad resident of Rega tehsel Gagra district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or

through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.00 am dated 21/5/24 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

SWABI

In the Court of Irum Bashir Civil Judge V, Swabi. Suit No. 94/1 Institution 25-03-2024 Next Hearing Date: 21-05-2024 Case title: Shreen Din Vs Sultan Din Notice to (2) Islam Din, (3) Israr Din Sons of Athar Din R/o Jamal Abad Tehsil & District Swabi. . In the above case titled the service of above defendant (s) is not possible through ordinary means, therefore , you defendant (s) is / are informed through this publication that on 21-05-2024 at 8.30 AM. You has / have to appear before this court either personally or through attorney or through counsel to pursue the suit noted above, otherwise, Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of court.

Vacancy Required

Chief required for
Ariana Star Ltd.
Company #12738697
Suitable Candidates can apply
Address:
302-304 High street,
Slough, Berkshire, SL11NB
Email:
mk.shirzad94@yahoo.com
ariana-star@outlook.com

CHANGE OF NAME

I AsadUllah Parvez s/o Muhammad Parvez R/o nothia qadeem mohallah garhi musa khari Peshawar cantt do hereby solemnly affirms and declare as under. 1. That I was registered with FBISE at SSC level under registration no 0844531015 and passed the SSC annual examination 2008 under roll no 716278. 2. Now I have decided to change my name and kindly correct my father's name spellings that is Asad Ullah s/o mohammad parvez.3. It is therefore requested that kindly use my name as Asad ullah s/o mohammad parvez. in all Educational institutions, Government and non-government departments. Asad Ullah s/o Mohammad Parvez



In brief

Pakistan downs Bhutan in ATF 12
ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Tennis team started their campaign with a resounding victory against Bhutan in the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) 12 & under Team Competition Regional Qualifying event of South Asia at Kathmandu, Nepal. Pakistani beat Bhutan by 3-0 in the tournament, in the first singles Rashid Ali Bacahni beat Dudu Tenzin Dudu bu 6-0-6-0, said a press release. In the second singles Muhammad Shayan Afridi beat Tshering Pelthop by 6-6-0. In the Doubles Muhammad Shayan Afridi, Junaid Khan beat Dudu Tenzin Dudu, Tshering Mipham by 6-1,6-0. The details of Group A and B are as follows, Group A: India, Bangladesh, Maldives; Group B: Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka.

Broad named in commentary panel
LONDON (Agencies): Former England pacer Stuart Broad was named in the star-studded commentary panel for the upcoming four-match T20I series between Pakistan and England, scheduled to commence on May 22. Besides Broad, the commentary panel features former England cricketers including Nasser Hussain, Michael Atherton, Isa Guha, Ebony Rainford-Brent, Mark Butcher, Eoin Morgan and Lydia Greenway. For the unversed, Stuart Broad bid farewell to international cricket in August last year after the fifth Ashes Test at The Oval. Since then, the former pacer has been a frequent member of the Sky Sports commentary panel and also served as an analyst in last year's SA20. Besides the T20I series between Pakistan and England, Stuart Broad will also commentate when his former teammate James Anderson plays his final Test against West Indies at The Lord's in June. The four-match T20I series will serve as a warm-up for last edition's finalists Pakistan and England for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to take place in the United States of America (USA) and the West Indies.

Liverpool appoint Slot as manager
L O N D O N (A g e n c i e s) : Feyenoord boss Arne Slot has been confirmed as Liverpool's new manager. The Reds agreed a compensation deal worth £9.4m with the Dutch club in April after the 45-year-old was identified as the man to succeed Jurgen Klopp at Anfield. Klopp, who had been in charge of Liverpool since October 2015, left the club following their season-finale win against Wolves on Sunday. After the game, the 56-year-old German called on Liverpool fans to get behind their new boss, chanting "Arne Slot, na na na na na". Slot's three-year contract at Liverpool will officially start on 1 June, subject to a work permit. The Dutchman led Feyenoord to the 2022-23 Eredivisie title, while this season they have won the Dutch Cup and finished second in the league. It is believed that the attacking style of Slot's teams, his personality and his ability to develop players were key factors in making him Liverpool's top choice for the job. Slot took over as Feyenoord manager in 2021 and confirmed his interest in managing in the Premier League when he was linked with Tottenham in 2023.

Babar on brink of historic milestones in T20I cricket

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's captain, Babar Azam, is poised to achieve several significant milestones in T20I cricket as he prepares for upcoming matches against England. With his impressive track record, Babar is set to add more accolades to his name, cementing his position as one of the greatest batsmen in the format. Firstly, Babar needs just 45 runs to become the first Pakistani player to reach 4000 runs in T20I cricket, surpassing the current top run-scorer for Pakistan. This feat would demonstrate his exceptional skill and consistency, as he cur-

rently sits third among the highest run-scorers in T20I cricket with 3955 runs, behind only Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, as quoted by cricketpakistan.com.pk. To surpass Virat Kohli's total runs in T20Is, Babar needs only 82 more runs. The current standings are: Virat Kohli: 4037 runs (109 innings), Rohit Sharma: 3974 runs (143 innings), Babar Azam: 3955 runs (110 innings). Furthermore, with 48 more runs, Babar will become the only captain to score 2500 T20I runs, distinguishing him as a top player and a leader who consistently contributes to

his team's success. It's worth noting that Babar recently created a world record during the T20I series against Ireland, becoming the most successful T20I captain with 45 wins, eclipsing the record held by Brian Masaba of Uganda, who had 44 wins as captain. As Babar continues to break records and achieve milestones, he solidifies his position as one of the greatest cricketers of all time. The Pakistan team would play the four-game T20I series against England, on May 22 (Wednesday) at Headingley Cricket Ground in Leeds.

National football team training camp kicks off in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan national football team Monday has started an intensive training camp in Islamabad as the national side gears up for the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qualifiers Round 2 home match against Saudi Arabia on June 6 in Islamabad followed by an away match in Tajikistan on June 11. Head coach Stephen Constantine was leading the team's efforts, focusing on refining their skills and tactics for the encounter

against one of the football powerhouses (Saudi Arabia), said a press release. Goalkeeping coaches Rogerio Ramos and Noman Ibrahim have been dedicating their efforts to the goalkeepers, while fitness coach Claudio Altieri was ensuring the peak performance in preparation for the crucial match. The preliminary squad of Pakistan includes-Goalkeepers: Hassan Ali and Tanveer; Defenders: Haseeb Khan, Mamoon

Moosa Khan, Huzaifa, Waqar Ihtisham, Abdul Rehman, Umar Hayat, Muhammad Adeel, Muhammad Saddam and Zain ul Abideen; Midfielders: Yasir Arafat, Alamgir Ghazi, Ali Uzair, Rajab Ali, Moin Ali, Junaid Ahmed and Fahim; Forwards: Adeel Younas, Shayak Dost, Ali Zafar and Fareedullah. The names of diaspora players who would join the national training camp later will be included in the final squad.

Judo competition talent hunt kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Comsats University Islamabad organized the Prime Minister Provincial League Talent Hunt Judo Competition for men here at the Rodham Hall of the Pakistan Sports Complex on Monday. It saw participants from Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Gilgit, Skardu, and Islamabad featuring in the extravaganza. The event's opening ceremony took place and was graced by Prof. Dr. Sajjad Ahmed Madni, Registrar Comsats University, as chief guest. In his address, Prof. Dr. Madni commended the participants for their enthusiasm and skill. He also lauded the management of the HEC Sports Division and the Ministry of Youth

Affairs for their remarkable initiative in launching this Talent Hunt program, which offers athletes a valuable platform to showcase their abilities at the national level. "The Talent Hunt program is a significant step towards nurturing and promoting sports talent across Pakistan," he said. "It provides our young athletes with the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and compete at higher levels, fostering a culture of sportsmanship and excellence," he added. Muhammad Mushtaq, Manager Sports at Comsats University Islamabad, provided a comprehensive briefing to the participants about the initiative. He highlighted the objectives

of the Talent Hunt program and emphasized its role in discovering and honing the skills of young judo athletes from diverse regions. The Talent Hunt Judo Competition promises to be a thrilling event, bringing together promising athletes from various provinces, allowing them to compete and gain exposure on a significant platform. This initiative reflects Prime Minister's commitment to promoting sports and supporting youth development across Pakistan. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) and COMSATS University Islamabad's also offers a diverse range of programs and actively supports sports and extracurricular activities.

England thrilled by 'Fear Factor' of returning Archer



LONDON (AFP): England are eager to unleash Jofra Archer's "fear factor" against Pakistan as the paceman prepares to return from a long injury lay-off ahead of next month's T20 World Cup, says team-mate Sam Curran. Injuries have blighted Archer's international career and he has not played top-level cricket for 14 months due to back and elbow issues. He has managed just 15 Twenty20 appearances for England since making his international debut five years ago but is in the squad for their four-match T20 series against Pakistan, starting this week, and the World Cup. The 29-year-old has been building up his fitness by playing club cricket in Barbados and last week took a wicket for Sussex's second XI.

"It's incredibly exciting to have a player of his quality," all-rounder Curran said on Monday. "I'm sure England fans and players are extremely buzzed to have him back. "He's obviously got that extra pace and fear factor we can bring to opposition. We all hope his injuries are behind him now. "Jof's had a really tough couple of years -- we all hope he can come back and do what he does for England and bring the A game that we know he's got." England, who are reigning T20 world champions, are desperate to find form ahead of the tournament in the West Indies and the United States after a dismal 50-over World Cup defence in India last year. Curran is one of eight squad members who returned early from the

Indian Premier League ahead of the Pakistan series. The players had little time together before the defence of their 50-over title. "The messaging from (captain) Jos (Buttler) and the coaching staff was they wanted to get the group back together and we probably didn't have that last time," said Curran. "We've been apart for a while so these games are going to be really crucial. We want to be playing as a team and get used to our roles. "There's a lot of buzz around the group, it seems like we're back to our energy and it seems like the boys are really fizzed about this trophy hopefully coming back." The first game of the four-match T20 series against Pakistan takes place at Headingley on Wednesday.



HEADINGLEY: Liam Livingstone and Sam Curran stretch off ahead of training.

Pakistan gear up for World Cup Qualifiers match

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan national football team Monday has started an intensive training camp in Islamabad as the national side gears up for the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qualifiers Round 2 home match against Saudi Arabia on June 6 in Islamabad followed by an away match in Tajikistan on June 11. Head coach Stephen Constantine was leading the team's efforts, focusing on refining their skills and tactics for the encounter against one of the football powerhouses (Saudi Arabia), said a press release. Goalkeeping coaches Rogerio Ramos and Noman Ibrahim have been dedicating their efforts to the goalkeepers, while fitness coach Claudio Altieri was ensuring the peak performance in preparation for the crucial match. The preliminary squad of Pakistan includes-Goalkeepers: Hassan Ali and Tanveer; Defenders: Haseeb Khan, Mamoon Moosa Khan, Huzaifa, Waqar Ihtisham, Abdul Rehman, Umar Hayat, Muhammad Adeel, Muhammad Saddam and Zain ul Abideen; Midfielders: Yasir Arafat, Alamgir Ghazi, Ali Uzair, Rajab Ali, Moin Ali, Junaid Ahmed and Fahim; Forwards: Adeel Younas, Shayak Dost, Ali Zafar and Fareedullah. The names of diaspora players who would join the national training camp later will be included in the final squad.

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PBBF suspend KBBA officials

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) General Council has suspended the President of Karachi Basketball Association (KBBA) and other officials for violation and misconduct. PBBF General Council suspended Ghulam Muhammad Khan, President KBBA and other officials in a decisive move to uphold integrity and discipline within its ranks, said a press release. These decisions were taken during the general council meeting of the Pakistan Basketball Federation, presided by PBBF President Brig. (R) Iftikhar Mansoor here at local hotel and was attended by all stakeholders. Ghulam, who also attended the meeting accepted his mistakes, tendered an apology, and recommended Senior Vice President Muhammad Yaqoob as his interim successor. Amidst this central decision, the PBBF council also ratified the establishment of a Scrutiny Committee. This body is tasked with assessing the clubs in Karachi, aiming to pave the way for transparent elections within the next 90 days for KBBA, followed by elections for the Sindh Basketball Association. Further disciplinary actions were imposed on two KBBA officials Zafar Iqbal and Zain Ul Abideen, who faced a three-year ban and a fine for severe misconduct and inappropriate behavior during the Divisional Basketball Championship Grade B in Quetta. Usman Paracha from Khanewal was banned for falsely representing PBBF and misconduct, with his case being referred to the Multan Division Basketball Association for further proceedings.

Aussie volleyball team to tour Pakistan on May 26

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a historic move, the Australian volleyball team would arrive in Pakistan on May 26 to play a three-match series against the national team. According to Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob, Chairman of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF), this landmark event was made possible after the Australian Volleyball Federation (AVF) expressed its desire to play

a series of matches with Pakistan, and all arrangements have been finalized. The Australian team will play matches against the national team on May 28, 29, and 30 in Islamabad. This marks the first time an Australian volleyball team has visited Pakistan, and excitement is building for the highly anticipated series, he said. Pakistan's national team has been in top form, recently after winning the title and remaining unbeat-

en in the Central Asian Volleyball League. Chaudhry Yaqoob expressed optimism that Pakistan would perform brilliantly against the strong Australian team, hoping to continue their winning streak. This historic series is a significant milestone for volleyball in Pakistan, and fans are eagerly looking forward to witnessing top-class competition between the two nations.

Kane to face old club Spurs for first time in Seoul

SEOUL (AFP): England captain Harry Kane will face his old club Tottenham Hotspur and former strike partner Son Heung-min for the first time in August after Spurs announced a pre-season fixture against Bayern Munich in Seoul. Tottenham had already scheduled a match against Vissel Kobe in Japan on July 27 and have now added the clash with Bayern on August 3 at the Seoul World Cup Stadium. "We are delighted to announce that our men's first team will travel to South Korea as part of its pre-season tour of Asia this summer," said Tottenham in a statement on Monday. It will be the Premier League club's fourth visit to South Korea where they enjoy massive popularity thanks to national hero Son. On their most recent trip

in 2022, large crowds turned out just to watch Tottenham train, with Kane also highly popular. Kane and Son combined for a Premier League-record 47 goals in eight seasons together at Spurs. "It is fantastic to have the opportunity to engage with our huge fan base in the country," said Tottenham executive director Donna-Maria Cullen. "I know Sonny in particular can't wait to play again in front of his home fans, and it will be exciting for him to return while representing us as club captain." Bayern Munich will also field a South Korea star, defender Kim Min-jae, and a second former Tottenham player in defender Eric Dier. Son and Spurs wrapped up their Premier League campaign with a 3-0 win against relegated Sheffield United

on Sunday that secured fifth place in the table. Kane scored 44 goals in his first season at Bayern as they finished third in the Bundesliga and failed to win a trophy after being knocked out of the Champions League in the semi-finals by Real Madrid. He missed Bayern's final league match on Saturday, a 4-2 defeat at Hoffenheim, with a back injury. Spurs and Bayern will also play a K-League 'All-Star' XI in South Korea, with dates and venues to be announced. Tottenham, managed by Ange Postecoglou, will play a post-season exhibition match against Newcastle United in Melbourne on Wednesday. The 2024-25 Premier League season begins on Saturday, August 17, with the Bundesliga kicking off six days later.

Pep Guardiola casts doubt over long-term Manchester City future



M A N C H E S T E R (Agencies): Pep Guardiola cast doubt over his long-term future at Manchester City on Sunday after winning a historic fourth straight Premier League title, admitting it is difficult to find motivation after so much sustained success. City's 3-1 victory against West Ham sealed a sixth top-flight title in seven seasons under the Catalan, who has taken the club to extraordinary new levels since he arrived in 2016. His tally is exceeded only by Alex Ferguson, who won 13 Premier League titles during his long reign at Manchester United. In 2019 City became the first club to win the domestic treble of Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup in the same season and last year they emulated Manchester United's class of 1999 in winning the treble of Premier League, FA Cup and Champions

League, which they lifted for the first time. Manchester City are now the first side in English top-flight history to win four titles in a row — surpassing the achievements of the great Liverpool and Manchester United teams from previous eras. And next week they will attempt to become the first English side to win back-to-back domestic doubles when they take on United at Wembley in the FA Cup final. Former Barcelona and Bayern Munich manager Pep Guardiola, 53, has a contract at the Etihad until the end of next season but his future after that is unclear. "The reality is I'm closer to leaving than to staying," Guardiola told Sky Sports. "It's eight years, will be nine. "Right now my feeling is I want to stay next season because I have to see the players as well (to see) if

they follow me, they follow us, for many reasons. I will stay and during the season we will talk when calm." Asked at his post-match press conference whether he felt as though he had "completed English football" and what he felt was left to achieve, Guardiola shrugged his shoulders and said: "I had that feeling last season. "When we won in Istanbul (in the Champions League final) I said, 'It's over, what am I doing here? It's over, there's nothing left'. "But I have a contract, I'm here and still enjoying. Some of the moments I'm a bit tired but some of the moments I love, and after I said 'OK, we are here'. "We start winning games, playing good, different players, new players and I start to think about 'No one has done four in a row, why don't we try?' And now I feel 'It's done, so what next?' I don't know right now." He added: "Next season, right now, I'm not able to know exactly what will be the motivation to do it because it's difficult sometimes to find it when everything is done." Pep Guardiola said for now he was enjoying banking in the glow of another Premier League triumph. "When I moved here if someone had said I would win six leagues in seven seasons I would say you're insane — no way," he said.



In brief

Police arrest three robbers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Potohar Division Police arrested three robbers and bike lifters and recovered six stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman here on Monday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Wah Cantt Police Station managed to net two bike lifters and robbers namely Akash alias Kashi and Imran and recovered three stolen motorcycles, and other items from their possession. In another raid, Race Course police arrested a bike lifter namely Aamir on recovery of three stolen motorcycles. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are underway. Superintendent of Police, Potohar, Nasir Nawaz said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

AIOU announces results

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the results of the Matric and Intermediate programs offered in the autumn semester of 2023. According to the AIOU, the results have been uploaded on the Content Management System (CMS) portal, and provisional result cards will be dispatched to successful candidates soon. To ensure compliance with the academic calendar, Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, directed the examination department to announce the results of all academic programs as per the calendar. On the special instructions of the Vice Chancellor, all academic matters related to students have been streamlined. Admissions, workshops, and examinations are conducted on time, and results are being declared as per the annual calendar.

6 stolen bikes recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a significant crackdown on street crime, the police on Monday had arrested three members of a gang and seized six stolen motorcycles from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Wah Cantt police apprehended Akash alias Kashi and Imran, who were involved in motorcycle theft. The accused were already wanted in cases related to robbery and motorcycle theft. Similarly, Race Course police arrested Amir for his involvement in motorcycle theft and recovered three stolen motorcycles from him. SP Potohar assured that all legal procedures will be followed to ensure that the accused face appropriate punishment. He emphasized that the protection of citizens' lives and property is the top priority for the police, and all available resource is being utilized in this regard.

Missing children reunited

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a heartwarming development, Police have found two missing children and reunited with their mother on Monday. Police immediately responded to the report of Abdullah Qamar and Abdul Rahman Qamar who were went missing from Sadiqabad. According to police spokesperson, Sadiqabad police station registered a case and started searching for the children and using all means including modern technology and human intelligence, found the missing children from Kohala and handed them over to their mother safely. The mother and uncle of the missing children appreciated the efforts of the Rawalpindi police for tracing the children.

Australian Defence Chief calls on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Defence Forces Australia, General Angus J. Campbell is on official visit to Pakistan for 13th Round of Pakistan - Australia, Defence and Security Talks and 10th Round of 1.5 Track Security Dialogue, called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza here at Joint Staff Headquarters on Monday.

During the meeting, the

two senior military leaders engaged in comprehensive discussions on defence and security cooperation, regional dynamics, and global security challenges, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Both sides reiterated the resolve to further strengthen and enhance security and defence cooperation between the two countries. The Australian digni-

ties remained appreciative of the high professional standards of Pakistan Armed Forces, their achievements in fight against terrorism and continued efforts for regional peace and stability.

Earlier upon arrival at Joint Staff Headquarters, General Angus J. Campbell, was presented "Guard of Honour" by a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent.

Raisi was 'vibrant voice for Kashmir, Palestine'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed expressed deep grief and sorrow on Monday over the tragic death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in a helicopter crash.

The Senator hailed President Raisi as a "vibrant voice for Kashmir and Palestine" and termed his death as an irreplace-

able loss.

Speaking to a private news channel, Senator Hussain stated that he had a close friendship with President Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, whom he met at a recent conference on Palestine in Tehran.

He praised the late president and foreign minister

for their support for Pakistan and their respect for the country's national poet, Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal.

Senator Hussain also highlighted President Raisi's achievements, particularly the normalization of ties with Saudi Arabia, and acknowledged his efforts as a true companion of Pakistan.

Edu minister for need for climate education

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui while addressing a session on Climate Education at Education World Forum (EWF) 2024 being held at London, emphasized the urgent need for climate education in the country.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that Pakistan, the world's 5th largest nation by population with 252 million people, facing significant educational challenges, said a press release received here on Monday. He said that cur-

rently, 54.2 million children are in school, but 26.2 million are out-of-school children, prompting the Prime Minister to declare "Education Emergency" in the country.

He underscored that despite contributing less than 1% to global climate change, Pakistan is the 8th most affected country, with severe natural disasters like the floods of 2022 disrupting education of 3.5 million children. Dr Siddiqui highlighted several initiatives to combat climate challenges through education.

He stated that Clean

Green School program aims to enhance climate literacy, while Punjab province has introduced climate change as a separate subject with the expert-developed Green Book.

Sindh province launched the Climate Crisis Education Data initiative to use data for informed decision-making. These efforts underscore Pakistan's commitment to integrating climate education and fostering resilience, calling on the global community to join in addressing this critical issue through collective action, he said.

IGP wants psychological test of police officers

ISLAMABAD (APP) : Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Monday directed to conduct a psychological test of officials deputed at Special Protection Unit (SPU) to improve the performance and mental capability.

A public relations officer talking to APP said that the initiative seeks to enhance the aptitude of officials within the Islamabad Police. The test included a special psychological

examination committee, chaired by SSP Security Division, while SP CTD, SP Headquarters, and psychological experts were the members of the committee. Police Officers from the Special Protection Unit (SPU) actively participated in the test. The conclusion of the workshop saw recommendations formulated for resolving ongoing issues faced by officers.

Islamabad Police officials are always engaged in law and order duties in order

to ensure the safety of the lives and property of the citizens. Maintaining the law and order situation in the federal capital, Islamabad is a challenging task, due to which the officials were facing not only physical but also mental difficulties.

In this regard, psychological tests of different division police officials were conducted. The purpose is to further improve the performance and solve the problems faced by the officials on a priority basis.

Commissioner directs DCs to be active in field

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak on Monday directed the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) to be active in the field with their teams to provide relief to the citizens.

Chairing a meeting the Commissioner instructed the officers to take solid steps to restore the public confidence on the government departments. The lack of the complaints from the public would indicate either public satisfaction on the performance of the government departments or outright despair, he added.

He instructed the officers try to resolve the problem before it is pointed out by the public. Validate the performance of the departments so that the performance could be visible in the field and not just on the papers, he ordered.

Zero waste was ensured in 455 of the total 570 Union Councils of the division under 'Suthra' Punjab programme during last week, the Commissioner said adding, a total of 199 complaints were received regarding cleanliness, of which 197 were resolved.

In last one week, 288 manholes were also cov-

ered across the division, he informed. During the last one week, 22 No Objection Certificates (NOCs) of petrol pumps and 82 NOCs of building plans were issued, the Commissioner said. He instructed that there should be no pendency for issuance of NOC by any department.

The departments should raise awareness about the documents required for notified NOC through panaflexes. No department should submit incomplete file, the Commissioner directed that drug control actives should be increased to control the means.

Police nab 303 drug peddlers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Monday said that Islamabad Police engaged in running the special movement "Nasha Ab Nahe" to rid the federal capital of drugs and protect the youth from the menace of drug addiction.

In this connection, Islamabad Police teams conducted extensive crackdown in different areas of

the city, and arrested 303 drug peddlers.

Police teams also recovered 17 kilograms of ice, 80 kilograms of heroin, 44 kilograms of Hashish, and 1,836 liters of alcohol from their possession.

The accused were involved in drug trafficking in various parts of the city, and 293 cases have also been registered against them in different police stations.

In order to ensure public awareness and a robust crackdown against drug dealers, the Islamabad Police had also continued its awareness campaign through various social media channels.

In this regard, 797 awareness posts have been published, with over 1.2 million citizens expressing their appreciation and support for this initiative by the Islamabad Police.



RAWALPINDI: General Angus J. Campbell, Chief of Defence Forces Australia, who is on official visit to Pakistan for 13th Round of Pakistan - Australia, Defence and Security Talks and 10th Round of 1.5 Track Security Dialogue, called on General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.

ANF recovers 43 kg drugs in nine operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover 43 kg drugs and arrested 11 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that 121 Ice-filled capsules and 13 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a Doha-bound passenger arrested Peshawar Airport.

In two operations at a courier office in Rawalpindi, 470 intoxicated tablets were recovered from two parcels booked for England.

20 kg Ketamine was recovered from three suspects held in Sohrab Goth Karachi.

16.8 kg hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up near Sial Mor Road Sargodha.

2.4 kg hashish and 108 grams Ice were recovered from two suspects nabbed near M-1 Islamabad.

In two operations conducted near M-3 and M-4 Faisalabad, 3 kg Ice was recovered from three suspects.

In ninth operation, 500 grams Ice was recovered from a drug smuggler arrested in Quetta.

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

IRSA releases 291,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 291,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 295,900 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1467.66 feet and was 69.66 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 93,300 cusecs and 100,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1176.60 feet, which was 126.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 61,600 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 158,200, 99,700, 77,800 and 17,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 101,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 24,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

The IG said that Islamabad Police is conducting targeted operation on daily basis to eliminate the scourge of drugs from this city. He emphasized that "Nasha Ab Nahi" is not just a campaign but a movement aimed at eradicating drugs from society and rooting out drug dealers. He assured that no element would be allowed to endanger the lives of the youth.

Ayaz condoles Raisi's demise

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Monday expressed profound sorrow over the tragic demise of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash.

The Speaker remarked that the news of the crash, which also claimed the lives of Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian and other high ranking officials, was deeply heart-wrenching and unfortunate, said a news release.

He expressed his shock at the news of sudden passing away of President Raisi, describing him as a

great friend of Pakistan.

Recalling their recent meeting during late President Raisi's visit to Pakistan, the Speaker highlighted their fruitful discussions aimed at strengthening bilateral and parliamentary cooperation.

He noted that President Raisi was a strong proponent of Pak-Iran partnership for regional development.

Ayaz Sadiq also mentioned the President's statement about the strong, heartfelt relations between the people of both countries, which still resonate with him.

The Speaker on behalf

of the parliament and himself, extended heartfelt condolences to the government of Iran, the families of the president, the foreign minister, and all others who lost their lives in the incident, as well as to the people of the brotherly nation of Iran over the martyrdom of Iranian leadership in the helicopter crash.

Ayaz Sadiq assured that the government, parliament, and people of Pakistan stand in solidarity with their Iranian brethren in this time of grief and pledged full support and cooperation from Pakistan to overcome this unimaginable loss.

Joint operation to reclaim ICT's public spaces

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon on Monday chaired a high-level meeting for addressing the encroachments issues in the Federal Capital.

According to the Spokesman of ICT's Administration, the meeting was attended by the Deputy Director General of Enforcement from the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the Administrator of the

Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI), and the Director of the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA).

Additionally, Assistant Commissioners and Additional Deputy Commissioners were also present to discuss the comprehensive strategy in the meeting. The attendees agreed on firm actions against illegal structures and encroachments throughout the Islamabad. On the occasion, the DC

stressed a joint effort by the district administration, MCI, and CDA for spearheading the initiative. Teams from these bodies would work together to ensure the enforcement drive, targeting all forms of encroachments across the district.

Deputy Commissioner Memon emphasized the need for unbiased and decisive measures, signaling a unified and determined approach to reclaim public spaces and uphold city regulations.

IESCO detects 11,292 slow, 202 tempered meters

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has caught 11,292 slow meters, 202 tempered meters and 1,959 such meters using direct power supply in various circles of the company during the ongoing anti power pilferage drive.

Sharing the details, IESCO chief Dr Muhammad Amjad Khan said that the police have arrested 1,348 electricity thieves and fines of over

Rs 593 million has also been imposed on them.

He said IESCO achieved tremendous results during the ongoing anti power theft campaign which was started in light of the government and Ministry of Power Division directives.

He said the company was dealing electricity thieves and facilitators with iron hands. Non-stop and indiscriminate operations against them were

going on in all operation circles of the company.

He further said that IESCO has the full support of the Federal Government and the Ministry of Energy Power Division in the ongoing crackdown against electricity thieves.

He said that IESCO's recovery has improved further owing to a successful crack down and the company's line losses have also been decreased significantly.

Railway Police reunites 37 children with their parents

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Railway Police have reported reuniting 37 children, both boys and girls, with their parents after finding them wandering at various railway stations or traveling on trains across the country over the past two weeks.

The Rawalpindi division reunited nine children, while the Lahore and Peshawar divisions each reunited six children, official sources in the Railway Police told APP.

They said the Multan and Sukkur divisions found three children, while the Karachi and Quetta divisions reunited seven and three children, respectively. Additionally, the police returned lost luggage and goods to 60 passengers.

To a question, they said the department collected Rs 74.8 million from ticketless passengers during a four-month crackdown, assisted by railway police and train staff. Approximately 58,446 passengers were caught traveling without tickets, and the collected

fines were deposited in the department's official bank account, they added.

They emphasized that crackdowns on ticketless travel are a daily occurrence, and violators are charged for the full journey plus a penalty. Those unable to pay are handed over to the railway police.

Over the past year, they said the Pakistan Railway Police arrested 3,923 individuals for various rule and law violations, registering 3,625 cases across the eight railway divisions.

They said the case distribution includes 658 in Peshawar, 577 in Rawalpindi, 1,044 in Lahore, 326 in Mughalpura workshops, 393 in Multan, 208 in Sukkur, 346 in Karachi, and 73 in Quetta.

The sources said the help desks have been established at all major railway stations to support passengers. Despite limited resources, the performance of the railway police has been satisfactory, with expectations for further improvement in the coming year.

11 apprehended for carrying illegal arms

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a significant crackdown on illegal arms holders, the police have arrested 11 individuals and confiscated arms and ammunition from their possession.

According to police spokesman, New Town police held Zeeshan and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession.

Similarly, Airport police nabbed Abdullah and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his custody.

While, Wah Cantt police arrested Irfan and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession and 01 pistol 30 bore was recovered from Ziaghama.

Gujjar Khan police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Ramzan and 01 pistol 30 bore was recovered from Adil.

Additionally, Kahuta police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Zeeshan.

IEA accelerates aid process

GHOR (BNA): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has recently sent new aid shipments to this province to address the needs of flood victims in Ghor. Several flights carrying aid shipments from the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan landed at Sultan Ghiyasuddin Ghor Airport in Firozkoh, the center of Ghor province. This aid includes emergency shelter, medicine, food, and clothing, which have been transported by the country's air force to Ghor province.

The Frontier Post

Ziqaad 12, 1445 — Tuesday, May 21, 2024

3.6m Afghanis donated

KABUL (BNA): The Herat Economy Directorate demonstrated solidarity by donating 3.6 million Afghanis to aid flood victims in Ghor. Haji Mullah Abdul Qadir, head of Herat Economy Directorate, informed BNA that, based on the direction of the Deputy Minister for Economic Affairs, under the supervision of the Ministry of Economy and in coordination with the Herat authorities, the collected aids were handed over to the representative of Ghor authorities to assist the flood victims.

Trust fund to be used to pay UN fee

KABUL (TOLONews): Some members of active organizations in Afghanistan, through a joint statement, have called for Afghanistan's UN membership fee to be paid from the trust fund.

The members of these organizations also requested the United Nations and donor agencies to pay Afghanistan's membership fee by any means possible.

"The issue of the membership fee that has recently arisen should be resolved either from Afghanistan's treasury or from the trust fund and donor agencies," said Sediq Mansoor Ansari, Head of the Mobile Economic Cultural Union.

These organizations emphasized that Afghanistan should not be deprived of its voting rights

as a member of this body and should use its vote in the organization's decision-making.

"Afghanistan is currently in international isolation. Unfortunately, this decision can isolate Afghanistan further and make its interaction with other countries more difficult," said Mohammad Reza Rafat, member of the leadership of the Civil Society Federation of Afghanistan.

"Unfortunately, in the current situation, playing with Afghanistan's card from any address is a betrayal of the Afghan people. It was necessary to pay this \$800,000 or \$600,000 from Afghanistan's trust fund," said Sayed Qaribullah Sadat, a political analyst.

In the past four years,

Afghanistan has owed more than \$800,000 to the United Nations due to non-payment of its membership fee, resulting in its voting rights being suspended.

"The payment and non-payment of Afghanistan's membership fee have specific regulations, and these regulations can be postponed, giving Afghanistan more opportunity to use its voting rights," said Sayed Zia Hossaini, an international relations analyst.

Earlier, Suhail Shaheen, head of the Islamic Emirate's political office in Qatar, has requested the United Nations hand over Afghanistan's seat to the representative of the Islamic Emirate following the suspension of Afghanistan's voting rights at the UN.

Flood victims face lack of shelter, food

GHOR (Khaama Press): A number of residents of Firozkoh City, the capital of Ghor province, say that due to the recent devastating floods, they have lost everything they own and are now facing numerous challenges.

Allahdad, a resident of the Darah-Sheikhs village in Firozkoh, the capital of Ghor province, says, "The flood took away our entire life; now we are without shelter, and we have no food to eat or water to drink."

Mir Ahmad, another resident of this village, says the destructive floods have caused him massive financial losses.

He says, "The recent flood was very destructive; it took away everything we had, including our house, agricultural lands, and both fruit-bearing and non-fruit-bearing trees." The devastating floods in recent days have caused irreparable damage to shopkeepers in Firozkoh, the capital of this province. However, the residents of Ghor say they have not received any assistance so far.

They call on the de facto administration and national and international relief organizations to urgently address the people's problems to prevent further human casualties. According to these Ghor residents, most of the flood-affected people are now without shelter, food, and drinking water.

It is worth mentioning that following the destructive floods on Friday and Saturday night in Ghor province, more than 50 people, including women and children, lost their lives in the center and districts of this province.

Additionally, thousands of residential houses and shops were destroyed, thousands of acres of agricultural land and orchards were wiped out, and thousands of livestock were also lost.

Polio vaccination challenged

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has announced that the return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan has made the polio vaccination campaign in the country more challenging.

Stevan Lauwerier, head of the polio eradication program, called for increased efforts to eliminate polio among returning refugees from Pakistan during his visit to the Torkham border on Sunday, May 19.

In a meeting with UNICEF staff in Torkham, he emphasized the need for more actions to eradicate the polio virus in Afghanistan.

Previously, the WHO had also warned that the return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan increases the risk of polio outbreaks.

According to a report by the organization, among the nearly 600,000 Afghans who recently returned from Pakistan, there are 200,000 unvaccinated children.

This comes as Afghanistan and Pakistan are the only countries in the world where polio remains endemic.

IEA to attend Doha meeting if its position accepted: Kabir

KABUL (Ariana News): In a meeting with Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Deputy Prime Minister said the Islamic Emirate will participate in the third Doha meeting if its "position" is accepted.

He said that Afghanistan is under the complete control of the Islamic Emirate and that the country "has an Emir" and the government is "obeyed".

According to a statement issued by Mawlawi Abdul Kabir's office, the deputy prime minister told DiCarlo: "The previous meeting in Doha was incomplete due to some shortcomings of its organizers, and the position of the Islamic Emirate should be accepted in the next meeting so that the delegation of the Islamic Emirate will participate in it."

The Secretary General of the United Nations once expressed regret for the Islamic Emirate's non-participation in the Doha meeting, but at the same time said that accepting the demands of the Islamic



Emirate is equivalent to its recognition.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate is asking the United Nations and other countries to recognize them as the legitimate government of Afghanistan.

Kabir said that the Islamic Emirate has fulfilled all its obligations and "rules over the entire geography of Afghanistan... There is a central government in all of Afghanistan that has an emir and is obeyed."

The United Nations is expected to hold the third Doha meeting with the participation of special representatives of countries for Afghanistan, but it has not set a date for it yet.

The Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs of the United Nations meanwhile visited Kabul this week and invited the Islamic Emirate's officials to participate in the Doha meeting.

According to the deputy

prime minister's office, DiCarlo informed Kabir about the Doha meeting and said that "the Islamic Emirate's conditions for participating in this meeting are not difficult."

She expressed hope that a delegation of the Islamic Emirate will participate.

She said that representatives of a number of international organizations and countries have been invited to the Doha meeting, including the World Bank.

Ministry of Economy: Continuing int'l aid for flood victims essential

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Economy said that for the recent flood victims in the country, the European Union has provided 97 tons of food, and Turkey and Qatar have also provided 80 tons of food supplies.

Abdul Rahman Habib, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Economy, called on all aid organizations to continue their assistance to the flood victims in the current situation.

The spokesperson said: "We ask all United Nations organizations, aid organizations, industrial and commercial unions, and our fellow citizens to take an active part and not to withhold assistance from the flood victims."

At the same time, Save the Children and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in reports expressed concern over the situation of recent

flood victims and emphasized that they are trying to provide shelter and food to the affected people.

Save the Children said that its health teams in Baghlan have so far provided services to 1,758 people. Arshad Malik, country director for Save the Children in Afghanistan, said: "The impacts of these devastating floods are immediate and long-term. Children urgently need clean water and health care to ensure that the current disaster does not worsen with the spread of disease. They also need long-term support for mental health, as many of them have lost their loved ones."

Wasim Safi, CEO of the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock, said: "Their daily needs must be met, and if the private sector and international organizations help in this area, it will be better."

The flooding in recent

weeks in the country has caused significant financial losses in addition to the loss of lives in several provinces.

The destruction of residential houses, the demolition of public infrastructure, the loss of agricultural lands, and the death of livestock have increased the problems of the residents of several provinces.

Some of these victims, who have not yet received assistance, said they urgently need aid organizations to address their basic needs, such as shelter and food.

"So far, no aid has reached us, and we and our neighbors are in great difficulty," Khairullah, a flood victim, told TOLONews.

"The flood has come and left people helpless, but no aid has arrived yet," said Nasratullah, a flood victim.

The acting Minister of Refugees and Repatriation, Khalil Rahman Haqqani, in a meeting with the Chinese

ambassador to Kabul Zhao Xing, discussed the damages caused by the recent floods and asked China to provide housing, employment, and educational opportunities for Afghans who have been displaced by natural and unnatural events, in addition to the returned refugees.

In this meeting, the Chinese ambassador described the recent human and financial losses caused by floods in Baghlan, Ghor, and some other provinces as severe and pledged that his country is ready to help these flood victims as much as possible.

According to information from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the flooding up to May 12 in Baghlan, Badakhshan, and Takhar provinces has killed 230 people and injured about 250 people, and 50 people are missing.

DiCarlo meets with Karzai and Abdullah over Doha meeting

KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan's former president Hamid Karzai, and the country's former CEO Abdullah Abdullah met with Rosemary DiCarlo, Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs this weekend, regarding the third Doha meeting.

In a statement issued by Karzai's office, it is stated that during the meeting they emphasized the need to help and support the people of Afghanistan and said that they considered education in Afghanistan essential.

They also emphasized the need for national understanding to achieve peace.



DiCarlo, who is on a trip to Kabul, has already met

and discussed numerous issues with a number of

officials of the Islamic Emirate.

IEA extended condolences to Iran over Raisi's demise

KABUL (BNA): In a devastating incident, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, along with Foreign Minister Dr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian and Tabriz Juma Imam Hajjat al-Islam Al Hashem, tragically lost their lives in a helicopter crash.

The news has left the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the Afghan people deeply saddened and affected by the untimely demise of these Iranian top political figures.

Expressing profound grief, the Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Mullah Mohammad Hasan Akhund extended his condolences to the Islamic

Republic of Iran and its citizens.

The Afghanistan nation stands in solidarity with Iran during this challenging time, offering sympathies to the families of the victims, the Iranian government, and the entire nation.

The loss of President Raisi, a highly respected and influential figure, has sent shockwaves through the region. Known for his steadfast commitment to his country and its people, President Raisi's passing leaves a void that will be difficult to fill. Similarly, Foreign Minister Dr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian, renowned for his diplomatic skills, played a crucial role in shaping Iran's foreign relations.

The tragic accident also claimed the life of Tabriz Juma Imam Hajjat al-Islam Al Hashem, a respected religious leader who held significant influence in the religious community.

The circumstances surrounding the helicopter crash are currently under investigation, with authorities working diligently to determine the cause of the accident.

Meanwhile, the international community mourns the loss of these esteemed individuals and pays tribute to their contributions to their respective fields.

The world mourns the loss of these notable Iranian figures, recognizing the profound impact they have had on their country and beyond.

MoUDH urges completion of incomplete uplift projects

KABUL (BNA): In a meeting held between Sheikh Madar Ali Karimi Bamyani, Deputy Minister of Urban Development and Housing and Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, the Deputy Secretary-General for United Nations Affairs in Security and International Peace, discussions were held on the ongoing situation in Afghanistan and the need to address incomplete development projects in the country.

The meeting began with Ms. DiCarlo and her accompanying delegation expressing their condolences for the financial and human losses caused by recent heavy rains and

floods that have affected several provinces in Afghanistan.

Turning their attention to the development sector, Sheikh Madar Ali Karimi Bamyani highlighted the presence of unfinished projects from the previous administration, which were partially funded by various donor countries and the World Bank.

Sheikh Bamyani expressed optimism about the overall security situation in Afghanistan, emphasizing the prevailing atmosphere of brotherhood and harmony. He assured the delegation that the Afghan people now enjoy a safe environment where they can breathe

freely.

Responding to the concerns raised by Sheikh Bamyani, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo pledged her support and stated her intention to address the issue of semi-completed development projects in Afghanistan during the upcoming Doha meeting.

She assured the Afghan side that she would raise this matter with the relevant countries and advocate for the World Bank's involvement in completing these projects.

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing their determination to work closely together to overcome the challenges faced by Afghanistan.

Parts of Ghor, Faryab devastated

GHOR (TOLONews): Nearly 70 people have died due to devastating floods in the provinces of Ghor and Faryab.

Thousands of homes, hundreds of shops, and thousands of acres of farmland have been destroyed in these floods, and thousands of livestock have also perished.

Local officials in Ghor province have reported that ten residents are still missing, and the death toll from the floods that occurred Friday's evening may increase.

Floods in Ghor have devastated nearly eighty percent of the city of Ferozkoh.

Additionally, the floods have surrounded the Minaret of Jam in Ghor, raising concerns about the

potential destruction of this 800-year-old monument.

Abdul Wahid Hamas, the spokesperson for the governor of Ghor, told TOLONews: "In these floods, fifty people, including women and children, have died, and several are missing. Two thousand houses have been completely destroyed, and more than four thousand houses have been partially damaged. Furthermore, two thousand five hundred shops in the city of Ferozkoh and the districts of this province have been destroyed."

The destructive and deadly floods in Ghor have also affected the districts of Shahrak, Dolina, and Tiura alongside the city of Ferozkoh. The

main Herat-Ghor highway and roads connecting the districts to Ferozkoh have been destroyed and blocked.

Homeless people are enduring difficult conditions.

Nazar Mohammad, a resident of Ferozkoh city, told TOLONews: "These floods have left us without clothes or a morsel of bread. I am in dire need of ten afghani. Two families lived here, and the flood destroyed both homes."

Abdul Hai, another resident of Ferozkoh city, said: "Our orchard, home, and livelihood are all gone. Nothing is left intact, and even our food has been taken by the flood. The floods have destroyed the wells, and we have no drinking

water."

In Faryab province, the deadly floods have claimed 18 lives. These floods have caused significant financial losses to the residents of Faryab and Sar-e Pol provinces.

Esamatullah Moradi, the spokesperson for the governor of Faryab, said: "The severe flood that hit Faryab province mainly affected the districts of Belcheragh, Pashtun Kot, Khwaja Sabz Posh, Qaisar, and Almar, causing significant financial losses to the local residents. Eighteen people have been martyred, and two have been injured in these floods."

Habibullah Masroor, the spokesperson for the governor of Sar-e Pol, said: "In the villages of

Khawal and Qala Shahr in the Kohistanat district, more than 60 residential houses have been either destroyed or partially damaged. Dozens of shops and hundreds of acres of agricultural land have been destroyed."

Recent floods in many parts of the country, especially in Ghor, have been unprecedented.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation has announced that tomorrow (Sunday), the provinces of Herat, Farah, Ghor, Badghis, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, Panjshir, Nuristan, Kunar, Kapisa, Parwan, Bamiyan, Faryab, Jawzjan, and Samangan will experience heavy rainfall and potential flooding.

KP CM, PTI leaders discuss electricity load shedding issue

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senior PTI leader and former Speaker of the National Assembly, Asad Qaiser, held an important meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur here on Monday at Chief Minister House Peshawar to discuss pressing provincial issues. The meeting, was also attended by Member National Assembly Faisal Amin Gandapur and former Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid.

During the meeting, the leaders held a detailed discussion on the ongoing illegal load shedding of electricity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They resolved to raise the issue prominently in both the National Assembly and the Senate. It was emphasized that if the relief schedule agreed upon with the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not implemented, all necessary measures will be taken to address the situation.

The participants expressed their concerns about the Federal Government not providing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with its legitimate and constitutional rights, including arrears from hydropower. They vowed to raise an effective voice at the national level against these injustices. The meeting also addressed the issue of wheat purchase from Punjab farmers.

The leaders expressed regret that the Punjab Government has imposed mandatory permits, thereby exploiting the farmers in Punjab. The Punjab Government's actions were strongly criticized as they hinder the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's efforts to buy wheat on a first-come, first-served basis at fair rates.

This behavior was deemed anti-farmer and a violation of Article 151 of the Constitution, which prohibits the restriction of inter-provincial trade. Furthermore, the meeting discussed the implementation of proposed taxes in the erstwhile FATA and PATA regions. It was unanimously agreed that no tax should be imposed in these areas without consent of the Provincial Government and taking the local populace into confidence. The leaders warned that any such unilateral move could lead to serious law and order issues.

Kohat Division Development Program discussed: An important meeting regarding the Kohat Division Development Program was held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur at Chief Minister House on Monday. During the meeting, the Chief Minister made a significant decision to increase the allocation of the development fund for Kohat Division from 10%

to 15% in the form of oil and gas royalty. He has directed the concerned authorities to submit this proposal to the provincial cabinet for final approval.

The meeting was participated by Provincial Agriculture Minister Major (Rtd.) Sajjad Barikwal, Additional Chief Secretary Imtiaz Hussain Shah, relevant Administrative Secretaries, Commissioner Kohat division, and Deputy Commissioners from the respective districts.

Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur was briefed on various development projects under the Kohat Division Development Program. The Chief Minister instructed that the annual working plan for development activities in the three districts of Kohat Division be prepared promptly. Emphasizing the importance of effective fund utilization, he mandated that the allocated funds for oil and gas royalty-producing districts must be spent within those districts.

Furthermore, the Chief Minister directed the activation of relevant committees to ensure the successful implementation of the Kohat Division Development Program. Chief Minister directed to give special attention to imparting technical skills to local youth, and to develop a mechanism to accurately determine the quantity of oil and gas extracted from the Kohat Division.

Imran, PTI leaders acquitted in Azadi March case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A session's court on Monday acquitted former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan along with other PTI leaders in cases registered at Karachi Company police station related to the Azadi March.

Judicial Magistrate Mureed Abbas announced the verdict reserved earlier on plea seeking acquittal of Imran Khan, Faisal Javed, Ali Nawaz Awan, Saifullah Niazi, Zartaj Gul and Asad Umar. Advocate Naeem Panjutha, Sardar Masroof and Amna Ali appeared in court to present arguments for the acquittal petitions.

Asad Umar and Saifullah Niazi were present in court while Faisal Javed and Zartaj Gul moved pleas seeking exemption from personal appearance before the court. Advocate Panjutha argued that Imran Khan was accused under Section 109, suggesting the case was instigated at his behest,

and that only the authority enforcing Section 144 had the right to file such a case. He contended that the FIR was registered by an unauthorized person, making the basis of the case invalid and unfit for prosecution.

Furthermore, Panjutha pointed out that no video evidence implicating Imran Khan was presented, and that FIRs were filed even for peaceful protests. He emphasized that multiple similar cases had been registered against Imran Khan in different police stations, all of which resulted in his acquittal. Sardar

Masroof argued that FIRs registered by unauthorized individuals are illegal and cannot be the basis for a case. He cited an Islamabad High Court order to support his argument. After hearing the arguments, the court reserved its decision and later announced the acquittal of Imran Khan, Faisal Javed, Ali Nawaz Awan, Saifullah Niazi, Zartaj Gul, and Asad Umar.

A session court in

Islamabad also acquitted Imran Khan and others in a case registered at Kohsar police station related to protests and vandalism. Judicial Magistrate Shehzad Khan allowed pleas seeking acquittal of Imran Khan, Sheikh Rashid, Faisal Javed Khan, Ali Nawaz Awan, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Qasim Suri, Raja Khurram Nawaz, and other accused. The court dismissed the charges of violating Section 144 during the Azadi March.

Lawyers Sardar Masroof and Amna Ali argued that the accusations against Imran Khan and others were baseless and politically motivated. The court, after completing the arguments, reserved and later announced the acquittal of the accused in this case as well. It may be mentioned here that on May 15, the Islamabad District and Sessions Court had also acquitted PTI founder Imran Khan in a case registered at Khanna police station during the Azadi March.

Bishkek unrest: More Pakistanis reach country

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: More than 300 more Pakistanis returned from Bishkek, landing in Islamabad and Lahore on separate flights on Monday, as the return of students stranded in Kyrgyzstan continues following the events of violence in the Kyrgyz capital last week.

Islamabad International Airport manager Aftab Gillani welcomed 179 returnees on their homecoming in the federal capital and presented flower bouquets to them. Mob attacks erupted in Bishkek, targeting a number of Pakistani and other foreign students last Friday, which resulted in injuries of various Pakistanis.

As per Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar about 11,000 students were in Bishkek while 6,000 others were in different cities. The situation in the Kyrgyz capital, according to the students stuck there became out of control as they feared for their lives and demanded immediate evacuation, but the government downplayed the unrest in the Central Asian state. Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam, who was present to greet the students at Islamabad airport said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was personally monitoring the sit-

KP govt arranges special flights to evacuate students

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has arranged special flights to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to safely evacuate the Pakistani students and other citizens after the incidence of violence against foreigners.

In a statement issued here to this effect, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has said that the provincial government has arranged two special flights for the purpose, adding that the first special flight with Pakistani citizens on board, will arrive at Peshawar airport today (Monday) and the other will arrive here today (Tuesday). Ali Amin Gandapur has said that these flights will be free of cost, and the expenditure will be borne by the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

uation. "Whoever wants to return to the country, the government of Pakistan will provide all kinds of assistance to them," he said. The minister revealed that more flights will bring the students back home. "Our first priority is the safety of Pakistani students," he said, adding that the protection of life and property of Pakistanis will be ensured in every case. Meanwhile, federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar received another 170 students in Lahore, which he said was the fourth batch arriving from the Kyrgyzstan. The minister assured that all possible measures would be taken to facilitate the students returning from Bishkek,

Kyrgyzstan.

He mentioned that a special flight is scheduled to bring back injured students. The Pakistani embassy in Kyrgyzstan has put up a Google Form for the evacuation of Pakistani students. Earlier, over 350 Pakistani students landed in Lahore and Islamabad in separate flights, from Bishkek on Sunday night, with 180 passengers on board each plane.

The students had expressed concerns about their security and lack of support from the government while they were still stranded in Bishkek. They said they reached Lahore on their own, contrary to the information minister, who claimed that the government was helping the students who wanted to come back.

Punjab PA passes Defamation Bill 2024

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Assembly on Monday approved the Defamation Bill 2024 amid a strong and noisy protest by the opposition.

According to the treasury benches, the bill is aimed at stopping fake news, while the media bodies termed it "draconian" in its current form. Brushing aside the media bodies' request to differ the proposed bill, Punjab's Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mujtaba Mian Shuja-ur-Rehman tabled the bill in the House.

Opposition Leader Ahmed Khan Bhachar said that the Defamation Bill 2024 is a "black law" and his side of the bench would not be partake in passing the legislation.

Turkish FM calls on PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday invited Turkish companies to further expand their investment portfolio in Pakistan, also urging them to consider relocating their industrial units to the country.

The prime minister, talking to Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, who called on him here, said that the current level of bilateral trade was not commensurate with the existing potential. He emphasized to undertake concerted efforts for achieving the bilateral trade target of US\$ 5 billion in the next three years as already agreed by the leadership of the two brotherly countries.

While underscoring the special bonds of brotherhood between Pakistan and Türkiye, the prime minister expressed satisfaction over the positive momentum in bilateral relationship. He reaffirmed Pakistan's firm commitment to further expansion of bilateral cooperation, in all areas of mutual interest, including trade, investment, technology and defence.

Regional and global developments, particularly the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza were also discussed in the meeting. Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated Erdogan's staunch advocacy for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and lasting peace in the Middle East.

He stressed the urgency and importance of the realization of the two-state solution as the key to attainment of durable peace in the Middle East. The prime minister also reiterated his invitation to President Erdogan to undertake an early official visit to Pakistan for co-chairing with him the 7th meeting of High Level Strategic Cooperation Council. Both sides reaffirmed their strong and abiding support to each other on the core issues of national interest.

Court grants bail to Advocate Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) Peshawar Saeed Amjad granted interim bail to lawyer Ali Zaman advocate till 28th May who was charged for tampering election results while ordered police to submit record of the case and have been restrained from arresting the accused, on Monday.

According to prosecution, Dr. Abdul Qadeer had filed report stated Ali Zaman advocate had made accusations against his wife, Samira Subaj who serves as Provincial Management Services (PMS) officer, who was performing her duties as a Returning Officer in the February 8 general elections in PK-73 constituency. The complainant added that Ali Zaman was a provincial assembly candidate from the same constituency and had made speeches accusing Samira of tampering with the election results, which led to the registration of a case against him under sections 121, 186, 500, 505, and 506.

However, Ali Zaman advocate had filed an application for interim bail in the session court to avoid arrest, which was granted after initial arguments. The court directed the police to submit record of the case by May 28 and restrained them from arresting the accused.



ASTANA: Deputy Prime Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar receiving Foreign Minister of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan at Foreign Ministry.

Rs306.520b of supplementary budget presented in KP Assembly

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: More than 306.520 billion rupees of supplementary budget for the year 2022-23 was presented in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly on Monday with Speaker Babar Salim Swat in the chair. All the demands of grants were took back on the request of Minister Finance Aftab Alam and Speaker Babar Salim Swati.

Finance Minister Aftab Alam said that everyone knows which political parties were involved in caretaker government. He said that in eight months of the current fiscal year, the caretaker government has incurred huge expenses. He said that we will pass it under compulsion, but there is a constitutional requirement to pass this budget.

He said that the opposition and treasury both were opposing to pass this budget. The Finance Minister Aftab Alam said that they will be fully consulted in the preparation of the next budget. Parliamentary leader of PPP Ahmad Karim Kundi said that the annual report of the Provincial Finance Commission should be presented in the House.

He said that it should be told how much income and expenditure this province received from the center and its own resources. He said that details of income and expenditure must be presented in the House under Article

163 sub-section 3 of the Constitution.

Meanwhile, Leader of Opposition Dr Ibadullah said that the students in Kyrgyzstan are the children of this country, their safe return is the responsibility of all of us so the federal government has keen for their safe return. By taking immediate action on behalf of the federal government, the return of students was made possible through four flights said Dr. Ibadullah Khan.

Now there is peace, if any students want to stop to complete their degree instead of returning, they should not be forced, Dr. Ibadullah Khan said. However, if there is any problem, the federal government is ready to increase the number of flights, Dr Ibadullah added. Special Assistant Malik Liaqat Ali said that the students of Pakistan are facing problems in Kyrgyzstan so it is the responsibility of KP and federal government for the safety return of the students. He said that the number of flights should be increased as these flights were not enough for 10,000 students.

Minister Mina Khan Afridi said that steps should be taken for the return of the students. He said that the provincial government have arranged flights for which registrations of the students are continue. Similarly, prayed were offered for the departed soul of Iranian President and Minister of Finance.

Maulana Lutfur Rahman of UIUF

said that the Islamic brotherhood is with the Iranian people in this time of grief over the death of the president of the Islamic country and other people. Maulana Lutfur Rahman said that protection of students in Kyrgyzstan should be the first priority of the government. Unfortunately, the country is currently suffering from a weak economic situation said Maulana Lutfur Rahman.

He said that the resources of the province are less, the federation is crying about its problems and economic deterioration. The elections held on February 8, 2024 proved to be more rigged than the 2018 election said Maulana Lutfur Rahman. Maulana Lutfur Rahman said that when there is no political stability in the country, then there will be no economic stability. He said that if the people do not have the power behind the elected representatives, they will not have the ability to solve public problems.

The Provincial Assembly unanimously passed the resolution for the formation of standing committees presented by MPA Shafi Jan. The Speaker was also given the authority to appoint the chairmen of the committees and to change the committee members in the future. Later, the Speaker adjourned the assembly proceedings till Tuesday 2pm after pointing out the the quorum by MPA Adnan Wazir of the opposition.

KP govt moves SC for live telecast of NAB amends case

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government on Monday filed a petition in Supreme Court (SC) seeking live telecast of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Ordinance 1999 amendment case. On the direction of the top court Imran Khan appeared before the Supreme Court (SC) bench in the NAB amendment case. However, the proceedings of the case were not live-streamed on the Supreme Court's YouTube channel.

Later, the leaked pictures, which showed PTI founder Imran Khan sitting in Adiala Jail were widely shared on social media platforms. The federal government filed the review plea in the NAB amendments case under the SC Practice and Procedure Law and made the Federation of Pakistan, National

Accountability Bureau and PTI founder respondents.

Citing no violation of basic rights with the NAB amendments, the federal government pleaded with the SC to nullify its decision in the case. "Legislation is the right of the Parliament," the plea said. In a majority 2-1 verdict, the top court approved Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's petition challenging amendments made to the country's accountability laws during the tenure of the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government. The top court also restored graft cases against public office holders that were closed down following the amendments to National Accountability Bureau laws.

National Press Club team calls on Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Monday that the government had no intention of unilateral legislation regarding the establishment of Digital Media Authority in the country.

"All journalist organizations and press clubs will be taken into confidence on the matter", Attaullah Tarar said while talking to a delegation of National Press Club (NPC) Islamabad which met him here. The minister assured the NPC delegation that health insurance scheme for journalists would be started soon.

Attaullah Tarar said that necessary steps would be taken for the construction of the permanent building of the NPC and the improvement of the existing building. The minister assured that provision of annual grant for NPC will be ensured. The government was well aware of the problems of the administration of the National Press Club regarding the improvement of the National Press Club, he remarked.

The Government intended to ensure continuous grant provision to NPC, he said adding he will meet the finance minister and discuss the issue of annual grant allocation for the press club in the financial budget. President Azhar Jatoti said that the government should solve the problems of the press club on priority basis. He said that journalists were facing many challenges in the present era.

Acting Secretary NPC Aun Shirazi said Media Town Phase II was very important for the journalistic community of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Shirazi said making government advertisements subject to timely payment workers salary will be a major step. Principal Information Officer Mobasher Hassan was also present in the meeting.