

Highway blocked
QUETTA (PPI): Quetta-Chaman highway was blocked for all kinds of vehicular traffic on Tuesday near Yaru area of district Pishin on the call of Tehreek-e-Tahafuz-e-Aaeen-Pakistan in solidarity with participants of Chaman's protest sit-in staged against the enforcement of Single Document Regime Policy. Three hour token wheel jam strike was observed to fulfill demands.

The Frontier Post

TEHRAN (AFP): Tens of thousands of Iranians gathered Tuesday to mourn president Ebrahim Raisi and seven members of his entourage who were killed in a helicopter crash on a fog-shrouded mountainside in the northwest.

Waving Iranian flags and portraits of the late president, mourners set off from a central square in the northwestern city of Tabriz, where Raisi was headed when his helicopter crashed on Sunday. They walked behind a lorry carrying the coffins of Raisi and his seven aides.

Their helicopter lost communications while it was on its way back to Tabriz after Raisi attended the inauguration of a joint dam project on the Aras river, which forms part of the border with Azerbaijan, in a ceremony with his counterpart Ilham Aliyev. A massive search and rescue operation was launched on Sunday when two other helicopters flying alongside Raisi's lost contact with his aircraft in bad weather.

State television announced his death in a report early on Monday, saying "the servant of the Iranian nation, Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi, has achieved the highest level of martyrdom," showing pictures of him as a voice recited the Qur'an. Killed alongside the Iranian president were Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, provincial officials and members of his security team.

Iran's armed forces chief of staff Mohammad Bagheri ordered an investigation into the



TEHRAN: Guards carrying coffin of late president Ebrahim Raisi during a funeral procession in Tabriz, capital of Iran's East Azerbaijan province.

cause of the crash as Iranians in cities nationwide gathered to mourn Raisi and his entourage. Tens of thousands gathered in the capital's Valiasr Square on Monday. Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has ultimate authority in Iran, declared five days of national mourning and assigned vice president Mohammad Mokhber, 68, as caretaker president until a presidential election can be held.

State media later announced that the election would be held on June 28. Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri, who served as deputy to Amir-Abdollahian, was named acting

foreign minister. From Tabriz, Raisi's body will be flown to the Shiite clerical center of Qom on Tuesday before being moved to Tehran that evening.

Processions will be held in the capital on Wednesday morning before Khamenei leads prayers at a farewell ceremony. Raisi's body will then be flown to his home city of Mashhad, in the northeast, where he will be buried on Thursday evening after funeral rites. Raisi, 63, had been in office since 2021. The ultra-conservative's time in office saw mass protests, a deepening economic crisis and unprecedented armed exchanges with arch-

enemy Israel.

Raisi succeeded the moderate Hassan Rouhani, at a time when the economy was battered by US sanctions imposed over Iran's nuclear activities. Condolence messages flooded in from Iran's allies around the region, including the Syrian government, Palestinian militant group Hamas and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. It was an unprecedented Hamas attack on Israel that sparked the devastating war in Gaza, now in its eighth month, and soaring tensions between Israel and the "resistance axis" led by Iran.

Israel's killing of seven

Revolutionary Guards in a drone strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus on April 1 triggered Iran's first ever direct attack on Israel, involving hundreds of missiles and drones. In a speech hours before his death, Raisi underlined Iran's support for the Palestinians, a centerpiece of its foreign policy since the 1979 Islamic revolution. Palestinian flags were raised alongside Iranian flags at ceremonies held for the late president.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi was confirmed dead on Monday after search-and-rescue teams found his crashed helicopter in a mountainous region of northern Iran, close to the border with Azerbaijan. Killed alongside Raisi were Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and seven others, including the crew, bodyguards and political and religious officials.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has assigned Vice President Mohammad Mokhber to assume interim duties ahead of elections within 50 days. Ali Bagheri, the country's one-time top nuclear negotiator, was appointed as acting foreign minister. Iranian authorities first raised the alarm on Sunday afternoon when they lost contact with Raisi's helicopter as it flew through a fog-shrouded mountain area of the Jolfa region of East Azerbaijan province.

Raisi had earlier met Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev on their common border to inaugurate a dam project. On the return trip, only two of the three helicopters in his convoy

Iran schedules presidential election for June 28

ISLAMABAD: Interim President of Iran Mohammad Mokhbar has announced that the presidential election will be held on June 28. According to the report, Iranian Interim President Mohammad Mokhbar chaired a special meeting that was attended by the Speaker of Iranian Parliament and the Head of the Judiciary. In the meeting, it was decided to hold presidential elections on June 28. As per the schedule of the presidential elections, the candidates will be registered themselves from May 30 to June 3 and then run their election campaign from June 12 to 27. — Agencies

landed in the city of Tabriz, setting off a massive search-and-rescue effort, with several foreign governments soon offering help. As the sun rose on Monday, rescue crews said they had located the destroyed Bell 212 helicopter — a civilian version of the ubiquitous Vietnam War-era UH-1N "Twin Huey" — with no survivors among the nine people on board.

State television channel IRIB reported that the helicopter had "hit a mountain and disintegrated" on impact. Analysts have highlighted concerns about the safety of Iran's civilian and military aircraft, many of which are in a poor state of repair after decades of US sanctions deprived the nation of new models and spare parts. Iran has kept its civil and military aviation fleets flying during its isolation since the 1979 revolution through a combination of smuggled parts and reverse-engineering, according to Western analysts. "Spare parts would have defi-

nately been an issue for the Iranians," Cedric Leighton, a retired US Air Force colonel, told CNN. "In this particular case, I think this confluence of spare parts, because of the sanctions, plus the weather, which was very bad over the last few days in this particular part of northwestern Iran. "All of that, I think contributed to a series of incidents and a series of decisions that the pilot and possibly even the president himself made when it came to flying this aircraft ... And unfortunately for them, the result is this crash."

Sunday's incident is only the latest in a long history of air disasters that have claimed the lives of world leaders since the dawn of aviation. One of the first instances of a serving leader or head of state to die in an air accident was Arvid Lindman, the prime minister of Sweden, whose Douglas DC-2 crashed into houses in Croydon, south London, while attempting to take off in thick fog on Dec. 9, 1936.

Faizabad sit-in: Cabinet expresses dissatisfaction over probe report

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet, with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the chair, on Tuesday expressed its dissatisfaction over a report of an Inquiry Commission into Faizabad sit-in (dharna) by observing that the commission had not adhered to its Terms of Reference (ToR).

The meeting directed to constitute a special committee of the cabinet that would submit its recommendations in this regard. The Attorney General for Pakistan submitted an inquiry report over the matter and gave a detailed briefing to the cabinet, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The cabinet also adopted a resolution expressing condolences on the shahadat of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and their

companions in a helicopter crash. The meeting also granted its approval to the recommendation of Ministry of Interior for duty and tax exemption on the equipment donated to Balochistan police by Guangdong Public Security Department, China. However, under Federal Excise Tax 2005, the federal excise duty would be imposed on these items.

The cabinet directed that in future, such like donations and grants would be exempted from taxes. It also approved signing of memorandum of understanding between Pakistan and the United Kingdom with regard to handing over of three accused of Pakistani nationality on the recommendation of the ministry of interior.

During the meeting, the National Livestock Breeding Policy, 2022 was presented by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research and the cabinet directed it to resubmit it after

holding consultations with the private sector. While on the recommendation of ministry of national food security and research, the cabinet approved in principle the legislation work related to National Animal Health, Welfare and Veterinary Public Health Act 2024. A Cabinet Committee on Legislative would comprehensively look into the matter.

The prime minister also directed for formulation of a mechanism under a private-public partnership project for establishing a quality slaughterhouse for Islamabad and its surrounding areas. The cabinet on the recommendation of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) granted its approval to ex-post facto on the relief goods dispatched to the Palestinians by the NDMA. The meeting was apprised that the government of Pakistan had sent 931 tons of relief goods via six airplanes and two ships.

PTI Rauf injured in attack

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson Rauf Hasan was injured after he was attacked by unknown people in Islamabad on Tuesday evening.

Onlookers said there were four assailants who attacked him outside a private news channel in G7 Markaz.

They said the attackers used an object to hit on his face. The attackers fled after people started gathering and stopping them from beating Hasan. During the attack, the PTI leader suffered injuries on his face. He has been shifted to hospital where he is being treated for the injuries.

Parvez Elahi granted bail

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday granted bail to former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) President Chaudhry Parvez Elahi in illegal recruitments case in Punjab Assembly.

Justice Sultan Tanveer of the Lahore High Court announced the reserved verdict. During proceedings of the case, the counsel for Parvez Elahi told the court that case was registered against him by Anti-Corruption Establishment after two years. Lawyer Amir Saeed Ran said Parvez Elahi did not receive money for recruitment from any candidate. He had nothing to do with these recruitments. The Anti-Corruption Establishment made a fake recovery from Parvez Elahi's house.

On this, counsel for the Anti-Corruption Establishment said the case against Elahi had been registered according to law. Elahi was arrested on October 25, 2023. Later, the Lahore High Court reserved the decision. It should be remembered that on March 27, 2024, the court had rejected Elahi's bail application, after which he again filed the application in the court. The court had reserved its decision on March 26 after the arguments of the lawyers were completed. The Anti-Corruption Department had registered a case of illegal recruitment against Parvez Elahi and former Punjab Assembly secretary. On April 28, the High Court had fixed Elahi's petition for hearing in May.

Economy on right track, says PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday while expressing satisfaction over the economic situation of the country, said that from day first, they had been working to provide facilities to the private sector for the economic development, provision of job opportunities and expansion of businesses and investment.

He observed that due to the government's policies, the inflation rate in the country was on the nose-dive and through governance they had been taking steps to pass on the effects of the reduction in the price hike to the common man. The prime minister expressed these views while chairing the first meeting of the Economic Advisory Council, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by council members including Jahangir Khan Tareen, Saqib Sherazi, Shahzad Saleem, Mussadiq Zulqarnain, Dr Ejaz Nabi, Asif Pir, Zaid Bashir, Salman Ahmed and

Sheharyar Chishti. Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Ahsan Iqbal, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Deputy Planning Commission, Dr Jehanzeb Khan, PM Coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal, governor SBP and relevant senior officials were also present.

The prime minister observed that the positive trends in the stock market reflected trust of the business community and investors in the government's policies, adding they would provide further facilities to the foreign investors and business community in the next fiscal budget. The prime minister said that they would reduce the tax ratio on common man and would increase the number of tax filers.

For the digitization of the country's economy, they were taking steps on priority basis, he said, adding that they would ensure provision of quality seeds and timely supply of fertilizers to the farmers for increasing their yield per acre. He further assured to promote small and medium level industry to save agricultural products from wastage.

The prime minister directed for removal of all hurdles in acquiring visa by the foreign investors and business people. The meeting was apprised that due to the government's investment and business friendly policies, the confidence of the local and foreign investors had been strengthened which was reflected in the bullish trends of the stock market.

Giving briefing over the economic indicators, the meeting was apprised that during the third quarter of the current fiscal year, the agri sector showed a growth rate of 6.25 percent which was higher by 2.27 percent in the corresponding period last year. Similarly, the industrial and service sectors also witnessed tangible growth rate. The inflation rate had been reduced from 38 percent to 17 percent and the government was immediately ensuring its trickle down effects upon the common man.

During the meeting, the council members presented different proposals for the economic stability and for

(Continued on Back Page)

KP Assembly passes supplementary budget

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly on Tuesday passed more than 306.520 billion rupees of supplementary budget for the year 2022-23 with Speaker Babar Salim Swati in the chair.

During winding up speech, Finance Minister Aftab Alam said that I am grateful to the members of the opposition and treasury benches to fully support and pass the budget. Finance Minister also paid thanks to the officers of all the departments who worked hard in preparing this budget.

Finance Minister said that it is expected to present the new budget for fiscal year on May 24 for the first time before the federal government. The budget for the financial year 2024-25 will actually be our budget said Finance Minister. Passing the caretaker government's budget was our constitutional requirement, said Aftab Alam.

The people of the province are facing many problems including inflation, unemployment and law and order, will serve the people of this province

together with opposition members Finance Minister Aftab Alam concluded.

Leader of the Opposition Dr. Ibadullah Khan while responding the criticism of treasury benches said that all children trapped in Kyrgyzstan are our children, there should be no politics on them. He said that there were two projects in Gabral Kalam and Madian on which no work could be done yet. We have 42,000 MW power generation capacity in hydropower project, said Dr. Ibadullah.

Dr Ibad informed that there were projects of PEDO at a cost of 125 billion rupees and supported by the World Bank, adding the Bank has written to the provincial government that they are withdrawing loans from these projects which not good for us. He said that action should be taken against those who play with the future of this province and committed corruption.

Many areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Malakand, Hazara, Chitral, Kumrat, have numerous hydro potentials but the provincial government did not take it serious said Dr.

Ibadullah. Dr Ibad also condemned the humiliation of senior journalist and former president Peshawar Press Club Saiful Islam Saifi by Gulbahar police.

Usman Bettani of treasury benches said that May 9 was a London plan. I was nominated in FIR in the Mah Rang Baloch Long March. He said that May 9 was a conspiracy to end his party. Regarding his constituency, Usman Bettani said that there is no water and electricity facility in Tank district, the road is bad and peace is also worsen. Tank hospital has become an ambulance base just to refer patients to DI Khan, he said. Bettani requested the chair to resolve the problems of his constituency on priority basis. Later, the Speaker Babar Salim Swati prologue the session.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly also unanimously passed the resolution and expressed grief and sorrow over the demise of Iranian President Syed Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hussain Amir Abdullah and other esteemed personalities.

JUI-F seeks ban on appointment of dual-national judges

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) has submitted a draft constitutional amendment to the National Assembly, seeking a complete ban on the appointment of judges in the higher judiciary who are dual-nationals.

A Constitutional (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has been submitted to the NA Secretariat by JUI-F lawmaker Noor Alam Khan, which sought modifications in the Constitution's Articles 177, 193 and 208, shutting all legal routes to the appointments of those judges who have foreign nationalities.

The draft bill clearly stated that a dual-national individual shall not be appointed as a Supreme Court (SC) or a High Court (HC) judge. It also sought to block the passage to the appointments of foreign nationals as judiciary officers and servants as well.

Raising objections over "foreign national" jurists, MNA Noor stated in the draft bill: "Judges of high courts and [the] Supreme Court must have their stakes in the country in which they hold [the] position of authority, privileged trustworthy."

It also read, "Those who hold dual nationality of foreign states, putting at stake the interest of the country of their origin." Urging the legislature to promulgate the proposed law, the JUI-F lawmaker said that there is a need to ensure the loyalty of the judges in the light of Article 5 of the Constitution, and his proposed amendments will achieve aforesaid objectives.

Baloch missing persons IHC: Objection only on spy agencies' unlawful work

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court's (IHC) Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani has said that the court has only objection to spy agencies' "unlawful work" and not the operations they perform lawfully. "No one has any objection to the work of the [spy] agencies, the objection is [only limited] to the unlawful work," Justice Kayani said on Tuesday while hearing a case pertaining to the implementation of the recommendations of the commission on Baloch missing persons.

Justice Kayani stressed that the court does not want to prevent judges, lawyers, journalists, parliamentarians and spy agencies from operating as per the law, but only objects to them working unlawfully. The judge's remarks come a day after he, while hearing a case relating to the recovery of missing Kashmiri poet and journalist Ahmed Farhad Shah, was irked by authorities' failure to recover the poet and had questioned whether spy agencies would run the country or the law.

The poet was allegedly abducted from his house last week and his wife had moved the IHC seeking his recovery. "Now the matter has gone beyond the jurisdiction of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Military Intelligence (MI). They are talking about their failure," Justice Kayani had said in response to the Ministry of Defence's remarks saying that Shah wasn't in ISI's custody.

The remarks then warranted a strong response

from the federal government with Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar stressing that the court didn't have the mandate to drag senior military officers and government officials to the court in the case of a missing person. "This is not the mandate of the court, the court is a platform for providing justice in line with the law and Constitution," Tarar had said during a press conference in Islamabad, as the rift grows between institutions. During the hearing on Tuesday — attended by Attorney General Mansoor Usman and lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir who were representing the Missing Persons' Committee report.

Justice Kayani inquired how many people were arrested, went missing and were harassed in the past 10 years. In response, the attorney general said that there has been some progress on the matter. He also stressed that intelligence agencies cannot harass anyone. To this, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq said that the spy agency would now be called to appear at a police station.

Underscoring the allegations that many people are being held by the agencies, Justice Kayani inquired whether the financial burden of this is catered via the government budget since such individuals must also consume food while in custody. "Is there an annual audit of agency funds," the judge questioned. "We have to make the police, the CTD and the FIA effective, these

are the three agencies that have to investigate [and] the other agencies can support them," he said.

IHC dismisses Tyrian White case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Tuesday dismissed a petition filed against former prime minister Imran Khan for concealing his alleged daughter Tyrian White as inadmissible.

A three-member bench consisting of Justice Tariq Mehmood, Jahangiri, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Saman Riffat took up the petition seeking the disqualification of Imran Khan for not revealing his alleged daughter Tyrian in the nomination papers.

During the hearing, Justice Tariq Mehmood observed that two judges had already declared the Tyrian case as inadmissible. The court upheld the decision given by two judges, declaring the petition against Imran Khan inadmissible.

PTI leader Shibli Faraz was present in the courtroom during the hearing. A citizen, Mohammad Sajid, had filed the petition through lawyer Hamid Ali Shah, requesting the court to disqualify the PTI founder Imran Khan for concealing his alleged daughter in the nomination papers.

Murad decides to upgrade tourist sites

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presiding over a meeting of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) discussed Green Pakistan Initiative projects to be launched on PPP mode to develop tourism sites, promote safari desert, develop agricultural and livestock farms.

The meeting was held at CM House and was attended by provincial ministers - Nasir Shah, Jam Khan Shoro, Haji Ali Hassan Zardari, Zulfiqar Shah, Dost Ali Rahimoo acting chief Secretary Musadiq Ahmad, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, SMBR Baqaullah Unar, provincial secretaries, Major General Muhammad Hussain of PCIC, Brig Zile Hasnain of

5 Corps and others.

The meeting discussed and decided on some proposals as follows: The meeting discussed the development of Keenjhar Lake, Haleji Lake, Hawks Bay and Gorakh Hill Resorts as world-class tourist sites in Public-public-private partnership. The agreement between Keenjhar Lake Sindh Tourism Development Corporation (STDC) and the irrigation dept for running the Lake as a tourist spot was pending since 2006 and needed to be renewed so that further action could be initiated.

The CM issued directives to the Irrigation & Culture dept to execute their agreement. The meeting discussed a proposal to develop new Tourism Sites at Parchi Javeri and Nagarparkar. The

chief minister directed Minister Culture & Tourism Zulfiqar Shah to study the proposal and file his recommendations.

The CM was told that a six km road from Karachi—Thatta to Haliji Lake was dilapidated. The CM said that the road must be reconstructed for which he directed the Works & Services department to start reconstruction work. The meeting agreed that Desert Safari may be incentivised by launching special trains and offering different packages to attract visitors and participants. Mr Shah sought proposals for improving desert safari activities. A proposal also came under discussion for the establishment/raising of the Sindh Tourism Police.

The CM directed the

Culture & Tourism dept to submit its proposal for raising separate police along with their assignment, including reporting to the CM for further necessary action. The meeting discussed the proposal to graft the wild olives at Gorakh Hill on the PPP model. The private party would plant and grow wild Olives for oil extraction on a commercial basis.

The CM directed the Agriculture and Public Private Partnership department to suggest an agreement for private parties so that the project could be taken up. The chief minister was told that the road to Gorakh Hill Station was in poor condition due to recent heavy rains. The CM directed the Works & Service department to

repair/reconstruct the road.

It was pointed out that a proposal for the construction of an expressway from Karachi to Dadu was under consideration which would connect Balochistan and various cities and towns of the province through inter-sections. The chief minister said that the Gorakh Hill Master Plan has been approved and ordered the release of allocated funds.

On the pointination of Minister for P&D Nasir Shah, the CM directed the acting chief secretary to post a good offer as the new DG Gorakh Hill to implement the proposed development initiative. Corporate Agriculture Farming: The meeting discussed the proposal of corporate farming to engage international companies in the PPP mode.

CM launches pilot project to make Lahore best eco-friendly city

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif reached LDA Avenue-1 to launch a pilot project to make Lahore the best eco-friendly residential city.

She inaugurated LDA Avenue-1 Central Park, covering an area of 87 canals, and planted a sapling there. LDA DG Tahir Farooq briefed the CM about the Central Park Project, upgraded LDA Enforcement Squad and other related issues. She was briefed that in LDA Avenue-1 Society, innovative steps have been taken to protect and beautify the environment. The Central Park of LDA Avenue-1, a pilot model park, is a major step in this direction. It was also briefed that a jogging

track, walkways, kids play area, open gym and badminton court; besides a cafeteria, mosque and rose garden have been established in LDA Avenue-1 Central Park.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was briefed that apart from LDA Avenue-1 Central Park, solar streetlights have also been installed on walkways. Moreover, specific vending points have been set up for the purchase of food items. Arrangements for rainwater harvesting and cycling have also been made. A model cemetery has been built there. The chief minister was apprised that the LDA enforcement squad is being supplied with new uniform, equipment and

machinery. She visited vending points of LDA Avenue-1, where fruits and vegetables were available for sale on clean and newly designed carts. "It's a good arrangement, but I will come and check again sometime," the CM said.

The CM also inspected the LDA upgraded enforcement squad. She gave keys of new bikes to the enforcement squad. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information & Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik, MNA Afzal Khokhar and MPA Samia Ashiq accompanied Madam Chief Minister. Chief Secretary and other relevant senior officers were also present.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Provincial Government in partnership with Asian Development Bank (ADB) is implementing **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Security Support Project** throughout the province to ensure food security in the face of challenges posed by climate change. The project is looking to hire Khyber Pakhtunkhwa domicile holder dynamic and competent human resources for the following positions.

S No	Position Title	No. of Position	Age	Requirements by the Recruitment Committee
1.	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Specialist (BS-18)	01	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years of education Economics, Development studies, Agriculture economics or Project management from HEC recognized university.Minimum 5 years of post-qualification relevant experience in M&E using qualitative and quantitative tools for data analysis and reporting under a project of similar nature and complexity preferably in agriculture sector with international donor organization or Public Sector organization.Must be well versed in both written & spoken in English.Proficient in MS Office applications i.e; Word, Excel, and Power Point.
2.	Information Systems Development Specialist, (BPS-18)	01	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years of education in Computer Science or Software Engineering from HEC recognized university.Minimum 5 years of post-qualification experience in relevant field in managing IT system, to configure/manage/monitor all the software & networking equipment (servers, routers, switches, DSL Modems) with international organization or any public sector organisation.
3.	Communication and Development Specialist, (BPS-18)	01	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years of education in Mass Communication or Journalism.Minimum 5 years' post-qualification experience in Knowledge Management / Communication.Have an excellent project reporting skill.Must be well versed in both written & spoken in English.Proficient in MS Office applications i.e.; Word, Excel, and Power Point.
4.	Social Safeguard and Resettlement Specialist, (BPS-18)	01	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years education in the relevant field such as Social Work, Sociology, Anthropology, Environmental Science, Development Studies, or a related discipline.Having at least 5 years' experience in the same field in public or private sector.
5.	Environment Specialist, (BPS-18)	01	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years education in environmental science, environmental engineering, ecology, natural resource management, or a related field.Having at least 5 years' experience in the same field in public or private sector.
6.	Gender Specialist, (BPS-18)	01	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years education in gender studies, women's studies, sociology, social sciences, international development, or a related fieldHaving at least 5 years' experience in the same field in public or private sector.
7.	Legal Specialist, (BPS-18)	01	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years education in law (LLM) or a relevant specialization.Having at least 5 years' experience in the same field in public or private sector.
8.	Admin and HR Officer, (BPS-17)	01	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years of education in Business Administration, Public Administration or Human Resources from HEC recognized university.Minimum 5 years post-qualification experience in similar capacity with international donor organization or Public Sector organization.Have excellent project reporting skills.Must be well versed in both written & spoken in English.Proficient in MS Office applications i.e., Word, Excel, and Power Point
9	Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning Officers, (BPS-17)	2	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years of education in Economics, Development studies, Agriculture economics or Project management from HEC recognized university.Minimum 5 years of post-qualification relevant experience in M&E using qualitative and quantitative tools for data analysis and reporting under a project of similar nature and complexity preferably in agriculture sector with international donor organization or Public Sector organization.Must be well versed in both written & spoken in English.Proficient in MS Office applications i.e; Word, Excel, and Power Point.
10	Procurement Officers, (BPS-17)	1	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years education in business administration, supply chain management, logistics, or a related field & diploma & certifications in procurement or supply chain will have an additional edge.Having at least 3 years' experience in the same field in public or private sector.
11	Environment Officers, (BPS-17)	2	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years education in environmental science, environmental management, ecology, natural resource management, or a related field. Additional certifications or specialized training in environmental studies or sustainability can be advantageous.Having at least 3 years' experience in the same field in public or private sector.
12	Account/Audit Officer, (BPS-17)	1	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years of education in finance or Commerce or ACCA from HEC recognized university.Minimum 5 years post-qualification experience at similar level, have managed donor funded project(s), familiarity with Government financial regulations and sound understanding of the community procurement and financial management of community driven sub-projects implementation.Have an excellent project reporting skill.Must be well versed in both written & spoken in English.Proficient in MS Office applications i.e; Word, Excel, and Power Poin t.
13	Sub-Engineer, Civil (BPS-16)	2	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Diploma or associate degree in civil engineering or a related field or a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.Having at least 2 years' experience in the same field in public or private sector.
14	Sub-Engineer, Electrical (BPS-16)	2	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Diploma or associate degree in electrical engineering or a related field or a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering.Having at least 2 years' experience in the same field in public or private sector.
15	Admin and HR Assistants, (BPS-16)	2	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bachelor's degree in business administration, human resources, or a related field.Having at least 2 years' experience in the same field in public or private sector.
16	Computer Operator, (BPS-16)	3	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum 16 years education in Computer Science or Information Technology from HEC recognized University/Institution.ORBachelor's degree with one Year Diploma in Information Technology from HEC recognized university/institution.One Year post qualification relevant experience in IT.
17	CAD Operator, (BPS-14)	1	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">At least 2nd Division Secondary School Certificate from recognized board.Survey course of at least 6 to 9 months duration from recognized institute or board of technical education.Three months course in AUTO-CAD (2-D, 3-D) drawing and computer knowledge of MS office from recognized trade testing board (TTB).
18	Drivers, (BPS-6)	6	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Having domicile of District PeshawarLiterate, having valid light transport vehicle driving license (LTV).Preference will be given to the candidate having sufficient experience of driving, repair, and maintenance of vehicle.
19	Peon/Naib Qasid, (BPS-3)	9	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Having domicile of District PeshawarAt least Matric 2nd Division
20	Security Guards (BPS-3)	4	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Having domicile of District PeshawarPreferably LiteratePreferably Job Experience in Government Sector
21	Sweeper, (BPS-03)	2	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Having domicile of District PeshawarPreferably Literate

TERMS & CONDITIONS	
1.	Candidates will be provisionally allowed to appear in the ETEA screening test. However detailed scrutiny will be carried out by the appointing authority and if any candidate is found ineligible in any respect at any stage of the recruitment process, he/she will be disqualified by the Appointing Authority.
2.	For posts at Serial No 18 – 18 , all the candidates will be required to create profile on ETEA's website. After creating the profile and before applying/depositing fee for any post, such candidates will have to print E-Sahulat token from ETEA's website and get their CNIC No. verified from any NADRA E-Sahulat franchise (Kiosk). Without such verification, they will not be able to apply for any post.
3.	For posts at Serial No 19, 20 & 21 (i.e. Peon/Naib Qasid, Security Guards and Sweeper), all aspiring candidates shall submit their applications along with relevant documents directly to ETEA Office, Plot No. 12, Sector E-8, Hayatabad Phase-7, Peshawar till 6th June, 2024 .
4.	Interview calls letter will be issued to short listed candidates only.
5.	Short-listing will be done strictly in accordance with the Project policy 2022 and donor guidelines.
6.	All these positions are purely "contractual" and have no chance of confirmation. The selected candidates shall be offered one-year renewable contracts subject to satisfactory performance.
7.	Candidates should be eligible in all respects by the last date of receipt of the applications.
8.	Incomplete applications and applications received after due dates will not be entertained.
9.	The candidates working in Government/Semi-Government bodies should apply through proper channel.
10.	Candidates intending to apply for more than one post shall apply separately for each post with separate fee.
11.	Competent Authority reserves the right to increase/decrease the number of vacancies or cancel/reject any application without assigning any reason.
12.	No TA/DA will be admissible for test/interview.
13.	In case of foreign degree, equivalent certificates from HEC must be provided.
14.	Errors/Omissions in number of posts are subject to rectification.
HOW TO APPLY	
1.	Interested candidates may first visit www.etea.edu.pk and apply for the posts online.
2.	After successful submission of online application, a prescribed online deposit slip (having token number, Project code & candidates' personal information) will be generated.
3.	Take a printout of the generated deposit slip & deposit the prescribed test fee (nonrefundable) through Easypaisa app or Agent Jazz Cash app or at any branch of UBL Bank via UBL OMNI agent.
4.	After successful fee submission, please keep the original deposit slip (candidate copy) having bank desired stamp with yourself and do not share it with anyone else.
5.	After online apply, don't send documents/testimonials to ETEA office, copies of testimonials/documents will however, be provided by the candidates who qualify the screening test, as and when required by ETEA or the Appointing Authority for scrutiny purposes.
6.	Availability of online Application Form on www.etea.edu.pk on 21 st May, 2024
7.	Last date for submission of online Application is 6th June, 2024
8.	Candidates will be informed through SMS by ETEA to download and Print their Roll No. Slips from www.etea.edu.pk . Candidates are directed to do not give ported/converted mobile number.
9.	Test Date, Time & Venue will be mentioned on Roll No. Slip.
10.	No separate Call Letter will be issued to candidates for screening test through postal/courier means.

PROJECT DIRECTOR KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA FOOD SECURITY SUPPORT PROJECT

Residents facing delay in issuance of passport F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The number of applied passports across the country has reached millions which caused severe disappointment among the citizens. Interior Minister and DG Passport and Immigration are unaware of the problems of the people. Crowded in passport offices have become a daily routine despite the increase in fees on time. Non provision of passports is a proof of the failure of the Interior Minister and DG Passport and Immigration.

Like other parts of the country large number of applicants are waiting in long queue in Peshawar to apply for passport. The people have complained that there is also fear of losing the visas. Citizens severely criticized the poor strategy of the Interior Minister and DG Passports and said that there are thousands of passports that were delayed.

They said that this issue could not be resolved due to the recent increase in passport fees, so what was the need for the increase in fees. They said that fighting has become a daily routine, he demanded from the Interior Minister and DG Passports to take immediate notice and resolve the issue of pending passports on priority basis.

Security assessment of Islamabad Airport begins



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Mohammed Abdul Ghaffar, the First Secretary of Aviation at the UK-DfT British High Commission, arrived at IIAP, Islamabad along with the UK-DfT Inspectors for the Avsec assessment of the airport.

On behalf of the Secretary of Aviation, Air Cdre (R) Shahid Qadir, the Director of

Avsec PCAA, warmly welcomed the team. Mr. Ghaffar reiterated the UK's commitment to strengthening Pakistan's aviation security system through capacity and capability building.

The opening meeting was attended by Airport Manager Aftab Gillani and all the relevant airport stakeholders. Throughout the assessment, the team will thoroughly inspect the

implementation of various security measures at the airport, with a specific focus on the measures being adopted for direct flights to the UK.

This assessment, hosted by PCAA, is a continuation of the collaborative efforts between the British High Commission in Pakistan and PCAA to enhance aviation security standards in the country.

BISP blocks 170 fake websites, deactivates 37,389 SIM cards

ISLAMABAD (APP): In order to combat fraudulent practices, the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Technology Wing has so far blocked 170 fake websites and deactivated 37,389 SIM cards involved in scams with the help of concerned departments.

This was disclosed during a briefing given to the Chairperson BISP, Rubina Khalid by the Technology Wing officials during a meeting held here Tuesday. The officials reviewed the significant achievements

by the Technology Wing including the blocking of 170 fake websites in cooperation with the FIA and the deactivation of 37,389 fraudulent SIM cards.

The meeting was aimed at discussing the ongoing efforts and future strategies to counter fraudulent activities associated with BISP. The meeting was also attended by the Additional Secretary of BISP, Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor.

The primary focus of the meeting was to brief the Chairperson about the Technology Wing's func-

tions and the measures taken so far to combat fraud. Rubina Khalid emphasized the need to publicly identify and shame those involved in fraudulent activities that defame BISP.

She advocated for a "name and shame" policy to deter future misconduct and protect the integrity of the program. During the meeting, Rubina Khalid instructed the Technology team to organize a meeting next week with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), and other

relevant stakeholders to address and resolve security issues collaboratively.

She also directed the Technology Wing to draft a comprehensive proposal to present to the FIA, aiming to strengthen their efforts in tackling individuals, organizations, and elements committing fraud in the name of BISP. The Technology Wing also outlined the extensive security measures implemented, especially prior to the release of each quarterly Kafaalat tranche, to safeguard the interests of BISP beneficiaries. Rubina Khalid instructed Additional Secretary Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor to arrange a meeting with the National Socio-Economic Registry team of BISP.

This meeting will focus on discussing the data-sharing mechanisms with relevant parties, reviewing the survey mechanism, and the registration of beneficiaries. Additionally, the geo-fencing of devices will be examined to enhance security protocols.

To further protect beneficiaries and the general public, the Chairperson suggested disseminating proper awareness messages through BISP's social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

She proposed using the BISP call center number 0800-26477 and the 8171 messages as a ringtone to ensure that the official number remains prominent in users' minds, thus preventing innocent people from falling victim to scams. This proactive approach highlights BISP's commitment to transparency and security.

Lost and Found

I have lost my Kanju Town Documents Plot No.201 St #201 St #II If any one found him please send us and request to UADA issues duplicate. Amjad Ali s/o Jehanzeb.

PHC dispose-of Taimour Jhagra plea after name removed from PNIL

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court has dispose-of former finance minister Taimour Saleem Jhagra plea after removal of his name from the Provisional National Identification List (PNIL), on Tuesday.

The counsel Ali Gohar Durran advocate argued that the petitioner was enlisted in the PNIL list due to his political affiliation with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The petitioner is peaceful citizen who has held important positions in the past, the lawyer added.

Deputy Attorney General Obaidullah Anwar and Director Legal Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Abdul Rehman appeared before the court.

Director FIA informed the court that Timur Saleem Jhagra's name has already been removed from the PNIL. Subsequently, PHC's divisional bench dispose-of the writ petition.

KPBC observes strike against charging lawyer in FIR

The legal fraternity observed strike on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) call and boycott from courts' proceedings including the Peshawar High Court against registration of First Information Report against Ali Zaman advocate, on Tuesday.

KPBC condemned registration of FIR and termed it as unconstitutional and illegal. KPBC Vice Chairman Sadiq Ali Momand and the Chairman of the Executive Committee Syed Taimur Ali Shah stated that the FIR against Ali Zaman advocate is beyond the law and constitution.

The lawyers' community has demanded that the provincial government immediately withdraw the FIR.

Moreover, Association of International Lawyers, London, Pakistan Chapter coordinator Nasir Ghilzai and provincial president Waqar Khan advocates also condemned the registration of the FIR and demanded its immediate withdrawal. It is worthy to mention that Advocate Ali Zaman charged in the FIR after political speech at a gathering.

Khushal Riaz wins UET EXPO National Squash C'ship



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khushal Riaz Khan of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has won the UET Expo Open Squash Championship by defeating Saddam ul Haq of Pakistan Army.

The University of Engineering and Technology Peshawar organized EXPO 2024 National Squash Championship at Hayatabad Squash Complex Peshawar.

Khushal Riaz Khan of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa won his first round against UET's Hamza Tariq, while he defeated Arsh Khan of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the second round and Aizaz Khan of Pak Army in the third round respectively and qualified for the final of the championship.

Khushal Riaz Khan won all these matches by 2-0. In the final, Khushal Riaz Khan faced Saddam ul Haque of Pak Army, and Khushal won the match by 2-1 and took the title of the tournament.

Talking to the media on this occasion, Khushal Riaz Khan thanked the Directorate General of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the encouragement and support and said that the training and guidance of his coach, former world number 11 Amjad Khan, had a big hand in his success.

Khushal expressed his determination that he will achieve more success by working hard day and night.

Seminar on AI Fusion held at UET Peshawar



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: UET Peshawar conducted a one day seminar on the "AI Fusion: academia and industry perspectives". The summit brought together experts from industry, academia, and the public sector to exchange views on AI and its impact on education. Addressing the participants, Prof Dr. Qaisar Ali, Vice Chancellor UET Peshawar said, Artificial Intelligence has brought another revolution across the world.

He said, the countries who are benefiting from this technology have worked hard to acquire this knowledge and we should follow the same path to implement it in our education institutions. Engr. Javed Saleem Qureshi Chairman Four Brothers and Ex Chairman PEC said, the seminar series started last year has been conducted in various engineering universities to sensitize the academia and industry for getting clarity of vision to adopt AI as a force for good, enhancing human capabilities and enriching lives.

He cited the UN report that the market for artificial intelligence (AI) is expected to show strong growth in the coming decade.

Its value of nearly 6 trillion dollars is expected to grow upto nearly 18 trillion U.S. dollars by 2030, so it is incomparable in terms of investment and getting unexpected results.

He said, Pakistani expatriates from the Silicon Valley will conduct the Training of Trainers courses on AI in fifteen engineering universities in Pakistan.

Prof Dr Fazal Ahmad Khalid Rector GIKI said, this is the right time to align our education system with global standards by embracing modern techniques. As academia, we need to understand the importance of this field as compared to earlier ones.

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Amjad seeks apology from Gandapur

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Former candidate for the National Assembly (NA-29) Malik Amjad condemned the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur remarks against Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, calling them "unacceptable" and "against the traditions of Pukhtuns."

This he said while addressing press conference at Peshawar press club along with Ali Shah Sheikh, Shehzad Shahid, Khalil Ullah, Ishfaq Khan and Adil Khan and claimed that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) workers will not tolerate any disrespect towards their chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

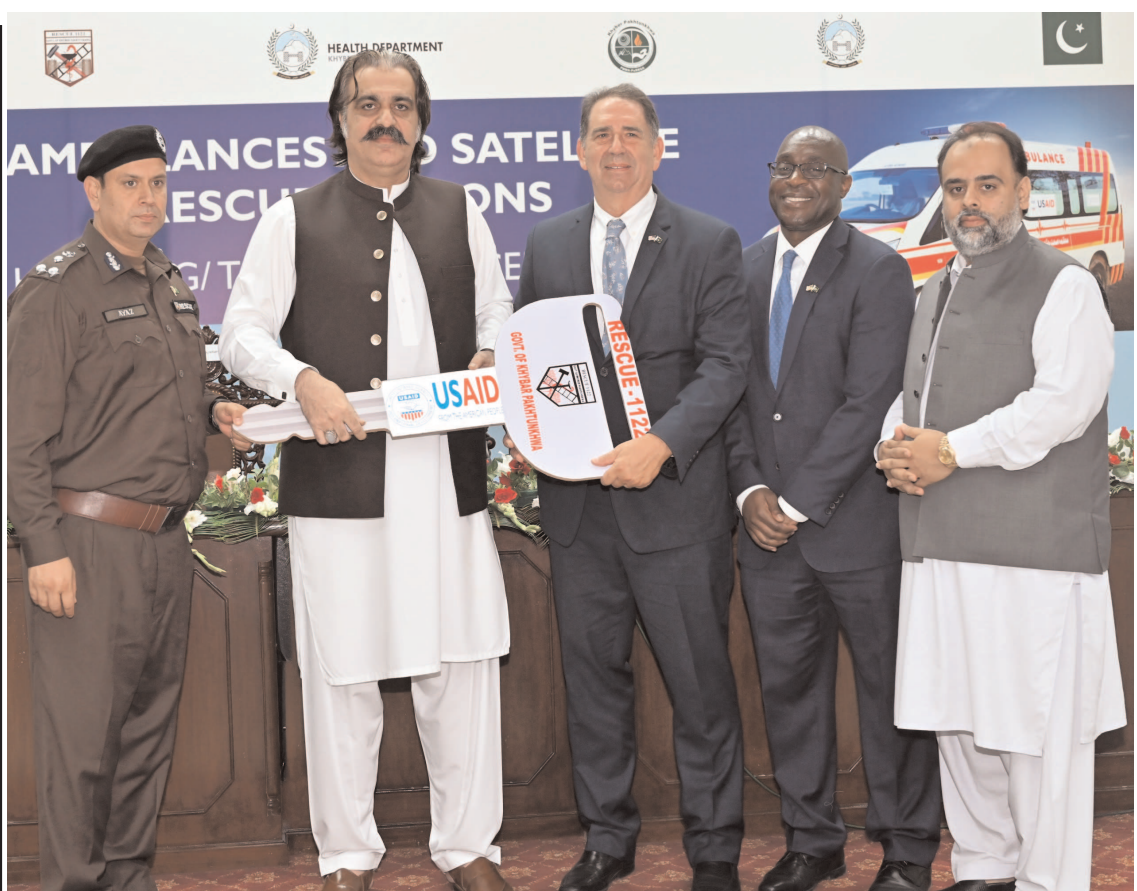
They demanded that the Chief Minister must apologize for his remarks, otherwise, he will not be able to run his own home, let alone the government. They also announced that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is visiting Peshawar city as well as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor's house.

Minister meets Hangu delegation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Revenue and Estate Nazir Ahmad Abbasi met with a delegation of local elders led by Shah Abu Tarab Bangash Member of Provincial Assembly from Hangu District. Member Board of Revenue and other relevant officials were present in the meeting.

The delegation informed the Provincial Minister Nazir Ahmad Abbasi about the problems faced and said that a village council of Hangu district which consists of two villages has been included in Karak district due to which the residents of the area are facing problems. The Village Council is in every respect is near Tehsil Doaba of Hangu District. It is more than 80 KM from Karak district headquarters while 14 KM from Tehsil Doaba headquarters. In the meeting, there was a discussion on the background and solution of the problems.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minsiter Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur receiving keys of state of the art ambulances and Mobile Rescue Stations from USAID.

FAPUASA wants end to financial crises in public sector varsities

Hamayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The 1st meeting of the newly elected Executive Council of the Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Association (FAPUASA) for the session 2024-25 held virtually chaired by President Dr. Amjad Abbas Magsi while General Secretary Dr. Muhammad Uzair moderated the proceedings.

Vice President Dr. Mazhar Iqbal along with presidents, general secretaries, and executive members from provincial chapters participated the meeting. The Council strongly condemned Israel for its barbarism against the innocent Palestinians. The Council also expressed deep sorrow and grief over the sad demise of Iranian President and Foreign Minister in a helicopter crash.

The Executive Council voiced deep concern over the precarious financial situation facing public sector universities nationwide. Discussions emphasized the urgent necessity for a substantial increase in both federal and provincial budgets and grant-in-aid for universities.

Consequently, the Executive Council unanimously demanded the federal government allocate a minimum of 500 billion rupees in the upcoming federal budget to ensure continuous funding for public sector universities through the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

Additionally, the Council called upon the provincial governments of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to promptly disburse grant-in-aid to universities experiencing prolonged salary payment delays. Furthermore, they urged the expeditious establishment of provincial HECs, akin to other provinces.

The Council resolved to initiate a token demonstration across universities nationwide. These demonstrations will persist until the next council meeting scheduled for May 29, 2024. Should the government fail to meet budgetary demands, further actions, including peaceful protests (dharna) in Islamabad, will be considered.

A joint statement from all members insisted the Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Federal Minister for Higher Education, to prioritize this allocation before finalizing the federal budget.

Furthermore, the Executive Council urged provincial governments to allocate at least 50 billion rupees each in their budgets for universities' recurrent expenses.

It was decided that FAPUASA leadership would engage federal and provincial ministers, as well as other government officials, personally and through official correspondence to advocate for budget allocations.

Rehman Medical Institute celebrates World Nursing Day

PESHAWAR (APP): Rehman Medical Institute (RMI) and Rehman College of Nursing (RCN) held a heartfelt celebration for World Nursing Day on Tuesday. They honored nurses for their dedication, skill, and empathy, highlighting their crucial role in healthcare. The ceremony served as a day to acknowledge the dedication of nurses and their potential to make a significant impact on the world.

Dr. Aurangzeb, principal of RCN, in his address emphasized the human impact of nurses and the College's commitment to supporting students financially and academically. He announced plans for future Master's and PhD programs in the near future. Dr. Aurangzeb's voice held a clear message nurses deserve our recognition and investment. He shared RCN's commitment to supporting their students financially and nurturing their desire to learn and grow.

A lamp-lighting ceremony and recitation of the Florence Nightingale Pledge resonated with the audience, while skits and documentaries portrayed the everyday challenges and triumphs nurses face. Professor Dr. Shahzada Bakhtiar Zahid, Dean of RMI, acknowledged nurses as the unsung heroes of the healthcare system. Former lawmaker Ayesha Bano, the Chief Guest, highlighted the growing respect for the profession and the potential for Pakistani nurses to address the global nursing shortage. CEO RMI Shafique Ur Rehman commended RCN's growth and emphasized the opportunity to empower Pakistani nurses to become global healthcare leaders.

Shahryar, PESCO Chief discuss load shedding in Kohat

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Shahryar Afridi MNA meets PESCO Chief on loadshedding issue in Kohat. Former Interior Minister and senior leader of PTI Shehryar Afridi MNA alongwith Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Daud Shah Afridi met the PESCO Chief in his office on Tuesday and informed him about the unscheduled and illegal loadshedding of electricity in Kohat.

He while informing him about the concern and anger being found in public, directed him to provide immediate relief to the public in this regard. Shehryar Afridi also discussed ways and means to reducing the load shedding period, line losses and transformers including grid stations in Kohat with Pesco Chief.

Meanwhile, Shehryar Afridi also contacted the TESCO Chief and informed him about the load shedding of electricity in Kohat district coming under the management of Tesco.

He also had a detailed discussion with him regarding Dara Adam Khel and Jawaki grid stations and feeders and transformers.

PID workshop: Journalists sensitized on adverse effects of fake news

PESHAWAR (APP): Speakers at concluding day of the two days workshop organized by the Press Information Department Peshawar here Tuesday sensitized journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa about the adverse effects of fake news, disinformation and negative propaganda on lives of people and urged them to verify news especially obtained from social media platforms before its publication or putting it on air.

The workshop titled 'truth in the digital era: strategies for countering fake news in Pakistan' was held here at a local hotel. On the last day, Chairman Journalism Department, University of Peshawar, Faizullah Jan, General Manager Investment, KP Tourism and Culture Authority, Umair Khattak and other speakers highlighted negative impact of fake news on social fabric of the society, national security, government and private institutions especially art, culture and tourism.

Chairman, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Peshawar Faizullah Jan said that besides social and economic sectors, the fake news and disinformation also make negative effects on democracy and can tarnish public and private sectors' departments' image.

He urged the media professionals to ensure that their news obtained from digital and social media were properly verified before its publication and put on air otherwise their credible would be at stake.

The journalists who were engaged in brainstorming and interactive exercises to counter negative propaganda, fake news and disinformation were told that journalism was a noble profession and credible news and information was right of people as per our country's laws and constitution.

He said that fake news and misinformation posed serious threats to the country's social and economic values in present era of digitalization and great responsibility rest on media outlets, journalists and editors to ensure that the provided information was true in all respect before its publication or airing on TV channels for well-informed knowledgeably society.

Lauding the efforts of PID Peshawar and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for conducting such an important two days workshop for journalists of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on topics of countering of fake news and misinformation, the young and mid career journalists expressed the hope of more such events at Peshawar.

Umair Khattak, General Manager, KP Tourism and Culture Authority said that there was great potential in the tourism sector in KP to help overcome the country's economic woes, saying that the media's role was crucial in nullifying negative perceptions about our province.

By promoting the country's soft image, he said that Pakistan could attract huge foreign investment by promoting adventure, sports, culture and heritage tourism.

He highlighted integrated tourism zones projects to be set up at Thandiani Abbottabad, Ghanool Mansehra, Mankyal (Swat) and Madakalasht (Lower Chitral) that after completion would help promote sustainable tourism in Pakistan.

These projects would help reduce load on existing tourists' destinations besides promoting the transport and hospitality industry in KP.

Umair Khattak also urged journalists to highlight the mega projects of tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially at camping pods setup in far flung districts to provide affordable accommodation to people.

Later, interactive sessions were held for journalists who were taught about various techniques to identify fake and propaganda news and how to counter it. Later, certificates were presented to participants.





In brief

Action against underage drivers F.P. Report

MANSEHRA: District Police Officer (DPO) Mansehra, Shafiullah Khan Gandapur on Tuesday directed strict action against mechanically unfit, unregistered vehicles and underage drivers. In a statement issued here, the DPO said that vehicles lacking fitness were major cause of the frequent road mishaps in the district. He said that teams of traffic staff have been constituted across the district which along with Motor Vehicle Inspectors (MVIs) would check the fitness of the vehicles moving on roads of Mansehra. Shafiullah Khan Gandapur said that road mishap due lack of fitness of vehicles will not be tolerated any more. The DPO said that an official notification in this regard has been issued to MTVs and Regional Transport Authority (RTA).

Bodies of two found from canal

MURIDKE/SHU-JABAD (INP): Bodies of a woman and minor girl were found from a canal while another woman was stoned to death in different cities of Punjab, police said on Tuesday. According to details, body of 25-year-old woman and her three-year-old daughter were found from a canal in Muridke. A wicked youth stoned a 55-year-old woman for forbidding derision in Shujabad. The bodies were shifted to different hospitals and police after registering separate cases at respective police stations of concerned cities started investigations.

New courses introduced F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Principal Govt Technical Training Institute Kamalia Amir Ali Bajwa said that HVACR, electrician, machinist, autos and phara-machinery courses are conducted in our institution. These courses are of two years. This he said while talking to The Frontier Post and added that our students after completing the course are employed in textile mills in addition to various companies, such talented students make their name and their institution bright. He said that There are four Technical Training Institutes in District Toba Tek Singh. In which the students of our institute come first every year due to which the result of the institute is 100%. Amir Ali Bajwa said that the staff of teachers in our institute are hard working. Which provides the best education to the students due to which our institution shines. In the end, he said that such talented students get an immediate job after obtaining the degree of engineers, which gives them employment.

Six-year-old girl raped

FAISALABAD (INP): A wicked person allegedly raped a minor girl. Police arrested the accused here on Tuesday. According to details, six-year-old daughter of Ibrar Ahmed hailing from Chak No 65 GB Jaranwala went to house of neighbours to play with the children. Accused Ali s/o Muhammad Talib who was alone at home, forcefully raped the minor girl. The police arrested the accused and after registering a case against him started an investigation. City Police Officer (CTO) Kamran Adil said that the culprits involved in rape of children don't deserve any concession and strict action will be taken against them.



QUETTA: SB passed candidates holding a protest for acceptance of their demands.

Fire erupted in English Dept at AWKUM

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Fire erupted in the hall of English department of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) due to short circuit, the university officials told. The officials and students of AWKUM told that the fire erupted in the hall when they were in their class rooms and were taking classes in different subjects.

They, however, told that they rushed towards the hall for necessary action, adding that all the students, teachers and other staff of the department remained safe on the occasion and no body received any injuries or wounds. The university officials told that they also informed the personnel of rescue-1122 quickly who rushed to the spot with a big tank of water to extinguish the fire before it caused a big destruction.

The relevant officials claimed that the preliminary investigations revealed that the fire was erupted due to short circuit in the hall. They, however, told that inquiry would be carried out in the matter with the purpose to also work on other possible causes and reasons.

MPA visits prison:

Provincial Assembly Member Iftikhar Ali Mashwani visited Mardan Jail along with DHO Mardan Dr. Javed Iqbal and Jail Superintendent Arif Khan. Member of the Provincial Assembly Iftikhar Ali Mashwani visited all the bars of the jail, including children's jail, women's and men's jail and other parts.

The tailoring, electricity and education classes included in the vocational center of the jail were also reviewed and the cleanliness of the jail and the problems faced by all the inmates were questioned. All the prisoners expressed their satisfaction and said that not only we get quality food inside the jail but also all the basic health needs are being provided and the cleanliness of the jail is also taken care of.

For further satisfaction, Iftikhar Ali Mashwani also visited the langarkhana (kitchen) and reviewed the cleanliness of food items there. MPA Iftikhar Ali Mashwani expressed his satisfaction with the facilities provided in the jail and instructed the Jail Superintendent Arif Khan to provide better facilities.

Wheat procurement

process inspected: In line with the instruction of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Fayaz Khan Sherpao along with District Food Controller Wasim Khan inspected the warehouses of the food department to review the process of purchasing wheat from local farmers.

Deputy Commissioner Mardan reviewed all the facilities as per Standard Operating Procedures prescribed by Provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Prosperous Farmers-Stable Pakistan Program and to purchase wheat from farmer at government fixed rates and store it in warehouses as per hygienic norms.

The deputy commissioner also inspected the storage process in the warehouse. He made it clear that the farmers should be rewarded for their hard work and the bond between the government and the farmers will be further strengthened. The Deputy Commissioner further clarified that no compromise will be made on official rates and best storage.

Tareen condoles Raisi's death



F.P. Report

LODHRAN: Jahangir Khan Tareen has expressed regret over the tragic accident in Iran that resulted in the death of Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi, Iranian Foreign Minister, and other comrades.

He stated that during this difficult time, our sympathies are with the bereaved and the Iranian nation. He prays that Allah Ta'ala elevates the ranks of the deceased and grants patience to their families.

Newly-born boy switched with dead girl

SIALKOT (INP): In a shocking incident at a private hospital in Sialkot, a newborn boy was switched with a deceased girl on Tuesday.

According to the report, after the mother passed away during childbirth due to alleged medical negligence of the doctor, the newborn boy was placed in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the private hospital. Two days later, the family was informed by the administration of the hospital that the newborn babyboy admitted in ICU had also passed away. The hospital administration handed the deadbody of the deceased newborn babyboy over the family members.

The victim family alleged that when they brought the dead body home, they discovered it was a girl's body instead of the boy's. The family accused the hospital administration of giving them the wrong body and staged a protest with the deceased girl's body. The victim family appealed to the Chief Justice of Pakistan, the Chief Minister of Punjab, and the Prime Minister for justice.

Jirga rejects imposition of Custom & Tax Acts

F.P. Report

BUNER: A grand jirga of the elders of Provincial Constituency PK 27 Tehsil Khadukhel held in which they unanimously opposed tax and custom Act imposition in the Malakand Division.

A large number of local elders participated in the Jirga. Prominent among them, Yusuf Ali Ameer JUI, Maulana Abrarullah former candidate JUI, Muhammad Hayat President Totalai, Mubarak Hussain Senior Leader PTI, Haji Dilawar Khan former candidate PML-N, Noor Wali Khan ANP, Dr Saifullah, Arshad Chairman Village Council, Gul Shaid, Ahmed Zeb, Shahid Khan President Insaf Welfare Wing Malakand Division, Hamid Khan, Anwar Zeb, Haji Mehmood and other important personalities attended.

It was jointly decided in the Jirga that the implementation of Tax and Customs Act in Malakand Division is completely unacceptable and electricity load shedding in Khadukhel should be stopped immediately. The local elders demanded the federal government to withdraw the decision to impose the tax in Malakand division and stop the illegal load shedding of electricity in Khadukhel tehsel otherwise there will be unanimous opposition and severe reaction from the people of Khadukhel.

Meanwhile, the owners of agricultural lands in Jood Chowk of Salarzi region have protested strongly against the imposition of section four on these agricultural lands for the establishment of Marble City.

The protestors blocked Jowar Chowk for all kinds of traffic for an hour. Due to which there were long queues of vehicles going to Swat, Pir Baba and Swari. The protestors were holding placards on which the slogans of disapproval of the establishment of the marble zone and disapproval of the administration were written. Rehman, Muhammad Amin, Khaliqdad Siddiqui, Comrade Muhammad Alam, Mumtaz Khan, Aziz Khan and others said in their address that thousands of families are going through hardships on 1000 kanals of agricultural land of thousands of owners in three districts and the district administration.

He termed the imposition of section four as signing the license to the economic murder of thousands of families and described their eviction from agricultural

lands as injustice and the continuous pressure to take possession was described as cruelty. The government should arrest them and put them in the jails of Haripur, Dera Ismail or send them to the jails of foreign countries, but they will not allow them to occupy the agricultural lands and establish Marble City on them by making all kinds of sacrifices.

The speakers severely criticized the role of the elected members of assembly from Bonir and said that thousands of residents of Salarzi region made these assembly members successful by voting thousands of votes, but when the land owners of Salarzi faced difficulties, these assembly members turned their backs. He warned that if the members do not support the people at this important point, they will be boycotted socially and their entry will be closed on the soil of Salarzi.

Discontinue implementation and abolish the office established for this purpose in the area and transfer Marble City to a suitable district or to another suitable place outside the district, otherwise, by taking possession of the land and establishing Marble City, all responsibility for the bad conditions on the district administration. Will be.

KBA consoles death of Advocate Sher Mohamad: The Khadukhel Bar Association held condolence reference in honor of advocate Sher Mohamad Khan of Swat. The TBA Khadukhel president Advocate Mohamad Hanif chaired the condolences reference.

All respected members of the association participated. The reference was held to pay tribute to the late Sher Muhammad Khan, Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and former Judge of the Peshawar High Court, who passed away recently. The participants expressed their deep sorrow and grief over his demise, acknowledging his services as a lawyer and former judge.

The late Sher Muhammad Khan's contributions were praised in glowing terms, and a collective prayer was offered for his forgiveness and mercy. All respected members of the Tehsil Bar Association Khadukhel Buner share the grief of the bereaved family at this difficult time. They prayed, May Almighty Allah grant the deceased a high place in paradise and give the family the strength to bear this loss.

Review meeting on cotton crop management held

Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR:

Secretary Agriculture

South Punjab Saqib

Ali Ateel chaired

meeting about Cotton

Working Technical

Group and current

situation of crop

management during

the ongoing heat

wave was reviewed

Cotton crop should

be irrigated at proper

intervals to protect

from heat stress, Secretary

Agriculture, South

Punjab.

Cotton Technical

Working Group meeting

at Agriculture Secretariat

chaired by Agriculture

Secretary, South Punjab

Saqib Ali Ateel. In the

meeting, the current situation

of cotton management

during the ongoing

heat wave were reviewed.

On this occasion,

Secretary Agriculture,

South Punjab Saqib Ali

Ateel said that according

to the forecast of the

Meteorological

Department, the recent

heat wave will continue

until on May 27th.

During these days, the

day and night temperature

will be 4 to 6 degrees

Celsius above normal so

field formations should

guide and support the



farmers to complete cotton cultivation by May 31st.

He further said that in view of the recent heat wave, cotton cultivation should be done preferably on field and the seed rate should be increased accordingly. During the briefing on this occasion, it was informed that the economic extent of damage caused by any insect attack on the cotton crop is not high at this time.

The Secretary Agriculture, South Punjab while instructing the field formations said that the first 60 days of the cotton crop are important, during which spraying any kind of agricultural pesticides to control the harmful insects puts the crop under stress and with it along with this

friendly insects also die which affects the production.

On this occasion, an advisory was issued by the experts that the farmers should regularly monitor the cotton crop in hot weather conditions and do light irrigation in the fields at appropriate intervals, preferably in the evening or at night.

Before sowing cotton, the land should be smoothed after deep plowing with a sub-soiler or chisel. Sow cotton preferably in the evening. Spraying the crop with Potash, Boron, Zinc and Sulfur helps ensure the supply of essential nutrients to the plants.

In this regard, cotton farmers should spray a solution containing 300 grams of Potash, 250 grams of Boron, 250 grams of Zinc, 150 grams of Copper and 150 grams of Magnesium per acre. Timely weed control and natural pest control methods can reduce the risk of crop complications due to heat stress. Spray growth promoting compounds (bio-stimulants/amino acids) in case of flower and fruit rot.

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Residents of Bajaur Talash village on Tuesday complained about their dysfunctional water supply scheme and demanded its immediate restoration. Talking to local journalists they complained that the concerned authorities had failed to make the scheme functional during the last several months.

The residents said that they faced difficulty in fetching drinking water from distant places. The residents said that they did not have water for ablution in mosques and homes while it had also hit the area schools hard. They demanded an immediate solution to the problem.

Power outage: The resi-

dents of Timergara told local journalists that due to prolonged power outage, normal life had been paralyzed in the city.

They said that educational institutions, mosques, business centers and homes had run out of water due to closure of water supply schemes. The power consumers complained that on the one hand, the exorbitant electricity bills had taken away the right to live while on the other hand, they were facing severe problems due to the longest unannounced load shedding of electricity in this summer. They threatened to take to the streets if the duration of power outage was not reduced to a maximum level.

Meanwhile local citizens also complained that they could not get the benefit of decrease in the price of flour as the bakers and nanbais were neither decreasing the price of roti nor increasing its weight. Talking to this reporter, they said that after the recent record production of wheat, the price of 20 kg of flour decreased from Rs 3000 to Rs 1800 but yet the nanbais across the district were still selling bread at its old prices.

The citizens said the benefit of decreased prices of flour should reach the people and in this regard the provincial government including the district administration should take measures to pass on the benefit to masses.

Zulfiqar Ali

PERHAPS Pakistan is the only state in the world which have no implementation of law. In the subcontinent the crown prince or British empire introduced and established same reforms for their personal interest and to Cantrell Pakistan peoples in surjection and emotional. British government empowered. Police and bureaucracy during their uncontrolled kingship in subcontinent.

At the time of crown prince or British government bureaucracy reforms/ system were suitable and law implemented well for the establishment of law and order situation but the question is that of the bureaucracy system was too good for the will fore of the people of subcontinent, then why they did met executors it in their in homeland.

Corruption inflation, law and order, terrorism, unemployment bad governance are major and main burning Flashpoint problems and issues of Pakistan community. The existence of administration is meaningless and aim-

less today in Pakistan. For Example, in several burning issues bureaucracy is reprobate a just enthralling inflation or establishing law on his self and administration is the silent beholder. The forceful classes or category high jacked the only by name powerful administration and police deportment by using illegal sources and by political influence. the meat official price is 650 Pakistani rupees but the butlers sell meat in their own will PKR800 out of official control.

The upper strata, social groups install black mirrors on their own cars illegally what they do they are free. Political and social personalities are involved by installing black mirror on their own transport. the local and district administrate on is failure and unable to remove. Black mirrors from high class cars, maintain law and order for the stability and establishing peace control artificial inflation as well. District management authority or evil high-level authorities unsuccessful to light against social injustice and violation in the community.

Land grabbing groups or also

active, but police forces are high jacked by social and political influences. The social, political personalities promote corruption, un justice and interference in the district management authority official services and put political pressure in the administration to use them in their own illegal immoral affairs. In the fast 5 years there is no stability in fuel prices in Pakistan on official level. There is no measurement of public transport thorough cant the country. Federal government is totally powerless regarding to control artificial inflation.

The private transporter increase fore on their own well every transporter charges public according to his own and wish. The district management authorities are fail to resolve the fare of transport. The teenagers can be seen on different rout driving cars and bikes which cause so many accidents are make road accident dangerous and horrible. But there is no check and control of bureaucracy over them.

Although there is inflation but peoples have extremely need of food and necessary commodities and buy it from local market.

Specially in Eid-s festival and Ramzan there are huge public in valve in purchasing commodities in rush. So, in the public hustle and bustle, the possibilities of law and order situation born here. So I did not notice any government official is AC or DC to visited bazaar control and check artificial inflation and make sure to established peace in the area.

Where there is any unpleasant situation may cause. Infect police forces, local AC, DC get ride from their real job descriptions. Butchers, shopkeepers, transporters sell locals commodities, meat to police force in official and suitable rates. So, the official authorities are satisfied personally. So, they avoid from any legal action against them.

The writer have keen and strong observation toward civil administration senseless behavior against artificial inflator and anti-state elements. The federal and provincial setup deployed military officers of caption and major rank in administration police and civil services to make sure legal action and law implementation thorough out the country. Heroine, ice and other

social evils are in the top, but district administration and police forces avoid to take any legal action.

Land grabbing groups are also active. Due to our unable police force and district management authority artificial inflation social injustices, target killing and bring abiding and firm peace in the community.

Over all and collective point of view administration performance is not courageous in mostly densely populated districts, towns, divisions, Tehsils, and in big cities. The environment is very polluted and district municipal committee staff are not performing their functions and descriptions and responsibilities. On road side or footpath big holes always open which cause any serious human incident at any time. But the authorities close eyes to covered manholes to avoid any incidents and protect people. The health and safety situation is not satisfied due to the district administration official laziness.

On mostly social crimes and crisis administration on is silent spectator. Federal and provincial

set up are also responsible for these uncertain situations as small writer I have keen observation administration get ride of their real responsibilities and are only financial burden on national treasure. Government facilitated administration with every point of view heavy attractive salaries well-furnished luxury well decorated accommodation in shape of big bungalows', physical protection ta and Da include VIP protocol, but their performance towards public interest is not encourage.

The vocation of attentive or atrophied and unhealthy animal is general and on top. there is no the official check and balance tight and illegal system on official side to promote cheap food and beverage, grocery in market on official price and standardized by genie fresh healthy meat surety on official level. This is the foremost duty of district management austerities and government. The tragic point is that district management and federal and provincial official units are badly failed to make sure peoples prosperity and good governance.

Administration, public and state



South Africa’s top court bars Zuma from standing in election

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): South Africa's highest court has barred former President Jacob Zuma from running for parliament in next week's general election. The Constitutional Court ruled that his 15-month prison sentence for contempt of court disqualified him.

Mr Zuma was convicted in 2021 for refusing to testify at an inquiry investigating corruption during his presidency which ended in 2018. He has been campaigning under the banner of the newly formed uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) party after falling out with the governing African National Congress (ANC). MK secretary general Sihle Ngubane said the party was disappointed with the ruling, but it would not affect the party's campaign for the 29 May election. "He is still the leader of the party."

It [the ruling] doesn't affect our campaign at all," he said. South Africans vote for political parties, with the candidates at the top of their lists getting parliamentary seats depending on the number of votes the party gets. The electoral commission said Mr Zuma's name would now be removed from MK's list of parliamentary candidates, while confirming that his image would remain on ballot papers, alongside his party's logo. MK members sang and danced outside the court portraying Mr Zuma as a victim, while those inside - some dressed in traditional Zulu regalia - sat silently as Justice Leona Theron read out the unanimous judgement.

Mr Zuma has not yet commented on the ruling. His supporters rioted after he was sent to jail in 2021, and some of its leaders had threatened violence if the court disqualified him from standing for parliament. But MK officials have since changed their rhetoric, saying the party's focus was on getting a two-thirds majority so that South Africa's constitution could be changed, and Mr Zuma could be returned to power. In court, his lawyers had argued that because he was released after three months in prison by his successor, President Cyril Ramaphosa, the rest of his sentence was cancelled.

But the court disagreed, saying the length of time he actually spent in prison was irrelevant. South Africa's constitution barred anyone sentenced to 12 months in prison, without the option of a fine, from serving in parliament in order to protect the integrity



of the "democratic regime" established after the end of the racist system of apartheid in 1994, Justice Theron said. Mr Ramaphosa told a local radio station that he "noted" the ruling.

"The court has ruled, and as I have often said, that is the highest court in the land and we have given the judiciary the right to arbitrate disputes amongst us in terms of our constitution," he said in an interview with 702. Political analyst Levy Ndou told the BBC that the ruling had the "potential to test his [Mr Zuma's] character - whether he joined the party for selfish reasons or whether he joined it to take South Africans forward". The ruling could weaken MK's chances in the election if its members joined the party out of loyalty to a "single individual", but if they genuinely believed in its cause then they "would have to focus the activities of the party without him", he added. MK has been plagued by in-fighting since last month, with Mr Zuma rising to the helm of the party after ousting its founding leader, Jabulani Khumalo. He insists he is still the leader of the party.

Mr Ramaphosa ousted Mr Zuma as president in 2018 after a vicious power struggle, and is leading the ANC's campaign to extend its 30-year rule. Mr Zuma's removal was welcomed by many South Africans as his nine years in office were marred by widespread allegations of corruption, which he has always denied. The former president said last December that he could never vote for a party

led by Mr Ramaphosa and has spearheaded MK's campaign. This will be the first election that it will contest after it was registered as a party last September. The party's emergence has raised the prospect that the ANC could lose its parliamentary majority for the first time in 30 years ago. MK's support is mainly in Mr Zuma's home province of KwaZulu-Natal, and the economic heartland, Gauteng. These two provinces have the highest number of registered voters, and have been the main battleground in the election. South Africans will be voting for the national parliament, and nine provincial legislatures. The president is elected by the new parliament, while each legislature elects a provincial premier.

The court's ruling bars Mr Zuma from taking up a seat in parliament or any of the provincial legislatures. An Ipsos opinion poll released last month gave MK 8% of the vote, and the ANC 40% as it loses support to MK and other opposition parties. But some analysts suggest that with the governing party stepping up its campaign in recent weeks, it could still cross the 50% mark. The ANC got 57.5% in the 2019 election. Former President Thabo Mbeki, who remains popular among many voters, recently joined the ANC's campaign in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, denouncing Mr Zuma as a "wolf in sheep's skin" and a "counter-revolutionary". uMkhonto we Sizwe, which roughly translates as Spear of the Nation, is the original name of the ANC's armed wing, which fought apartheid.

Spain demands apology after PM's wife called 'corrupt'

MADRID (BBC): Spain has demanded a public apology after Argentina's president said the Spanish prime minister's wife was "corrupt". Without directly naming her, Javier Milei made the remarks about Begoña Gómez, wife of Spain's PM Pedro Sánchez, at a far-right political rally in Madrid.

Prosecutors called for a preliminary inquiry into Ms Gómez over corruption allegations to be dismissed last month, saying there was no evidence behind the claims. But Argentina's government has not apologised, with a minister instead insisting that Spain say sorry for past remarks made about Mr Milei. Speaking in Madrid at an event organised by Spain's far-right Vox party, Mr Milei lashed out at "global elites", the dangers of socialism and "the type of people clinging to power and the level of abuse that generates". Mr Milei directed comments at Ms Gómez: "When you have a corrupt wife, let's say, it gets dirty". A Spanish court opened an preliminary inquiry into Ms Gómez in April over allegations from an opposition party of influence peddling. She has not been charged over the claims made by a right-wing anti-corruption group, which has since acknowledged the allegations could be false. Recalling Argentina's ambassador, Spain's foreign minister José Manuel Albares said Mr Milei had insulted both Spain and its leader. Spain would be willing to cut diplomatic ties with Argentina if no apology was issued, he warned. However, Argentina's Interior Minister Guillermo Francos said "there is no apology", and that it was for the Spanish government to say sorry for what had been previously said about Mr Milei. This latest diplomatic clash comes after a cooling of relations between the two countries since the election of the Argentine far-right leader. Earlier this month, a Spanish minister suggested Argentina's president had used drugs. Mr Milei hit back condemning the "slander and insults" and attacked the policies of Spain's Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. Mr Milei is no stranger to spats with world leaders. He has described Brazil's President Inacio Lula da Silva as an "angry communist", and called Mexico's President Andrés Manuel López Obrador "ignorant".

NZ planes to evacuate nationals from Caledonia

SYDNEY (AP): The Australian and New Zealand governments announced Tuesday they were sending planes to evacuate their nationals from violence-wracked New Caledonia. Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong confirmed Australia had received clearance from French authorities for two flights to evacuate citizens and other tourists from New Caledonia amid violent unrest that has beset the French Pacific archipelago where indigenous people have long sought independence from France.

"We continue to work on further flights," Wong wrote on the social media platform X on Tuesday. The Department of Foreign Affairs said 300 Australians were in New Caledonia. New Zealand also announced it was sending a plane Tuesday to evacuate 50 of its nationals from Noumea, the Pacific island's capital, in the first in a series of proposed flights to bring its citizens home. "New Zealanders in New Caledonia have faced a challenging few days - and bringing them home has been an urgent priority for the government," Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters said.

"In co-operation with France and Australia, we are working on subsequent flights in coming days." At least six people have died and hundreds more have been injured in New Caledonia since violence erupted last week following controversial electoral reforms passed in Paris. Some 270 rioters had been arrested as of Tuesday, and a 6 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew was in effect for the archipelago of about 270,000 people.

Rohingya face arson attacks in Myanmar's Rakhine State

YANGON: Fighting between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army (AA) has escalated in the western state of Rakhine in recent days, putting thousands of mostly Muslim Rohingya who live in the area at increased risk.

Based on interviews with Rohingya activists who have spoken to witnesses in Buthidaung, there have been huge fires across the town in the last few days. They accuse the Arakan Army of being behind the arson campaign, but the AA has rejected the allegations saying the fires were started by the Myanmar military in air attacks. What is clear is that thousands of Rohingya are fleeing for their lives and are increasingly unsafe, caught between the military, which seized power in a coup more than three years ago and in 2017 launched a brutal crackdown on the Rohingya that is now the subject of a genocide investigation, and the AA.

"As of now, people are still on the road looking for a safe place," Nay San Lwin, the co-founder of the Free Rohingya Coalition advocacy group, told Al Jazeera. "There is no food or medicine at all. Most of them couldn't carry their personal belongings." The Arakan Army is an ethnic armed group based in Rakhine state and is believed to have about 30,000 troops. The armed wing of the United League of Arakan, it represents the state's majority Buddhist Rakhine and wants autonomy for the people of Arakan, the old name for the state. It was in an increasingly tentative ceasefire with the military until November last year. Nay San Lwin claims the AA issued an ultimatum

late last week, demanding that the Rohingya vacate Buthidaung by 10am on May 18, 2024. The AA had already attacked key locations where the Rohingya had sought shelter, including a school and a hospital, resulting in numerous injuries and fatalities, he said. The entire town reportedly "witnessed AA troops set fire to their houses".

Rohingya sources report that since May 17, thousands of Rohingya refugees have sought safety in central Buthidaung, occupying any available space, including houses, government buildings, a hospital and schools. At least four different sources told Al Jazeera that fleeing Rohingya had been forced from their homes. They have "nowhere to go", Nay San Lwin said. Al Jazeera was unable to independently verify the competing claims because the state's internet and mobile phone networks have been largely shut off. The Arakan Army denies being involved in the alleged arson campaign, but announced at the weekend that it had taken control of Buthidaung. On May 19, the AA's Commander-In-Chief Twan Mrat Naing posted what appeared to be a warning on his X account. "Attention R-Bengali diaspora activists and coterie," he wrote, using the term "Bengali" that the Rohingya consider a slur. "The ppl of MM are fighting against a brutal military regime with great tribulations and sacrifices. Please stop selfish grumpiness and sabotaging, dragging the struggle into the wrong direction. It is time to abandon your misbegotten scheme of creating a separate islamic safe zone through foreign interven-

tions, it is very unpatriotic." The United League of Arakan blamed the Myanmar military for the fires. In a statement, it condemned the military for "prolonged aerial attacks on Buthidaung", saying that "in reality, the SAC and its allies have destructed the town", using the acronym for the State Administration Council as the military calls itself.

Regardless of who is responsible for the attacks, human rights groups are sounding the alarm: warning of the danger of another serious wave of ethnic and communal violence that could be even worse than in 2017. That year, more than 750,000 Rohingya fled into neighbouring Bangladesh after the military launched a series of attacks on their villages after the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), an armed group, attacked several police posts. The United Nations has found that the military committed crimes against humanity and genocide in the crackdown, which is now the subject of an International Court of Justice genocide case. While those who fled continue to live in sprawling refugee camps in Bangladesh, about 600,000 Rohingya remain in Myanmar, mostly in Rakhine state, and live under severe restrictions.

According to Fortify Rights, a human rights organisation working closely with Rohingya in both Bangladesh and Rakhine, the situation is extremely tense in a state that has a long history of communal violence. Fortify Rights says while it is extremely difficult to verify who is responsible for the attacks, the reports from the past two nights have been harrowing. — Al Jazeera

US set to evacuate ‘illegal’ troops from Niger

AGADEZ: The United States says it will pull all its troops out of Niger within the next four months or so after the West African country's military government ordered them to leave.

Niger last month told Washington to withdraw its military personnel, which number close to 1,000, branding their presence "illegal". The military government, which took power last year, has already overseen the withdrawal of troops from former colonial power and traditional security ally France as it has strengthened ties with Russia.

The US pullout has already begun, the Pentagon and Nigerien defence officials confirmed in a joint statement, with all of the troops set to vacate the country by September 15 "at the latest". Until a coup last year, Niger had been a key partner of the West and involved in Washington's fight against armed groups in the Sahel.

The new agreement between Niger's defence ministry and the US Department of Defense, reached after a five-day

meeting, guarantees the protection of US troops until their withdrawal, the joint statement said. "The withdrawal of American forces from Niger in no way affects the pursuit of relations between the United States and Niger in the area of development. Also, Niger and the United States are committed to an ongoing diplomatic dialogue to define the future of their bilateral relations," the statement added. US troops and some gear have already begun leaving the country, senior military officials told Reuters and The Associated Press news agencies.

The plan is to remove all lethal, hazardous or classified equipment before the last US troops depart, but items determined to be too expensive to fly out could be left for the Nigerien military to use instead, the officials added. They admitted that Niger had been an "anchor" in US counterterrorism efforts over the last decade and that they were still looking at options on how to fill the gap. Niger's military rulers seized power in July 2023. A few months later, the military govern-

ment asked French forces to leave and turned to the Russian mercenary group Wagner for security assistance.

In October, Washington officially designated the military takeover as a coup, which triggered US laws restricting military support and aid. Niger announced in March it was ending a military cooperation agreement with Washington, saying the presence of US soldiers was now "illegal". The order for the US to withdraw came after Washington expressed concern about "potential Nigerien relations with Russia and Iran".

The coup and subsequent breakaway from Western countries in favour of Russia follows similar moves in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali. Among the Nigerien public, opinion has long been hostile to the presence of foreign forces. In 2022, about two-thirds of Nigeriens disagreed with the government's use of foreign military forces to secure the country, according to an Afrobarometer survey. — Al Jazeera

Candidates begin registering in process to select Thailand’s Senate

BANGKOK (AP): Thailand officially began the selection of new senators, a process that has become part of an ongoing war between progressive forces hoping for democratic political reforms and conservatives seeking to keep the status quo. Hopeful candidates headed to district offices across the country on the first day of registration to compete for one of the 200 seats in Parliament's upper house.

The power of the Senate - although limited compared to the House of Representatives, which is tasked with law-making responsibilities - was demonstrated dramatically when it blocked the progressive party that won the most seats in last year's election from forming a new government. The senators were able to do so because of the 2017 Constitution, passed under a military government, which requires the prime minister to be approved by a joint vote of the elected House and the Senate, which was appointed by the military regime. The Move

Forward Party was opposed by senators who disapproved of its vow to seek reforms of Thailand's monarchy. The process of selecting the new senators will include three rounds of voting: district, provincial and national. Unlike the elected lower house legislators, the senators will be chosen by their fellow applicants, competing in 20 categories such as occupation or social position, including women, the elderly and the disabled. The final results are expected to be announced in July.

The selection process in the Constitution is so complicated and unclear that critics say it was deliberately designed to discourage public participation. Critics say the Constitution also allows the state bureaucracy to hold more power than directly elected political officeholders. The new senators will no longer be able to take part in selecting a prime minister but will retain the power to approve legislation passed by the House. They also have the power to select members of nominally independent reg-

ulatory bodies such as the Election Commission and the Constitutional Court, whose work has been widely seen as impeding efforts at political reform and crippling proponents with legal penalties, including prison. The Senate's votes are also required to amend the Constitution.

The governing Pheu Thai party is pushing for a new charter to replace the 2017 one to facilitate certain reform efforts promised during the campaign. Civil society groups have campaigned to raise public awareness and encourage those favoring democratic reforms to enter the Senate selection process. Law reform advocate Yingcheep Atchanont of the group iLaw has been organizing public discussions on the importance of the Senate and workshops to help would-be applicants understand how the selection process works. "We are telling people what to do if they want change. There have been calls in recent years to reduce the power of the Senate, to get rid of the Senate," he said. "All of

this can only happen if we can amend the Constitution, and we need enough votes from the senators for that." Candidates must be more than 40 years old and have more than 10 years of experience in their chosen occupational group, the latter provision not applying for those competing in one of the social identity groups. They also cannot campaign or do anything that can be interpreted as campaigning. Even the Election Commission has acknowledged how complicated the process is but says it will be able to carry it out smoothly and transparently. Purawich Watanasukh, a political science lecturer at Bangkok's Thammasat University, said he thinks the complicated rules were intentionally designed to reduce public participation. "This is the contest of the people to debug not just the Senate itself, but the Constitution, which would lead to a new political landscape in Thailand," he said. "It will be the next battleground between the progressive movement and the establishment."

Nine Egyptians to go on trial in Greece over deadly Pylos shipwreck

ATHENS: Nine Egyptian men accused of criminal responsibility in the Pylos shipwreck that led to the deaths of more than 550 people on June 14, 2023, will go on trial in Greece on Tuesday. The accused are alleged to be members of a criminal organisation, facilitating illegal entry into Greece and intentionally causing the shipwreck.

But they have all stated they were not smugglers or responsible for the shipwreck, claiming instead to be simply trying to reach Europe like the others on board. Organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have called the trial proceedings rushed and improper.

"The Pylos 9 defendants were unjustly arrested and charged with smuggling offences based on limited and questionable evidence," Marion Bouchetel, a member of Legal Centre Lesvos, which is defending the accused, told Al Jazeera. The group has called the trial an instance of the "sys-

tematic criminalisation of migrants in Greece". If the nine men are convicted, they face several life sentences. The Adriana fishing trawler, which was crammed with as many as 750 people, mostly from Egypt, Pakistan, Syria, and Palestine, set sail from Libya on June 9, 2023. Four days later, passengers started sending out distress calls that the boat had stopped moving. The Greek coastguard, notified by NGOs, the Italian coastguard, and Europe's border agency Frontex of the location of the ship, reached Adriana late on June 14 night.

In the first hours of June 15, the Adriana capsized. Survivor testimonies allege that the Hellenic coastguard attempted to tow the boat, causing it to flip over, and that it did not sufficiently act to save the lives of those in the water. The Hellenic coastguard has denied both of these allegations. There were 104 survivors. "Our argument, following the testimonies of the survivors, is

that these nine people are not responsible for the sinking at the very least. The coastguard is responsible for the sinking," said Stefanos Levidis, one of the lead researchers in an investigation into the shipwreck, who will testify as an expert witness for the defence.

Levidis's group, Forensis, which cross-referenced testimonies from 26 survivors with videos and photographs of the ship, vessel tracking and flight path data, satellite imagery, as well as the logs and testimonies of the captain of the coastguard vessel - concluded that the coastguard was responsible for the sinking as it did not properly mobilise other nearby ships, towed the Adriana, retreated causing waves, and then left those who had been thrown overboard as the ship capsized alone at sea for at least 20 minutes.

A joint Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch report, based on testimonies from representatives of the Hellenic

coastguard, the Greek police, and nongovernmental organisations, similarly concluded that the coastguard did not respond to distress calls properly and that allegations about its role in the sinking merited a full investigation. An investigation in Greece's naval court into the Hellenic coastguard's role in the shipwreck has yet to be concluded. The defence team has not been given access to the evidence collected. The Hellenic coastguard has repeatedly stated that those on board refused assistance before the boat capsized, denying any responsibility for the sinking as it maintains it fulfilled its life-saving duties.

Beyond this, Levidis noted that there are questions about the evidence collected by the Hellenic coastguard after the sinking. "The process of evidence collection coming from the authorities was lacking, at the very least, if not tampered with," he said. — Al Jazeera

Russian court hands 25 years to arson plotter accused

MOSCOW: A court in Russia has sentenced a man to 25 years in jail for plotting an arson attack against a military recruitment office. Ilya Baburin, 24, was sentenced by a court in Novosibirsk, on charges including treason. Prosecutors had claimed that he had plotted to burn down the recruitment office in Siberia on instruction from Ukraine in 2022, the year Moscow launched its invasion of its neighbour.

The prosecutors claimed that the attack, which did not happen, was being planned at the behest of an unidentified person from Ukraine. They accused Baburin of seeking to help the Azov battalion, a branch of the Ukrainian military branded a terror organisation in Russia. Russia saw a wave of arson attacks on army offices after the Kremlin announced an

unpopular military mobilisation drive in September 2022, the month Baburin was arrested. The court also found him guilty of setting fire to a local music school, which it categorised as a terrorist act. Rights groups say the sentence is a record length, and stressed that the arson never happened.

The Perviy Otdel (First Department) legal association rights group cited his lawyer as saying there was no evidence of Baburin's involvement in the incidents, in which no casualties were reported. "Baburin does not look like a spy giving out state secrets and did not have or hand out state secrets," his lawyer Vasily Dubkov said, according to a transcript of a statement delivered in court. Zona Solidarnosti (Solidarity Zone), a Telegram channel that provides information about Russian antiwar activists,

quoted Dubkov as saying: "No, he [Baburin] did not kill, rape or rob anyone. Even according to the indictment, no one was harmed by his actions". "Does a person really deserve to spend half his life in a prison or colony for such crimes?" he asked. The court argued that Baburin had "created a plan to set the military commissariat in Novosibirsk on fire". It said he had recruited somebody to throw a Molotov cocktail at the army office but the unnamed person instead reported him to Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB).

It alleged that he was acting on Ukrainian orders and that he had "established contact" with members of the Azov battalion. The Russian TASS news agency published footage of Baburin in court, smiling inside a glass cage for defendants. — Al Jazeera

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ICC decisions must be respected

IN the aftermath of recent developments at The Hague, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has taken a significant step by seeking arrest warrants for Israeli and Hamas leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This bold move underscores the ICC's commitment to addressing war crimes and crimes against humanity, bringing into sharp relief the complex interplay of justice and international relations.

The ICC's actions are rooted in the aftermath of a seven-month war that resulted in the deaths of over 35,000 Palestinians, as estimated by Gaza health officials, with a significant number being women and children. This tragic loss of life, along with the extensive humanitarian crisis it has triggered, underscores the severe impact of the Israeli offensive, driven by strategies including widespread aerial bombardments. This approach, largely due to Israel's limited ground forces, raises profound ethical and strategic questions about the conduct of war and the protection of civilian lives in modern conflict zones. Prime Minister Netanyahu, by the accounts of the ICC, may be complicit in these devastating strategies, raising the question of accountability at the highest levels of government. The allegations suggest a heavy reliance on aerial tactics that have contributed significantly to civilian casualties, a tactic often criticized for its indiscriminate nature in densely populated areas like Gaza.

Moreover, the situation is further complicated by President Joe Biden's rejection of the ICC's decision. This stance not only highlights the challenges faced by the ICC in asserting its authority globally, including in the United States but also raises concerns about the international community's commitment to upholding international law and human rights standards. The U.S. position, potentially shielding allies from international scrutiny, could undermine the credibility and effectiveness of the ICC, suggesting a geopolitical landscape where justice is seen to be applied selectively.

This selective application of justice can severely impact the ICC's perceived legitimacy and its ability to function as a truly international body. The effectiveness of the ICC hinges on its universal respect and enforcement, without which its mandates risk being seen as politically motivated or selectively enforced.

The ongoing conflict and the resulting humanitarian crisis in Gaza, as highlighted by UN officials and other humanitarian agencies, are a stark reminder of the urgent need for a balanced approach to conflict resolution that prioritizes human lives and adheres to international humanitarian laws. The ICC's pursuit of justice in this case is a crucial test of the international legal framework's ability to transcend powerful political interests and enforce laws designed to protect the most vulnerable in times of war. As the world watches how this situation unfolds, it is imperative that all nations, including the U.S., support the mechanisms of international law and justice, such as the ICC. Doing so not only reinforces the global commitment to human rights and accountability but also ensures that leaders and nations are deterred from pursuing strategies that result in significant civilian harm. The path to peace and security lies through adherence to these principles, ensuring that actions, even in wartime, are bounded by the rule of law and respect for human dignity.

Tragic death of Iranian President

THE tragic death in a helicopter crash of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in the mountainous terrain in the province of Eastern Azerbaijan on Sunday comes at a time when Iran and the West Asian region are going through a crisis because of the war in Gaza, and the exchange of missile and drone attacks between Iran and Israel last month for the first time since the creation of Israel in 1948 which had made the security situation both fragile and volatile.

Raisi won the presidential election in 2021 and he was seen as strong, especially in the protests that broke out over Kurdish girl Mahsa Amini for violating the dress code, in late 2022 and early 2023. He was also expected to succeed the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei because of his adherence to conservatism. The helicopter carrying Raisi and Abdollahian was a 50-year-old vehicle. It is being inferred that because of the American economic sanctions, Iran has not been able to buy modern planes and equipment in general.

Iran's Supreme leader Ali Khamenei expressed his sorrow in a statement, in which he said, "With immense grief and sorrow, I received the bitter news of the passing of the diligent scholar, the competent and hard-working popular president, the servant of Imam Reza, Sayyid Ebrahim Raisi, and his esteemed companions. The entire tenure of Ebrahim Raisi, whether during his short presidency or before that, was spent in tireless service to the people of the country and Islam." Raisi rose from the ranks. He became a deputy head of the judiciary for 10 years, and was appointed prosecutor-general in 2014. In 2019, the United States sanctioned him for human rights violations, including his role in the death of political dissidents in the 1980s. He lost the presidential election to Hasan Rouhani in 2017. Rouhani was seen as a pragmatist. Raisi was appointed chief of the head of the judiciary in 2019 by Khamenei. And soon he was made deputy chairman of the Assembly of Experts, the 88-member clerical body that will elect the Supreme Leader.

According to the Iranian Constitution of 1979 – important amendments were made to the Constitution in 1989 – the first vice president will be the caretaker president in the case of the death of a president in office. Mohammad Mokhber, the first vice president, will be care-taker president, and the election for a new president will be held in 50 days. The cabinet has made deputy foreign minister Ali Bagheri Kani as the caretaker foreign minister in the place of Abdollahian. The complicated Iranian constitutional structure provides for exigencies. This is the reason that Ali Khamenei said that there would be no disruption in government when news came in about the helicopter crash carrying Raisi, Abdollahian and others. The nuclear negotiations between Iran and the U.S. along with Germany, France and UK, is hanging fire. And with the presidential election in the US due in November, the prospect of reviving the 2015 deal seems to be difficult. Then US President Barack Obama had pushed for it, but his successor Donald Trump dropped it without hesitation. The possibility of reworking the agreement which involves Iran reducing the up-gradation of the fissile material to weapons grade in return for lifting of West's economic sanctions against Iran would become difficult if Trump were to win in November. And there is little doubt that Iran's economic growth is suffering because of the sanctions.

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UN resolution can help us, survivors, fight Srebrenica genocide denial

Ehlimana Memišević

ON May 23, the United Nations General Assembly will be voting on a draft resolution declaring July 11 the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 genocide in Srebrenica.

The resolution was proposed by Germany and Rwanda and is supported by a significant number of UN member states. Besides designating a day of commemoration, the resolution also condemns "without reservation any denial of the Srebrenica Genocide as a historical event", and urges member states "to preserve the facts, including through their educational systems, by developing appropriate programmes", and undertake action to prevent "denial and distortion, and occurrence of genocides in the future".

It also emphasises the importance of "completing the process of finding and identifying the remaining victims of the Srebrenica Genocide and according them a dignified burial", and calls for "the continued prosecution of those perpetrators of the Srebrenica Genocide who have yet to face justice".

As a survivor of the genocide, I consider this resolution a much-needed acknowledgement of what happened, and the proposed day of remembrance – a crucial act of preserving the memory of the fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, sons, daughters, grandparents, and other people we loved, who were violently and cruelly taken away from us.

As their existence and our suffering are constantly denied, and their torturers and murderers are celebrated, this resolution gives hope that their remains will be found and that those responsible for our suffering will be brought to justice. This is crucial for the reconciliation and healing processes, and it is a necessary step for the prevention of future genocides.

My family is one of thousands who are still searching for the remains of our loved ones, killed by Bosnian Serb forces in the genocide. In the summer of 1992, when the mass killings and disappearances of Bosniak Muslims intensified in my hometown of Višegrad, my mother and father decided to split the family. Bosnian Serb forces were targeting and killing Bosniak men and boys first and kidnapping women and girls who would be raped and murdered.

So my father took my 17-year-old brother and they fled Višegrad. My 13-year-old sister joined my aunt's family who also left. They all temporarily settled in Crni Vrh – a village between Višegrad and Gora de, which was not yet captured by the Serb

forces.

My mother and I – just six years old then – went to her parents' village. In rushing to flee, we had to leave behind my paternal grandmother, who was unable to walk due to her severe asthma. Her remains were uncovered 18 years later in the Perucac lake mass grave.

In my mother's village, we were still not safe. As we made preparations to flee again, my mother tried to convince me to leave behind my baby doll. Realising how hard it was for me to give up the doll, my grandfather hid it with other family valuables so "I could find it when we return". We never returned, and I never saw my grandfather again.

He and the other men from the village fled to Srebrenica. A few weeks later, my mother, grandmother, and I managed to escape to Crni Vrh.

We reunited with my brother, father and sister for a short period of time in Crni Vrh. Just a few days later, my father was ambushed while doing reconnaissance with a couple of other men and went missing. We never found out what had happened to him. Soon after we had to flee again and we managed to reach Gora de, a town in southeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, declared as one of the safe areas by the United Nations in 1993.

We spent the next three and a half years, marked by death, fear and uncertainty, in the refugee centre there. We communicated with my grandfather in Srebrenica through letters the Red Cross delivered. In one of his last letters to us, dated April 24, 1995, he reassured us that he had enough food and urged us not to worry about him. He told us that he loved us and worried about us, as he had heard that the situation in Gora de was not good.

In July 1995, he and many other men and boys from his village were killed in the genocide. His partial remains were recovered from a mass grave near Zvornik in 2009. Then, in 2020, one of his missing arm bones was exhumed from another mass grave.

The reason so often only partial remains of victims' are uncovered is because the Bosnian Serb forces tried to hide evidence of their crimes by digging up mass graves and transferring bodies multiple times. In many cases, ravines, rivers and lakes were used as mass graves.

I will never forget the day we learned about the "fall of Srebrenica" and I witnessed my mother's pain as she heard about the mass killings. As I grew older, I became aware of how she endured unbearable loss – our father, our home, our town, and everything we had – with dignity and grace. However, it will

forever be embedded in my memory how devastated she was when she learned about her father's death. "Was he afraid? How did they kill him? Was he tortured or humiliated? What was he thinking about in his last minutes?" she asked herself.

Remembering her pain, I spent my childhood and most of my adult life wishing never to find the remains of my father, grandfather, paternal grandmother and other extended family members who were missing, fearing what we could learn about their last days and hours. As a child, I did not understand the survivors' need to find the bodies of loved ones.

My father's aunt, whose three sons were killed trying to flee from Zepa in 1995, devoted her life to finding their remains, to "bury them properly", so she and their souls could finally find peace. She died without finding the remains of two of them.

Her story is similar to that of hundreds of mothers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hajra Catic, the head of the Women of Srebrenica association, spent her life searching for the remains of her only son, journalist Nihad Catic, who famously reported in his last dispatch for Radio Bosnia and Herzegovina on July 10, 1995: "Srebrenica is turning into the biggest slaughterhouse".

"Finding even one bone would bring me back to life," Hajra said in 2020, before passing away the following year without ever finding even that single bone of her son's remains.

As many survivors, including my family, continue to search for the remains of more than 7,500 victims, of which 1,200 were killed in Srebrenica alone, high-ranking state officials in Serbia and Republika Srpska, politicians, journalists, and citizens, continue to deny that the genocide took place. They have called it a "fabricated myth", questioned the reported number of victims, and accused survivors of making "tombstones in Potocari for living people", referring to the location of the Srebrenica genocide memorial-cemetery.

In 2018, the Republika Srpska parliament rejected a 2004 report, issued by a special investigative commission established by a previous Republika Srpska government, which acknowledged that Bosnian Serb forces had committed the crime of genocide in 1995.

Then in 2019, the Republika Srpska entity set up a supposedly independent commission – the Independent International Commission for Investigating the Sufferings of all Peoples in

the Srebrenica Region in the Period from 1992 to 1995 – to "determine the truth".

In July 2021, it published its "concluding report", which claimed that most of those killed in Srebrenica were Bosniak soldiers and not civilians and that what happened was an "horrific consequence" of their refusal to surrender to Serb forces. The document also accused the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) of staging politically biased trials of Bosnian Serb political and military leaders, and of wrongly classifying the Srebrenica massacres as genocide. The report was heavily criticised and rejected by lawyers, genocide scholars, and experts in transitional justice.

Such institutionalised denial and distortion of the truth has led to the continued dehumanisation of the victims and survivors. One poignant recent example is the case of orthopaedic doctor Nebojša Mraovic.

On September 21, the incomplete remains of two Srebrenica genocide victims were exhumed from the yard of his home in Brcko District. According to a witness, they had been brought there in 1997 and were subsequently buried under a fountain.

When asked about them, Mraovic, who has a private orthopaedic clinic in the city of Brcko, said that he did not see anything wrong in possessing the remains and that he used the bones for "planning operations". He explained he had found them in the woods while hunting.

The remains found in his yard belonged to Mensur Nukic and Salko Had ic, victims of the Srebrenica genocide; their other body parts were found in mass graves in Vlasenica in 2000.

Mraovic has continued his practice and his licence has not been revoked. His lack of remorse is a reminder of the dehumanisation of the Bosniak Muslims that led to the genocide in the 1990s and represents an increasingly apparent threat of a repeat of these atrocities.

Amid the continuing historical revisionism by Republika Srpska's authorities and society, it is more urgent than ever to counter genocide denial.

The UN Resolution to designate July 11 as the "International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica" is a good step in the right direction.

Adopting the resolution, which recognises and acknowledges the genocide and condemns its denial and the glorification of war criminals, is the least the world can do to defend the dignity of victims and survivors and commit to preventing future genocides.

Gantz's challenge to Netanyahu and the ICC: What comes next?

Osama Al-Sharif

ISRAEL is in turmoil. It has been in chaos since before Oct. 7. Its war on Gaza has turned into a stigma, haunting the country, its government, and its standing among nations. This has turned out to be Israel's longest, most horrific, and most controversial conflict. The declared goals of the war have not been fulfilled as the war enters its eighth month with no visible finishing line. Inside Israel, the debate is not about the calamitous outcome of the Israeli onslaught on Palestinians in Gaza – more than 35,000 dead and 10,000 missing and counting – but over two main issues: returning the Israeli captives alive, and agreeing on a post-war plan that excludes a Hamas role.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been wavering on both issues. He has rejected last-minute deals to end the fighting and retrieve all hostages, and failed to deliver a pragmatic plan for the day after that is acceptable to all stakeholders, mainly Israel's political and military bodies, the US, and the rest of the world.

So he has sanctioned – against US warnings – an onslaught on heavily populated Rafah, believing that he can deliver a decisive victory against Hamas and force his obscure vision for a post-war plan. That is not working well for him and an exhausted Israeli military. Instead, he faces an enduring insurgency, to quote a beleaguered US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. In recent days, the fight in Jabalia, in northern Gaza, has been the fiercest since the early days of the war.

This prompted War Cabinet member and former Defense Minister Benny Gantz to issue an ultimatum to Netanyahu on Saturday: He will leave the government on June 8 if it does not formulate a new war plan, including an international, Arab, and Palestinian administration to handle civilian affairs in Gaza. He called on Netanyahu to put Israel's interests ahead of his own.

It is unclear what a Gantz withdrawal from the Netanyahu coalition would do. Netanyahu had become dependent on his far-right partners to the extent that he had become a hostage to their will. But Gantz's threat must be taken seriously. His departure would weaken the coalition and could bring the government down. If that happened, an early election would be called, and Gantz and his broad coalition would likely emerge winners.

Gantz is seen as a more "moderate" replacement to Netanyahu and his radical partners in the eyes of the Biden administration, which has given up on the current premier.

That was the calculus, at least before the shocking declaration by the International Criminal Court announcement on Monday that the prosecutor, Karim Khan, was seeking arrest warrants against senior Israeli and Hamas officials, including Netanyahu and Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar, on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The proposed arrest warrants include Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Galant and other key Hamas military leaders.

Khan has been under pressure for months to take action in response to documented Israeli atrocities, including crimes against humanity. Ignoring

intimidation by US lawmakers, Khan has finally made his move, saying there are reasonable grounds to believe that both Netanyahu and Sinwar bear criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity from the day of Hamas's attack on Israel on Oct. 7 onwards.

ICC judges will now decide whether they believe the evidence is sufficient to issue arrest warrants, a process that could take weeks or months.

Regardless of the outcome, this has become a political earthquake for Israel and its foreign allies. Once such warrants are issued, the top political leaders of Israel will become wanted men. But the international and domestic reverberations will go deep.

Already, top US leaders have attacked and attempted to discredit the ICC. President Joe Biden called the ICC move "outrageous." Other lawmakers threatened to take action against the court and its judges. Israeli politicians moved together to condemn the ICC decision. They looked to the US to adopt measures to discredit the ICC, where the US and Israel are not even members.

Gantz has attacked the ICC and its equivalence between Israel and Hamas. So did Opposition Leader Yair Lapid, who nevertheless hinted that Israel has reached this point because of Netanyahu's policies.

For now, Israel will show unity and solidarity regarding the ICC move. But that will not last long. There is a belief that Israel would not have reached such a devastating milestone without Netanyahu. The conclusion will be that he must go.

How Gantz will use this significant development to his advantage remains to be seen. Regardless of how the US reacts to the ICC's next move, Israel now confronts a dire challenge unlike any it has faced in its short history.

The ICC, with 124 members, also faces an existential challenge. Since it was established in 2002, it has overseen more than 30 cases involving war crimes and crimes against humanity. Failure to address the carnage in Gaza would mean its demise. Doing so would restore credibility to the rules-based order and international law covenant.

Away from all this, can Gantz use the overwhelming international pressure on Israel to dismantle the Netanyahu government? That will not be an easy task. Netanyahu will fight until the end to keep his government alive. He will use the ICC indictments to stir emotions that Israel is now under attack by an antisemitic conspiracy.

But it is worth mentioning that while he may disagree with Netanyahu's tactics, Gantz is no dove. Israeli society has become anti-Palestinian in recent years and more so since Oct. 7. Gantz may support the existence of a Palestinian Authority, but only as a proxy of an extended Israeli control of the West Bank. He will not risk supporting a two-state solution.

We could see an attempt to dethrone Netanyahu, opening the path for a Gantz rise, but that will not be good news for the Palestinians. The project that Netanyahu has launched will go on: total annexation of Palestinian territories and a derailment of a Palestinian state project.

Slovakia was at the crossroads even before its leader's shooting

Damien McIeroy

SLOVAKIA was pitched into the global headlines last week, right when its fate represents a crisis point for Europe.

The attempted assassination of Robert Fico, the veteran and iconoclastic Prime Minister, was a graphic illustration of the tensions roiling the continent as the Russian war on Ukraine endures through a third year.

Mr Fico is a bounce-back politician who has held the Prime Minister's office before and in his

return to the European stage presents Brussels with a challenge that goes beyond the immediate discord over a withdrawal of support to Kyiv.

As he recovers from his life-threatening injuries, there will be a lull period, something underlined domestically by the main opposition declaring a 100-day moratorium on campaigning, even though the European Parliament elections loom next month. Those elections are ever more a faultline

for the continent. The backdrop is Russia's renewed headway along a fresh Ukrainian frontline, and the pressures there can now only be expected to build throughout the European summer.

Meanwhile, the victory of Peter Pellegrini, a Fico ally, in Slovakia's recent presidential election confirms that the country is deeply polarised.

President Zuzana Caputova, the incumbent who has often clashed

with Mr Fico and whose losing campaign portrayed her as an anti-populist candidate, secured more votes in this year's election than she did in 2019. However, Mr Pellegrini's victory consolidated the left populist movement's grip on power in Slovakia.

The last government gave away all of Slovakia's viable armour and Soviet-era air force equipment to Ukraine, then benefited from mod-

ernised western replacements. But when Mr Fico took over as Prime Minister late last year, he announced that all of Bratislava's support would halt.

This made relatively few waves as Slovakia's early support had been exhausted. It was his push to introduce reforms (which diminished the metropolitan elite institutions) that was causing greater ructions.

The EU's Foreign Affairs Council last week issued a report warning

Brussels against punishing Slovakia for its lurch away from the bloc's norms and standards on the judiciary and press freedom. The reason given in the report is that Slovakia could still fit into a trend of the awkward member.

Once synonymous with how then prime minister David Cameron tried to position the UK to ward off Brexit ahead of the 2016 election, pulling the lever marked "take back powers" is a fact of life in modern Europe.

Searching for humanity among algorithms

POLITICAL unrest, grave human injustice and the non-responsive attitude of governments to the demands of the people have always produced innovative ways of punishment. Masses take to the streets to make their demands heard and when, as history has shown, this is met with neglect, or worse yet violence, the people begin to retaliate by finding ways to disrupt the economy. Recalling capitalism's well taught lesson that only the dollar matters and all else is collateral damage people have started boycotting certain institutions and companies that are in one way or another complicit in the hindering of their demands.

Governments have for decades told their people that these boycotts do not work, that they do not produce the kind of damage intended and that they mainly harm the people themselves by leading to layoffs and closures. The stock exchanges around the world and the massive logistic response from companies to these boycotts say otherwise.

As the war in Gaza rages on raising the civilian death toll to figures yet unseen in modern history warfare, the boycotts have been and still are in full swing. Companies

notorious for their support of Israel have been hit the hardest with corporations like Starbucks and McDonalds seeing decline in sales, shares plummeting to all-time lows, and a tarnished brand image that they might never recover from. This has led both companies to form new brand identities designed and situated far from their mother companies in efforts to compensate for the losses occurred by their once respected brands.

Universities around the world are facing one of the difficult dilemmas of having to deal with student protests demanding their divestments from companies complicit in aiding Israel with its genocidal efforts on Gaza. In the United States universities collect billions in endowments from companies and organizations that have long-term ties with Israel and are almost impossible to sever.

Only one university has agreed to divest from Israel, Evergreen State College, a clear indication of how entrenched the US education system is in its politics.

The war on Gaza has passed the 200-day mark and after numerous attacks that have been deemed war crimes and the starvation of innocent people by barring the

Aysha Taryam

entry of international aid the protests have become louder, more furious, once more evolving into 'blockouts'.

'Celebrity Blockout' is the term social media users have coined to call out celebrities for their inaction towards the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The mission is to once again threaten profits, this time of celebrities, through the loss of their followers on social media sites like X, Instagram and TikTok. Blocking a celebrity is different from unfollowing them as the blocking of an account hinders its algorithm progress and lowers its reach.

This 'blockout' was a response to Vogue's Met Gala that saw bejewelled celebrities walking the red carpet in the most extravagant gowns flaunting what many saw as a parallel universe to the one the rest of us inhabit. People were quick to compare the scenes at the Met to the movie The Hunger Games and branded the event with Marie Antoinette's alleged infamous words 'Let them eat cake'. As US universities are searing and genocide is being committed all eyes were meant to be focused on The Met Gala fiasco, needless to say it backfired and from it the #blockout2024 was born.

Celebrities from around the world saw their follower numbers plummet just as one saw boycotted companies' stocks do, losing hundreds of thousands of followers an hour, a major blow to a celebrity's image and finances.

The only means of expression an artist once possessed was through their art, the rest was left for news organizations and political pundits. Talent was what artists used to be criticized for but when the famed transformed into their own news outlets, radio stations and advertising agencies they not only reaped the financial benefits of cutting the middle-man, but they also shouldered the responsibility that those companies used to carry. It was once a rarity to demand such action from a celebrity yet today we see them being reprimanded for not having a political voice. In the past such criticism was reserved for political figures and specialists, today it is demanded from anyone with a large following.

Indeed, it is a responsibility that any human must acknowledge when gifted with such a large platform, to be the voice of the voiceless and yet one must ask: do celebrities and 'influencers' possess the political wherewithal to put their liveli-

hood on the line for it? One could only do that if they solidly stood for their ethical beliefs and even then, most people fail to take a stand. This argument is in no way absolving celebrities from their duty towards humanity it merely poses the question of whether political commentary and courage should be demanded from 'fashionistas' and TikTok dancers.

It will forever be ironic that social media celebrities who are followed by masses of the population have labelled themselves 'influencers' when all they are able to do is transform their followers into addicts raising consumerism to unimaginable heights. They are 'influencers,' yes, but what kind of influence are they peddling and how much of it is legitimately honest? The ends might justify the means in this scenario but to ask for genuine care towards an issue from someone who does not grasp the gravity of genocide is futile.

The pro-Palestine post might or might not be uploaded but at the end of the day social media 'influencers' cannot truly give what they do not have. The people must remember this as they search for humanity in the dark forest of algorithms.

Gaza, Ukraine wars not going according to Biden's plan

Michael Jansen

Kremlin to Putin's sharpest liberal critics, I have yet to find anyone who views Ukraine in NATO as anything other than a direct challenge to Russian interests."

Other commentators have said that Russians see Ukraine as more than an "interest" or asset but as a long-standing marriage partner who shares religion, culture and identity with Russia.

Israel is losing the Gaza war on multiple fronts. On the ground in Gaza, Hamas has announced it is waging a war of attrition in Gaza and is ready to carry on until Israel withdraws. Hamas fighters — with sidearms and home-made rockets — continue to battle Israel's well-equipped troops backed up by tanks, drones, and aerial bombardment. After the Israelis launched their staged offensive against Rafah in the south of Gaza, Hamas gunmen appeared in Jabalya and

manent ceasefire. This number is growing, dividing the country.

On the international front, Israel has been widely condemned by millions of people around the world for slaying and wounding thousands of Palestinian women and children, denying them food, water, fuel and medical care, precipitating famine, and devastating Gaza to the point the strip is uninhabitable. Israel has been accused of genocide of the Palestinian people before the International Court of Justice and war crimes charges against Netanyahu and his commanders have been raised at the International Criminal Court where warrants for their arrest have been demanded.

Israel's traditional partners, the US, Germany, and Britain, have been criticised for continuing to arm Israel and provide political backing during the Gaza war but other countries have withdrawn support and condemned Israel. They do not see Israel's war as defensive

The US and its allies initially dismissed the ramshackle Russian military due to its poor performance and low morale in the early months of the war and did not credit improvements in discipline and logistics. This was accompanied by ramping up of weapons manufacture by Russian military industries. Russian morale has been boosted by political support from China and the Global South which has been disillusioned by US and Western double dealing. Their Cold War warriors are seen as using Ukraine as a proxy to weaken Russia, the heir of the Soviet Union. Ukraine and Ukrainians are paying a high price for a war which should have been avoided.

Gaza City in the north and Khan Younis in the south all three of which had been declared "cleared" by the Israeli army. Although Israel has claimed it has killed 13,000 and captured 500 Hamas fighters, the movement remains strong and is said to be attracting volunteers among young males determined to exact revenge on Israel for killing more than 35,000, wounding 78,000 and disappearing 10,000 Gazans beneath the rubble. Even the US has warned that Israel's war aim of eliminating Hamas is unachievable.

On the home front, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's extreme right-wing government has been accused of putting the war ahead of agreeing to a six-week ceasefire and freeing 90-odd live hostages and more than 30 bodies of captives still held by Hamas.

Most Israelis want him to agree to Hamas' demands for the release of some of the 9,000 Palestinian prisoner Israel holds. Many Israelis are prepared to accept Hamas' demand for a per-

but as designed to crush the Palestinian people and make them submit to forever occupation. Israel has sacrificed unconditional backing and impunity by waging this cruel seven-month war. Raising the spectre of the World War II Holocaust has always enabled Israel and its backers to fend off criticism of its policies. However, critics are now prepared to risk being accused by Israel of "Holocaust denial" and being "antisemitic" or racist against Jews.

This being the case, Israel should declare "victory" and end the Rafah offensive and the war. Netanyahu refuses to take this step because as long as Israel is fighting, he does not have to account for Israel's failure to pre-empt the October 7th raid staged by Hamas which killed 1,139 and abducted 250 Israelis and visitors. Deeply unpopular Netanyahu would also have to call for an election which his Likud party would lose, leaving him liable for jail time if he is convicted of fraud, breach of trust, and bribery in his ongoing trial.

Biden's middle-of-the-road approach to Israel is misguided

ON Friday, aid deliveries began via the US-constructed floating pier connected to Gaza's coast. While any aid reaching Gaza is helpful, the pier is emblematic of the Biden administration's efforts to show concern for Palestinian civilians, while maintaining support for Israel. President Joe Biden's attempts to take a middle-of-the-road position on the war in Gaza expose him to political attacks from all sides.

Nuanced approaches to policy that recalculate in response to new information or events are often commendable. Indeed, some supporters of Biden's approach argue that that is exactly what the US leader is trying to do — listen to all sides and adjust policy as needed, while holding firm to core principles.

However, Biden and his foreign policy advisers face intense polarization in American responses to the war in Gaza. Pro-Israel Republicans and many older Democrats view anything short of absolute support for Israel, especially in the aftermath of the horrific Oct. 7 attack by Hamas, as a betrayal. Democratic critics, who are mostly younger, see US military support for Israel as directly contributing to the death of many thousands of

Palestinian civilians and growing famine; for them, such support equals complicity in severe human rights violations, at a minimum.

In the immediate wake of the October attack, Biden and his senior officials doubled down on support for Israel. However, as Israel pursued an intensely destructive form of warfare in the crowded and isolated Gaza Strip, the US administration faced growing demands to use its leverage to mitigate or stop the violence. To Biden's frustration, however, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was unwilling to cooperate. The current Israeli government either does not care if it faces consequences in Washington, or is calling Biden's bluff and simply does not believe that the US government will take serious action against Israel.

The Biden administration has shifted its rhetoric and tinkered with some elements of policy in an effort to respond to criticisms that it is too willing to support Israel. During a speech on Sunday, Biden called for an "immediate ceasefire," a demand he had been unwilling to make earlier in the war. The president and his officials have frequently repeated a call for a two-state solution.

Kerry Boyd Anderson

Over the past few months, Biden increasingly has criticized Netanyahu, while maintaining his overall support for Israel.

The US provides support for Israel in many forms, but its provision of weaponry is, perhaps, the most important, and is Washington's greatest source of leverage with Israel. For critics of Israel's conduct in Gaza, it is essential to place conditions on or altogether halt deliveries of US offensive weapons. For many supporters of Israel, threatening to limit or cut off arms supplies — let alone actually doing it — would be a betrayal.

The US government process of providing or approving the sale of weapons to other countries can be complex — involving multiple funding streams, approval processes, and timelines — which makes it difficult to properly analyze US funding and approval for sending weapons to Israel. Nonetheless, the Biden administration has taken some steps that suggest increased scrutiny of which weapons it sends to Israel.

On May 8, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin confirmed that the administration had paused a specific shipment of particularly large bombs to Israel, citing

the "context of unfolding events in Rafah." In a CNN interview that aired the same day, Biden said that his administration would stop sending certain types of weapons if Israel pushed into "population centers" in Rafah, though he said that Washington would still provide defensive weapons. He acknowledged that some civilians have been killed by US-provided bombs. In a statement that seemed stunning to many observers, the US leader said: "We're not walking away from Israel's security. We're walking away from Israel's ability to wage war in those areas."

However, the Biden administration has continued to actively supply weapons to Israel. In March, the Washington Post reported that the administration had approved more than 100 military sales to Israel since the war in Gaza began. On May 14, the administration informed Congress that it plans to proceed with the sale of more than \$1 billion in weapons to Israel. Under a 2016 agreement, the US provides \$3.8 billion per year to Israel in military aid, and Congress in April approved an additional \$17 billion in defense aid for Israel.

The Biden administration has tried to provide aid

to Gaza, including via air-drops and now the pier, but has been unwilling to use its full leverage with Israel to obtain sufficient amounts of aid into the enclave by road. Biden also suspended funding for UNRWA in January after Israel accused UNRWA employees of supporting Hamas; since then, Congress has ensured that no US aid will resume to the agency until at least March 2025.

It appears that the Washington administration has not come to terms with the fact that some small shifts in US policy that might seem huge to Biden's team seem completely insufficient to critics. For officials who come from traditional Washington foreign policy circles, pausing even one delivery of weapons to Israel, calling for a ceasefire, or acknowledging that US-provided weapons have killed civilians can feel like enormous changes, but to younger Americans who have a fundamentally different view of the conflict, these barely make a dent. At the same time, for those who unconditionally support Israel, these policy adjustments appear to be an abandonment of Israel. Biden's efforts to find a compromise position risk angering everyone, while reassuring no one.

Amid global polarisation, the pandemic agreement encourages cooperation

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

FOR more than two years, countries of the world have worked together towards one historic and generational goal – to ensure we are better prepared for the next pandemic by learning lessons from the devastation caused by COVID-19.

At a time when conflicts, politics and economics have wrought destruction, discord and division, sovereign governments have found a way to work collaboratively to forge a new global agreement to protect the world from inevitable future pandemic emergencies.

This essential effort, being driven by hundreds of negotiators tasked by over 190 nations, was launched in the middle of the most devastating event in our lifetimes.

Based on official counts, COVID-19 left more than 7 million dead. But the real death toll is likely much higher. The coronavirus pandemic also wiped billions, if not trillions, from the global economy. Social upheaval – from job loss-

es to school closures – scarred communities worldwide.

At the height of this disaster, with hospitals around the world crowded with patients being cared for by over-stretched health workers, more than two dozen world leaders came together to issue a global call for unity. They said the world must never again be left so vulnerable to another pandemic. They concurred that governments must never again fail to cooperate in sharing vital information, medical equipment and medicines.

And they stressed that never again can the world's poorest countries and communities be left at the end of the queue when it comes to access to life-saving tools like vaccines.

Equity, we said then, and continue to say now, must be our guiding light. What was needed, the presidents and prime ministers said then, was a historic compact that commits countries to work together, across

frontiers, recognising that deadly viruses do not respect the borders, do not see race, and do not recognise wealth.

This spurred a decision, by the 194 Member

Health Regulations, the global playbook which countries use to detect, alert and respond to public health emergencies.

to make the world safer from the next pandemic.

The outcomes of these vital negotiations are scheduled to be consid-

ered at the 77th World Health Assembly that will open in Geneva on May 27.

With the finishing line so close, the stakes facing the world have never been higher. Key issues remain to be resolved, above all, how the pandemic agreement will ensure equity for all countries when it comes to making them ready to prevent or respond to the next pandemic. "Operationalising" equity has been a regular refrain during the talks. This entails ensuring countries have assured real-time access to the capacities needed to protect their health workers and communities from a pandemic threat, so that we do not see a repeat of the inequities in access to vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics, personal protective equipment and

other vital tools.

Operationalising equity is also about making sure all countries have strong health systems that are prepared to respond to future pandemics, where they may emerge.

Global health security depends on ensuring there are no weak links in the chain of defence against pathogens with pandemic potential. Global health equity is key to ensuring that every link in the chain is strong. All of this requires collaboration between coun-

tries to share what is needed, from pathogens and diagnostics, to information and resources. And this can be secured only if political leadership focuses on global cooperation, not narrow nationalism.

The pandemic agreement provides the foundation on which to build the world's future collaborative approach to prevent the next pandemic threat.

It is not a piece of paper. At its heart, it is a life-saving instrument that will set out how countries will engage with each other to protect their populations, strengthen public health and avoid unnecessary disruptions to societies and economies.

At a time of such global friction and tension, I salute all efforts by the international community to grasp this unique opportunity to make the world safer from pandemics.

The weight of this shared responsibility is matched by the benefits that a strong agreement will provide for the health and security of all.



SCCI demands soft loans for entrepreneurs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: President of the Sarhadi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq urged the bank of Khyber and commercial banks to issue soft loans for promotion of new entrepreneurship and startup business/industry instead of provision of the running financing facility.

Fuad said revival of Development Financing Institutions (DFIs) and Industry Development Bank of Pakistan (IDBP) in a true sense is vital for industrialization and promotion of small and medium scale industry and business. He called for proper training and awareness about various loans schemes to new entrepreneurs and startups.

The SCCI chief asked the BoK and commercial banks to facilitate the business community under passion of service and friendly atmosphere. He further emphasized KP constitutional rights on electricity and gas should be ensured.

In order to enhance export through railway, he suggested launching cargo trains from Peshawar to Karachi and fully functional dry-ports along with restoration of the railway system.

For promotion of mutual Pak-Afghan trade, he stressed enforcement of sustainable and long-lasting policies and allowing trade in Pak rupee with Afghanistan and permission of re-export of the finishing goods/products.

The chamber president stated that if tariff/duties of 224 items of Pakistani products should be equalized to Afghanistan and Iran, then smuggling will be eliminated.

He added that the business community should be taken on board regarding closure of borders so that it will prevent huge financial losses and unhurt bilateral trade as well.

Fuad Ishaq was speaking to members during the visit of Mr Irfan Saleem Awan, Chief Financial Officer/Acting CEO/Managing Director of the Bank of Khyber (BoK) along with his team here at the chamber house on Tuesday.

Besides, Senior vice president of the SCCI Sanaullah Khan, vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, former president Zulfikar Ali Khan, former senior vice presidents Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Imran Khan Mohmand, former vice president Junail Altaf, member of the chamber executive committee Pervez Khan Khattak, Affaf Ali Khan, Monawar Khurshid, Qurtul Ain, and Saddam Gul, Faiz Rasool, senior management, high officials of the BoK, a large number of industrialists, traders and importers and exporters were present in the meeting.

The SCCI chief lauded the resilience and bravery of the KP business community and people, who remained steadfast against terrorism and continued their businesses and played a role in country peace, solidarity and economic development.

oment by giving matchless sacrifices and taking bodies and fought against conspiracies of anti-state forces.

Fuad expressed grave concern over putting commercial banks KP into the red zone, stating that banks have surged up deposits but lending ratio is completely negligible in the province.

He said Pakistan is situated at an important location so its position will be further improved in the region and rest of the world by taking full benefit from the locational advantage.

Furthermore, he said there is the Silk route, or CPEC, KP will be made a hub of economic and trade activities through them.

Half of the world population is in our reach, and our geo-political situation is very important, particularly KP is considered a gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asian states so we need to take full benefit from it, Fuad stressed.

The SCCI chief said the US has imposed anti-dumping duty on China, which has created an opportunity of \$100billion for export, so he emphasized that Pakistan should take benefit from it and the Bank of Khyber also play a frontline role in this regard.

He asked BoK to take initiatives to remove the business community and clients' grievances and complaints about various loans schemes. He mentioned during his meeting with the head of US mission and other officials, they have also made emphasis on provision of

soft loans to new entrepreneurs and startup businesses, which SCCI highly appreciated and endorsed.

The SCCI president said KP is producing 6500 megawatt electricity in which 2700 megawatt is utilized in summer and only 1100 megawatt in winter season, rest of the produced electricity exported to the national grid.

Giving examples of Bangladesh, Japan and Korea, Fuad said these countries open import and produce finishing products by getting raw material and then exporting and increasing their foreign exchange.

The SCCI chief expressed grave concern over payment of Rs8 Trillion interests on loans.

Talking about hydel, nuclear and thermal power, Fuad said all these resources expenditure is only Rs11 per unit but due to inefficiency of power distribution companies, thieves and growing line losses, Rs23 per unit has been increased in it, calling for steps for its eradication at government level.

Similarly, he said total gas production of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 615 MMCFDs against its demand of 200MMCFDs and rest of 415 MMCFDs were been given to the national grid if the 200MMCFDs were fully supplied with proper gas pressure to KP so the gas issues would be resolved.

He added that the rate of 200 MMCFDs to KP were also charged equal to other provinces, which is totally unjustifiable and unfair.



PESHAWAR: President SCCI Fuad Ishaq presenting a shield to Chief Financial Officer/Acting CEO/MD BoK Irfan Saleem Awan. Vice President SCCI Ejaz Khan Afridi also present on occasion.

42 gas connections disconnected

F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 42 connections; Rs 2.8 million fine imposed.

In Lahore, the team disconnected 12 connections on illegal use of gas while another two on use of compressor and imposed fine of Rs 0.23 million against gas theft cases.

In Multan 07 connections were disconnected on illegal use and one on use of compressor by the regional team.

In Karak the company disconnected 06 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal use of gas and amount of Rs 2.01 million have been booked against gas theft cases.

The regional team of Shiekhpura disconnected 05 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.04 against gas theft cases.

In Mardan the team disconnected 05 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.2 million against gas pilfers.

The regional team of Gujrat disconnected one connection on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.0004 million against gas theft cases.

In Faisalabad the team disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.07 million against gas pilfers.

The regional team of Gujranwala disconnected one connection on use of compressor and also booked an amount of Rs 0.31 million against gas theft cases.

Markets retreat as traders take profits

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Markets in Asia and Europe suffered a downturn Tuesday after racking up a series of gains as profit-takers stepped in, while traders were also spooked by a surge in commodity prices.

Eyes are also on the release of minutes from the Federal Reserve's May policy decision, hoping for some idea about officials' thinking as they considered three straight forecast-beating reads on inflation.

That, however, came before figures last week indicated price rises were easing, stoking fresh hopes the US central bank could cut interest rates a couple of times this year, with some looking at July or November as possibilities for a first.

Still, a number of Fed decision-makers have warned they are not willing to call for a reduction until they are sure higher borrowing costs are doing their job and that inflation is truly under control.

After a mildly positive day in New York, where the Nasdaq hit a record high and the Dow ended down from Friday's record, Asian investors were cautious as they eyed rising commodity prices.

Copper, a key gauge of the state of the economy owing to its widespread use, hit a record above \$11,400 Monday, while gold was also hanging just short of its own peak touched on the same day.

Silver was around an 11-year high.

PSX turns bullish, gains 122 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 122.77 points, a positive change of 0.16 per cent, closing at 75,206.77 points against 75,084.00 points the previous trading day.

A total of 462,304,427 shares valuing Rs 15.871billion were traded during the day as compared to 375,359,048 shares valuing Rs 16.301 billion on the last day.

Some 381 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 174 of them recorded gains and 184 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 40,931,358 shares at Rs4.84 per share, Dewan Cement with 38,491,341 shares at Rs 10.80 per share and Symmetry Group Limited with 32,850,970 shares at Rs 4.94 per share.

Serice Industries Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 56.46 per share price closing at Rs

841.46, whereas the runner-up was Mehmood Textile Mills Limited with Rs 26.30 increase to close at Rs 525.52.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 428.42 per share closing at Rs 18,555.32, followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs 96.54 decline to close at Rs 7,321.28.

Rupee loses 10 paise against dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday lost 10 paise against US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.39 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.29.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.90 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 12 paise to close at Rs 302.47 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.59, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.78, whereas an increase of 65 paise was

witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 353.94 as compared to the last closing of Rs 353.29.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 03 paise each to close at Rs 75.79 and Rs 74.23 respectively.

Gold rates dip by Rs 1,900 per tola to Rs 248,500

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,900 and was sold at Rs 248,500 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs 250,400 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,630 to Rs 213,048 from Rs 214,678 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 195,295 from Rs 196,788, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

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

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$21 to \$2,418 from \$2,439, the association reported.

CCP approves product supply agreement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted a time-bound exemption on the relevant clauses of product supply agreement between Aramco Trading (ATC) Fujairah FZE Ltd and Gas & Oil Pakistan Ltd (GO Petroleum) for importing and selling Gasoline and diesel products to Pakistan.

ATC Fujairah, registered in the United Arab Emirates, is one of the world's largest integrated energy and chemicals companies. Gas & Oil Pakistan Ltd, an Oil Marketing Company (OMC) registered in Pakistan that operates a network of retail outlets across the country that sell petrol, diesel, and lubricants.

Under the referred agreement, ATC Fujairah intends to meet GO Petroleum's demand for essential petroleum products for its outlets, which primarily includes gasoline and diesel. The parties submitted to the CCP that this arrangement is expected to achieve economies of scale in procurement for GO Petroleum, potentially resulting in better prices for

Pakistani consumers. Accordingly, the exemption sought was on exclusivity aspects of the commercial agreement to supply 100% demand of imported products for GO Petroleum's retail outlets.

CCP while considering the matter sought information on how the arrangement will enhance distribution network and resultant benefits will translate for the consumers. It also sought the status of approvals from relevant regulators on fuel stations, fuel terminals and storage depots. CCP also considered how synergy between the GO Petroleum and ATC Fujairah will benefit the economy and consumers besides enhancing competition in the relevant market.

CCP grants exemptions pursuant to Section 9 of the Competition Act, 2010, inter alia ensuring that such exemptions have the economic benefits that outweigh the anti-competitive effects. Besides, this promotes economic progress for the benefit of consumers and results in improving production and distribution.

The CCP has according-

ly granted exemption on the product supply agreement with certain conditions included therein. The CCP's conditions stipulate that both parties must refrain from engaging in anti-competitive activities. Importantly, the exemption does not include approval on any pricing terms and mechanisms related to the products. Additionally, as the agreement has referred to certain off specification products, however approval of concerned sector regulator should be ensured for import and sales. The applicants have also been directed to ensure required approvals on their terminals and storage facilities by relevant authorities to be used in the execution of this agreement.

Subject to these conditions, the CCP has granted exemption until June 2026. If the exemption is to be extended, both the applicants can approach the Commission with required details and also identifying the benefits that have accrued to the improved distribution network of petroleum products, enhanced competition in the relevant market.

PRL advances refinery project with strategic meetings in China

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a significant step towards enhancing Pakistan's refining capabilities, senior management from Pakistan Refinery Limited (PRL) recently visited China to engage with Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) contractors and financial institutions. These discussions were highly productive, laying the groundwork for the forthcoming phases of PRL's Refinery Expansion & Upgrade Project (REUP). There was keen interest from Chinese companies to collaborate with PRL on this mega opportunity.

The REUP project is a major initiative for PRL,

aimed at doubling the refinery's crude processing capacity from 50,000 barrels per day (bpd) to 100,000 bpd. This expansion will be complemented by the adoption of a state-of-the-art Deep Conversion Refinery configuration. The upgraded refinery will utilize advanced technology to meet stringent environmental standards, including the production of EURO V standard fuels, thereby significantly enhancing PRL's operational efficiency and environmental footprint.

"PRL is ahead of all refineries in Pakistan right now in terms of our Refinery Expansion & Upgrade Project," stated

Zahid Mir, Managing Director & CEO of PRL. "The meetings with EPC contractors in China yielded very positive results. We have developed a comprehensive plan to award the EPC contract by the end of this year and work towards achieving financial close of the project by mid-next year. The feedback from these discussions has been overwhelmingly supportive."

In addition to these strategic meetings, PRL has also proactively engaged with the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) to sign a supplementary agreement. PRL has requested amendments to the existing agreements

to align with the updated brownfield policy. This step is crucial for securing the regulatory support needed for the project's successful implementation and long-term sustainability.

The Refinery Expansion & Upgrade Project represents a substantial investment in Pakistan's energy infrastructure.

By doubling capacity, producing value-added products, and adhering to international environmental standards, including the production of EURO V compliant MS and HSD, PRL aims to strengthen its position in the global energy market and contribute significantly to the country's economic growth.

Color Doppler Ultrasound machine inaugurated

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Latif Kapadia Memorial Welfare Trust (LKMWT) held a celebratory event to mark the successful acquisition of a state-of-the-art ultrasound machine for Medi-Health Clinic I, one of LKMWT's four healthcare facilities dedicated to the service of the underprivileged in Karachi.

Ahmed Kapadia, Chairman LKMWT, along with his sister, Tahira Ahmed, cut the ribbon to officially announce the successful acquisition. The ceremony was held at Medi-Health Clinic I and attended by members of the clinic staff.

"Upgrading one's skills is crucial in today's fast changing world," Kapadia spoke on the occasion, "If we can't upgrade our technological prowess, it is not possible to provide comprehensive healthcare to the underprivileged."

The installation of the high-tech machinery means that LKMWT can deliver a wider range of



special colour, Doppler ultrasound services, including Doppler ultrasound for blood vessels, pelvic Doppler ultrasound, colour Doppler ultrasound for detecting fetal anomalies and monitoring fetal growth, bilateral breast ultrasound for detecting breast pathologies, ultrasound of the neck and thyroid, and ultrasound for assessing small parts

swelling.

"With every little step, we are getting further," Said Ahmed, "We can't change destiny but can do all that's possible to show people the path to a healthier future. Upgrades at Medi-Health Clinics surely augment our ability to fulfil this noble resolve."

Latif Kapadia Memorial Welfare Trust is a leading nonprofit organization

active in the field of healthcare.

The trust strives to provide affordable and comprehensive medical treatment to the underprivileged in the most densely populated areas of Karachi.

It is currently operating four Medi-Health Clinics from where more than 165,000 patients receive highly subsidized treatment every year.

Tokyo stocks close lower

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks closed lower on Tuesday in cautious trade ahead of US chip giant Nvidia's earnings report.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index slipped 0.31 percent, or 122.75 points, to 38,946.93, while the broader Topix index ended down 0.30 percent, or 8.32 points, at 2,759.72.

"A wait-and-see atti-

tude grew" ahead of Nvidia's results, Iwai Cosmo Securities said.

Nvidia, a major player in high-end processors for artificial intelligence applications, will be the last of the major United States tech giants due to release its earnings on Wednesday.

"Sales by investors who had been waiting for shares they've held to

rebound, as well as a rise in yields of 10-year Japanese government bonds, weighed on the market," Daiwa Securities said.

The dollar fetched 156.37 yen in Asian trade, against 156.29 yen on Monday in New York.

Among major shares in Tokyo, Kobe Steel ended down 2.23 percent at 1,955.5 yen.

Industrial robot-maker Fanuc lost 1.86 percent to 4,587 yen.

Toyota slipped 0.29 percent to 3,437 yen, while Sony Group dropped 1.42 percent to 12,880 yen.

Chip-linked shares were among winners. Advantest rallied 1.45 percent to 5,600 yen, while Tokyo Electron gained 0.80 percent to 36,630 yen.



In brief

Pak secures 2nd consecutive win in ATF 12

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani team achieved its second consecutive victory by downing Nepal in the ATF 12 & under Team Competition Regional Qualifying event of South Asia Kathmandu, Nepal. According to details, on the second day of the tournament, Pakistani team showcased remarkable skill and determination, securing a commanding 3-0 victory over hosts Nepal. This win highlights the team's consistent excellence and competitive spirit. In the first singles, Rashid Ali Bachani outplayed Dallakoti Bishwo Bishesh bu 6-3, 6-0 while M. Shayan Afridi beat Gnowali Nischal by 6-1, 6-1 in the 2nd singles. In the doubles M. Shayan Afridi, M. Junaid Khan defeated Dallakoti Bishwo Bishesh, Aalam Shah Nawaz by 6-1, 6-0 Pakistan would face Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

All KP Full Body Contact Karate concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): Amna of Abbottabad claimed the best player award while Peshawar clinched the overall trophy and District Haripur got the runners-up titles in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Full Body Contact Karate Championship played on Tuesday. Aman Shah of Haripur won gold medal in 70kg weight category with Peshawar and Haripur got first and second trophy, followed by Shahbaz Branch claiming third position in the competition played at Al-Hadi International Karate Academy in Gulbahar Karate Headquarters. Male and female athletes from different districts of the province, Wah Cantt and Islamabad participated in this competition. According to the rules of the World Karate Organization Japan, this competition was in eight weight categories. The International Karate Coach Shah Faisal distributed medals and prizes to the players on this occasion. They were accompanied by Altaf Romi, Nadeem Atman Khel, Mehr Elahi, Haji Hidayatullah, Ghulam Haider, Shahzad Ahmed Siddiqui and others. Sahbzada Al-Hadi was the chief organizer who was assisted by Provincial Association Secretary M Yasin Yasir, Hazara Region Jangariz Khan, Tanoli, and President Sajjad Hussain. In 30 kg, Ayanzada of Gulbahar headquarters won first, Mujtabi Shahzad won second and Saeed of Shahbaz Center grabbed the third position. In the 40 kg category, Kamran of Peshawar got the first position. Armaan got the second position and Sangar Khan got the third position. In 50 kg, Atiqur Rehman of Shehbaz Center got the first position, Aamir Khan got the second position and Naseer of Abbottabad got the third position. Ahmed got the third position in the same weight. In 60 kg, Kalam Khan of Haripur got the first position, Mohammad Ishaq of HQ got the second position and Sajjad Arabzai of Haripur got the third position. Qasim got the second position and Subhan got the third position. In the Open, Sajjad Zaki of Haripur got the first position, Mujeebullah of Islamabad got the second position and Bacha Khan of Haripur got the third position. Safoora Khan of Wah Cantt got the second position and Howrah Zainab got the third position. In the 50 kg category, Mah Noor of Islamabad got the first position. Hania of Wah Cantt got the second position and Nayab got the third position. Amina of Abbottabad was declared best player of the tournament by winning the gold medal in her 70kg weight category.

Pak meet England in T20I series opener at Headingley

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Men's cricket team will take on England in the first of the four-match T20I series at Headingley on Wednesday (tomorrow). The remaining three-match will be played in Birmingham (25 May), Cardiff (28 May) and the Oval, London (30 May), before the two teams depart for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and USA. The last T20I meeting between Pakistan and England took place at the MCG in the final of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 where England edged past Pakistan by five wickets in the close encounter with Sam Curran earning the player of the final award for his figures of three for 12. A full-strength Pakistan cricket team is expected to take the field at Headingley on Wednesday at the back of a 2-1 series win against Ireland in Dublin last week. Mohammad Rizwan and Shaheen Shah Afridi snapped up Player of the Match awards in the two

victories. England dominate the T20I rivalry with 19 wins to Pakistan's nine triumphs, while one game ended as a no-result. England were the winners of the previous bilateral series against Pakistan, clinching the seven T20Is played in Lahore and Karachi 4-3. Pakistan men's white-ball head coach Gary Kirsten joined the side on 19 May for the first assignment of his two-year tenure. Pakistan captain Babar Azam - the most successful captain in T20Is with 46 wins - said, "I am confident that Pakistan will carry the winning momentum from the Ireland series into the England T20Is. Our 2-1 victory in Dublin showcased the brilliance of our batters and bowlers, while also providing us with learning as we aim to work on our areas of improvement. Babar said the team had productive training sessions at Headingley and with head coach Gary Kirsten linking up with the squad, they were focused

on fine-tuning their strategies and combinations for the four T20Is against England and the ICCT20 World Cup. **Squads (to be selected from):** England: Jos Buttler (captain), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley and Mark Wood Pakistan: Babar Azam (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Usman Khan **Series schedule:** 22 May - v England, 1st T20I, Leeds 25 May - v England, 2nd T20I, Birmingham 28 May - v England 3rd T20I, Cardiff 30 May - v England, 4th T20I, The Oval.

Pak climber Sirbaz conquers Mount Everest without supplemental oxygen

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani climber Sirbaz Khan has achieved another landmark by successfully summiting Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, without the use of supplemental oxygen. This achievement marks a historic milestone for Pakistan in the world of mountaineering. According to Karrar Haidri, Secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP), Sirbaz was part of the 'Imagine Nepal 2024 Everest Expedition' team, comprising 14 international climbers and 18 experienced Sherpas. The team reached the summit on the morning of



May 21, between 5:15 am and 10am. Sirbaz Khan's remarkable feat shows his exceptional physical and mental strength, as well as his expertise in climbing. The expedition team included climbers from

China, Poland, Australia, and the UK, as well as seasoned Sherpas from Nepal, who played a crucial role in the successful ascent. The climbers in the expedition include Dongfei, Liu Yongzhong, Chen Cheng,

Shen Hailang, Ms Liu Qiucheng, Pang Zhinan, Zhou Shuanglu, Xu Jin, Liu Yingan, Yu Fei (China); Mateusz Henryk Waligora (Poland); Ms Alison Mary Bowen (Australia); James Bradbury Mansell (UK) and Sirbaz Khan (Pakistan). The Climbing Guides/Sherpas from Nepal comprise Dawa Tenzing, Jangbu, Pema Chhiri, Fur Gyaljen, Phinjo Dorjee, Phur Gyaljen, Lakpa Tamang, Lakpa Tendi, Kami, Ningma Dorjee Tamang, Mingma Gyaljen, Ngima Dorjee, Mingma, Nima Nuru, Suman Gurung, Denjung Bhote and Dipan Gurung.

Sana Bahadur wins All Pakistan National Junior title

PESHAWAR (APP): Sana Bahadur clinched the All Pakistan Al Baraka Bank National Junior Girls U15 title after handing an upsetting defeat to Mahnoor Ali here at final played at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex. Regional Chief Al Baraka Bank Aftab Haider was the chief guest along with former World Squash Champion Legend Qamar Zaman, Senior Vice President Ehsanullah Khan, General Secretary Mansoor Zaman, Director PSF Academy Group Capt Irfan Asghar, Assistant Director PAF Yasir, Finance Secretary and Director Blue Tone Academy Wazir Mohammad, Executive Members Fazal Khalil, Sher Bahadur Chief Organizer and Senior Directorate coach Munawar Zaman, chief Referee Adil Faqit, Muhammad

Waseem were also present. The Al Baraka Bank All Pakistan National Junior Boys U13 and U15, and KP Women Squash Championship 2024 at Qamar Zaman Squash Complex Qayyum Stadium Peshawar played. In the U13 final Sohail Adnan (Punjab) beat Muhammad Faizan of Pakistan Army by 3-0, 11-6, 11-8 and 11-3. Sohail Adnan fully dominated the proceedings and did not allow Muhammad Faizan of the Pakistan Army to strike back. In the U15 final, Ahmed Rayyan of Pakistan Army Force defeated Rayyan Bahadur of PAF in a thrilling three sets battle, the match lasted 39 minute. The score was 12-10, 11-7 and 11-3. Boght Ahmad Rayyan and Rayyan Bahadur played well and received thundering applause from

the sitting spectators. In the most thrilling final Sana Bahadur of Pakistan Army recorded a straight sets victory against her tough rival Mahnoor Ali by 3-0. Both Sana Bahadur and Mahnoor Ali played well and gave each other a tough fight, both in the first set and third set which stretched to 12-10 and 12-10. The sets won by Sana Bahadur. In the first set Sana Bahadur marched into victory at 12-10. She has good control over her shorts and did not give much time to Mahnoor Ali, a player who recently won a medal in the Australia Junior. Sana played well and won the second set by 11-7 and did the same in the third set by 12-10. At the end, the chief guest gave away trophies and cash prizes to all the three categories.

KP U23 Regional Games: Peshawar Region Men, Women Trials tomorrow

PESHAWAR (APP): In connection with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa U23 Regional Games, Peshawar Region Women Trials will be held on Wednesday at Peshawar Sports Complex in which women from districts Charsadda, Mohmand, Khyber, Nowshera and Peshawar District would participate. This was stated by Kashif Farhan, Regional Sports Officer Peshawar while talking to media men here on Tuesday. He said all arrangements for the smooth conduct of the trials have been completed well in time and the trials would be held in a conducive atmosphere. According to Regional Sports Officer Peshawar Kashif Farman, U23 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Regional Games under the management of Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced the trial schedule for the selection of teams from Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mohmand and Khyber on May 23 will be held at different places in Peshawar to prepare various sports teams for the U-23 Games. The U-23 Games will start from May 28. He said the cut off date for the player is June 1, 2001 and players born after the said date would be eligible for the trials to participate in different Games. Players have been advised to bring Form B and National Identity Card to verify their age group. For cricket, the trials were held at Muazullah Khan Cricket Academy

Peshawar Sports Complex, while for football at Tahmas Football Stadium, Athletics trials would be held at Hayatabad Sports Complex at 10.00 in the morning. The selection of volleyball, badminton, squash, table tennis, karate and taekwondo players will be held at Peshawar Sports Complex Qayyum Stadium at 3.00 in the afternoon. Throwball trials will be held on the same day on May 23. The football trials would be held at Tahmas Khan Football Stadium at 3.00 p.m. The players selected in these trials will be provided kit, shoes and TA/DA by the Directorate General of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa whereas no TA and DA will be given during the trials.

The women's trials of various games would be held on May 22 in the morning at 10.00. Cricket trials would be held at Mazallah Khan Cricket Academy, Peshawar Sports Complex, Athletic trials at Hayatabad Sports in the morning at 10.00 a.m. Volleyball trials would be held at Peshawar Sports Complex PSB Coaching Center at 10.00 am, Badminton Trials at Wood Hall Peshawar Sports Complex 10.00 a.m, Table Tennis Peshawar Sports Complex Arena Hall, Judo at Peshawar Sports Complex at 10.00 a.m, Taekwondo at Peshawar Sports Complex and Hockey Women Trials would be held at Lala Ayub Hockey Stadium at 10.00 a.m.

‘They love their cricket’: Rohit Sharma lauds Pakistani fans for praising Indian cricketers

DUBAI (Agencies): Indian captain Rohit Sharma recently praised Pakistani fans for appreciating Indian cricketers, saying that he would love to play in a Test series between the two arch-rivals if it were ever to take place. The South Asian neighbors are bitter political adversaries and have fought three wars against each other since they were partitioned at the end of British colonial rule in 1947. Their tensions mean the two countries rarely play bilateral series against one another and meet only at "neutral venues" during international tournaments. Sharma, 37, appeared on 'Dubai Eye 103.8,' a Dubai-based talk radio station on Wednesday to discuss the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024 and his journey as India's

skipper so far. During the show, the hosts relayed a message to Sharma from a Pakistani fan. "Loved the messages from the Pakistani fans," Sharma said, smiling. "I know they love their cricket, they love it. Every time, mainly when we are in the UK these guys come and just tell us how, respectfully, how they love us, how they love Indian cricketers and how they love to watch some of us at big stages." India and Pakistan are bitter political adversaries and have fought three wars against each other since they were partitioned at the end of British colonial rule in 1947. Their cricket teams have not faced off in a Test since 2007. Instead, they play only occasionally in the shorter versions of

the game. When asked whether there were chances of India and Pakistan playing each other in a Test match soon, Sharma said: "I don't know the status of it. Personally if you ask me, I'm a cricketer at the end of the day. I want to play cricket and I want to get challenged at whatever stage I play cricket, and I feel Pakistan is a good team." Sharma praised Pakistan for having "solid bowlers," saying that the green shirts are "overall a very good team." He said cricket fans around the world would love to watch a Test series between the two arch-rivals. "I actually have no issues it's just from a pure cricketing perspective if I have to look at it, it's going to be a great cricket contest," he explained.

Ronaldo poised for Euro record as Portugal name squad

LISBON (AFP): Cristiano Ronaldo is likely to set a Euro record after he was named in Portugal's 26-man 2024 squad, unveiled on Tuesday by coach Roberto Martinez. The 39-year-old, five-time Ballon d'Or winner will be appearing in his 11th major international tournament. He played his first at Euro 2004 and will be making a record sixth appearance at the men's continental championship. He collected a winner's medal in France in 2016, even though he went off injured after 25 minutes in the final. Ronaldo, who plays his club football for Al Nassr in Saudi Arabia, already holds the men's world record for caps (206) and international goals (128). He again proved indispensable as Portugal won all 10 of their qualifying games,

scoring 36 goals and conceding two. Ronaldo hit 10 goals in nine qualifying appearances. Praising "a player who has scored 42 goals in 41 matches for his club", Martinez said he felt that the striker continued to offer "a quality in front of goal that we really appreciate and need". In spite of his advancing years, Ronaldo will not be the senior player in the squad. His former Real Madrid team-mate Pepe, 41, and now playing for Porto, has also been called up because of his "important role in the dressing room", said Martinez. Before facing the Czech Republic, Turkey and then Georgia in Group F of the Euro, from 14 June to 14 July in Germany, the Selecao will play warm-up matches against Finland, Croatia and Ireland. Alongside Ronaldo in attack,

Martinez has selected strikers Rafael Leao, Joao Felix and Goncalo Ramos, as well as Pedro Neto and Francisco Conceicao. The creative midfielders include Bernardo Silva, who has just won an English title with Manchester City, and Bruno Fernandes of Manchester United. **Squad:** Goalkeepers: Diogo Costa (Porto), Rui Patricio (Roma/ITA), Jose Sa (Wolves/ENG) Defenders: Joao Cancelo (Barcelona/ESP), Nelson Semedo (Wolves/ENG), Diogo Dalot (Manchester United/ENG), Nuno Mendes (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Ruben Dias (Manchester City/ENG), Antonio Silva (Benfica), Goncalo Inacio (Sporting), Pepe (Porto), Danilo Pereira (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA)



Midfielders: Joao Palhinha (Fulham/ENG), Ruben Neves (Al-Hilal/KSA), Joao Neves (Benfica), Vitinha (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Otavio Monteiro (Al Nassr/KSA), Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United/ENG), Bernardo Silva (Manchester City/ENG) Forwards: Cristiano Ronaldo (Al Nassr/KSA), Rafael Leao (AC Milan/ITA),

Joao Felix (FC Barcelona/ESP), Goncalo Ramos (Paris SG/FRA), Diogo Jota (Liverpool/ENG), Pedro Neto (Wolves/ENG), Francisco Conceicao (Porto)



In brief

285,300 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 285,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 300,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1467.48 feet and was 69.48 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 97,300 cusecs and 100,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1177.30 feet, which was 127.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 63,000 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 177,400, 104,500, 75,500 and 26,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 96,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 29,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Awareness walk held

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the directions of Secretary Local Government, Shakeel Ahmad, the Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi, on Tuesday organized an awareness walk to promote the 'Suthra Punjab' programme. The event aimed to engage the community in efforts to keep the city clean and was spearheaded by Chief Digital Monitoring Officer Punjab, Dr. M. Abdullah Tabassum. The rally started at the Municipal Corporation office and concluded at Liaquat Bagh. The rally was attended by key figures included Chief Officer MC Rawalpindi, CO/RWMC Rana Sajid, CO/MCR Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, President Anjumman Tajran Rawalpindi Tariq Jadoon, President Small Chambers and Traders Chaudhry Fakhar Waraich, President Labour Wing MCR Amiruddin Mir, and Chairman UC 34 Rawalpindi and a significant number of citizens. During the event, Dr. Tabassum emphasized the crucial role of both the public and government departments in maintaining the city's cleanliness. He highlighted the importance of community involvement in making Rawalpindi a cleaner and more pleasant place to live.

PFA takes strict measures

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a bid to enhance the quality of food across Punjab, the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has intensified its efforts. Teams dedicated to food safety have been conducting rigorous inspections of restaurants and cold stores, cracking down on violations of hygiene standards. The recent actions have led to the disposal of 610 kg of expired food and 20 liters of adulterated oil. On the special instructions of the Director General of Punjab Food Authority, extensive measures are being implemented to combat threats to public health. In this regard, crack-down was carried out in Rawal Town 2, Rawalpindi, where a cold store was found storing expired items and was fined Rs. 50,000 due to subpar cleaning arrangements. Additionally, a popular restaurant along the Murree Expressway also faced penalties. Emphasizing the commitment to public health, the DG of Punjab Food Authority highlighted the daily monitoring of businesses, both large and small. He warned of strict repercussions for those jeopardizing public health through negligence or misconduct.

Gilani visits Iranian embassy for condolence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday paid a condolatory visit to the Iranian embassy here wherein he said that with the death of Iranian President Dr Ebrahim Raisi, the Islamic Ummah had lost a great leader.

The acting president expressed deep grief on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan on the sad demise of Dr Raisi, the Iranian foreign minister and others in the helicopter accident, saying that the whole nation shared the grief of the Iranian brothers and sisters.

Talking to the Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam, Acting President Gilani said that Pakistan and Iran enjoyed excellent relations based on historical, cultural, and

literary linkages.

He remarked that both countries needed to promote people-to-people contacts and parliamentary exchanges to bring the two brotherly countries further closer. He highlighted that President Raisi was a noble soul, a scholar and a great friend of Pakistan. The Iranian ambassador said that Pakistan and Iran enjoyed excellent relations and promotion of ties with Pakistan was a cornerstone of Iran's foreign policy.

He informed that the Supreme Leader of Iran placed special emphasis on promoting relations with Pakistan, adding that the recent visit of the late President Raisi took place in this context. The ambassador expressed gratitude to the people and government of Pakistan for their

messages and sentiments sharing the grief of the Iranian people.

The acting president also penned condolatory remarks in the visitor's book at the Iranian embassy. Later, talking to the media persons, Gilani said that the whole Muslim world shared the grief of the Iranian people.

Gilani recalled his representation of Pakistan in the funeral prayer of Imam Khomeini, his frequent travels to Iran, and his interaction with the country's leadership.

Referring to his ancestors also coming from Iran, he said Pakistan and Iran shared many cultural and historical commonalities. Even our old Farman Namah in Multan - the 5,000-year-old living city - is also in Persian, he added.

Govt to bring reforms in key areas: Leghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaish Ahmad Leghari Tuesday said that the government would bring reforms in key areas to address the issues concerning the masses.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that we will take effective measures to eliminate power theft to reduce the financial burden on the national exchequer.

Talking about Pakistan's solar net metering policy,

he clarified that the government would take all stakeholders into confidence before taking any final decision, adding that the PML-N-led government in 2017 Solarization was encouraged, and there are currently 113,000 connections on the net.

The government is willing to review the solar net metering policy if needed, it supports the continuation of the scheme, "he added.

To a question, he said that Net metering is a

billing tool that allows the consumers to send excess energy generated by solar panels to the local grid in exchange for credits to the monthly electric bills.

He underscored the importance of E&P sector reforms, a supportive investor policy, and stakeholder inclusiveness to channel untapped natural resources.

He further made it clear that the IMF has yet not demanded anything related to this Policy.

Army, Saylani Trust organize free medical camp

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a joint effort to provide quality medical care to the underserved community, the Pakistan Army and Saylani Trust Tuesday organized a week-long medical camp in Bahawalpur.

According to PTV, the camp, which began on May 15, has already treated over 2,000 patients and performed 260 eye operations. Residents of the area have expressed their gratitude to the Pakistan Army for bringing much-needed medical facilities to their

doorstep.

"We are thankful to the Pakistan Army for providing us with excellent medical care," said a local resident. "Many of us cannot afford to travel to cities for treatment, so this camp has been a blessing for us."

The medical camp offers free medical examinations, treatment, and medicines to patients. A team of experienced doctors and medical staff are providing specialized care in various fields, including general medicine, surgery, pediatrics,

and gynecology.

The Pakistan Army has a long history of organizing free medical camps in remote areas, and this initiative is part of their ongoing efforts to support the local community.

Saylani Trust, a non-profit organization, has been working tirelessly to provide various services, including medical care, to underprivileged communities. The medical camp will continue until May 22, and residents are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to receive free medical care.

Int'l Tea Day celebrates women's vital role

ISLAMABAD (APP): The tea lovers around the world on Tuesday observed International Tea Day to highlight contributions of women in the tea sector.

According to United Nations this year's theme, "Women and their Role in the Tea Sector," shines a light on the often-overlooked yet vital work of women in tea production, processing, and trade. In Pakistan, where tea is an integral part of the culture and daily life, women play a significant role in the tea industry.

From plucking tea leaves in the lush green

fields of Gilgit-Baltistan to selling tea at bustling markets in Karachi, women are the backbone of the sector. According to industry experts, women make up a significant proportion of the tea workforce, with many serving as tea pluckers and packers.

Despite their hard work, women often face challenges in accessing training, credit, and other resources, limiting their opportunities for advancement. International Tea Day provides an opportunity to recognize the achievements of women

in the tea sector and to address the challenges they face.

"We want to empower women in the tea sector and provide them with the resources they need to succeed," said Sarah Khan, a tea industry expert.

As part of the celebrations, tea companies and organizations hosted events and initiatives to promote women's empowerment in the tea sector. These include training programs, workshops, and awareness campaigns aimed at promoting gender equality and inclusivity.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters jumping and bathing in nullah korang to get relief from scorching hot weather in Federal Capital. —APP Photo



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani penned down condolatory remarks over the sad demise of the President of Iran Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi in the visitor's book during his visit to the Embassy of Iran. —APP Photo

13 wanted criminals netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a significant breakthrough, police have apprehended 13 wanted criminals involved in heinous crimes here on Tuesday.

According to police spokesman, Airport police held 10 wanted criminals, including Ata Khan, Haroon Khan, Ayub, Yaqub, Sadaqat, Liaquat, Khan Zameer, Farhad, Pakhtoon, and Ishaq. These individuals were wanted in connection with attempted murder and hurling death threats. Liaquat and his accomplices were implicated in injuring Spingul and his son, following a verbal altercation.

Similarly, Naseerabad police apprehended two advertised criminals, Nadeem and Mubeen, who were wanted in theft cases. Additionally, the Morgah police nabbed Nauman, another wanted criminal, in a case related to hurling death threats. Commenting on the operation, SP Potohar, Nasir Nawaz, affirmed the commitment to pursue criminals and their collaborators relentlessly. He emphasized that such actions against criminals and their accomplices would persist to uphold law and order in the region.

OEC to send nurses staff to KSA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) an attached department of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOP&HRD) will send the nurses staff to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). An official source told APP here on Monday that Saudi Arabia required nurses staff on urgent basis and in this regard OEC had advertised the qualifications and experience of required nurses staff for abroad.

Only qualified females would be entertained for final selection who have a Bachelor of Science in Nursing BScN (4-years) or (Post RN), minimum two years of experience in the relevant field, only females, not more than 45. Nurses Staff were required in various fields including Cardiac Care Nurse, Emergency Nurse, Medical Care Nurse, Obstetrics Nurse, Pediatrics Nurse, Critical Care Nurse, Hemodialysis Nurse, Neonatal Care Nurse, Oncology Nurse, Surgical Care Nurse, ICU Nurse, he added.

He also shared the terms and conditions for the job seekers information as annual air ticket, excursion economy class (Round Trip), MID-year Benefits: 10 Calendar Days Post Leave and Mid-Year-Round Trip Air Ticket (For Nursing Positions only), End of Service Benefits (Saudi Service Award): Remuneration Computed Equivalent to the Years of Service as Job Portal: Interested applicants can apply via OEC's website <https://oec.gov.pk/>.

Help-Desk Team: for technical support, contact the OEC-Helpdesk team at UAN: 0311-0011-632 or Email: helpdesk@oec.gov.pk

The applicant will be submitted with attached deposited Bank challan amounting to Rs 1000 generated at the time of online application submission and last date of apply is May 24.

Uzbek defence delegation calls on Secretary Defence

RAWALPINDI (APP): A high level defence delegation of Uzbekistan headed by Director General of Defence Industry Agency, Mansurjon Ibodullaev called on Secretary Ministry of Defence Production, Lt Gen (R) Muhammad Chiragh Haider here on Tuesday.

The Secretary Defence Production warmly welcomed the delegation, a

news release said. He appreciated existing relations between the two countries in the domain of defence Production.

The visiting delegation also held a delegation level meeting with high officials of Ministry of Defence Production.

During the meeting both sides stressed on the need to explore avenues for joint ventures in the field

of defence production.

It was further emphasized that the existing cordial relations between the two countries be translated into active cooperation in the defence production sector.

However, matters of mutual interest were also discussed including visit of Uzbek experts to Defence Production Establishments of Pakistan.

Role of Margalla Hills firefighters hailed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi. Additionally, Randhawa confirmed that, following the Federal Minister's directive, the firefighting crew would be rewarded.

He mentioned that the crew will be supplied with modern equipment to enhance their accessibility to hills during fire incidents. Additionally, he stated that vehicles will be acquired for transporting the crew during such occurrences.

Randhawa cautioned about the heightened risk of fires on Margalla Hills during intense heat and urged

encouragement in accordance with the directive from Interior Minister Naqvi.

He mentioned that the crew will be supplied with modern equipment to enhance their accessibility to hills during fire incidents. Additionally, he stated that vehicles will be acquired for transporting the crew during such occurrences.

Randhawa cautioned about the heightened risk of fires on Margalla Hills during intense heat and urged

the crew to maintain their preparedness as usual.

He reassured that prompt action would be taken to resolve any issues the crew may have.

It is worth mentioning here that Chairman Randhawa personally visited the Margalla Hills firefighting crew at their posts, shaking hands and commending their role and announced a special reward for the crew members involved in the firefighting efforts.

Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Memon and a member of the CDA Environment department were also present on the occasion.

Heatwaves linked with heart disease

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health expert on Tuesday stressed media awareness drives and precautions especially for workers outdoors and elderly as prolonged heat exposure may lead to heat-related illnesses with complications such as increased risk for heart disease.

"The number of fatal heart attacks and strokes could triple as extreme heat increases with global warming", said In-charge Medicine & viral infections Dr Naseem Akhtar while talking to the PTV news channel. It is crucial to be aware of and recognize the early symptoms of heat-related illnesses, said Dr.

"Those people who are having outdoor jobs like

sales and manual jobs construction workers are more prone to health-related issues and even young children and old age people with chronic medical problems are easily prone to heat-related health issues," she said.

"Those who are even more dehydrated can present with nausea, palpitations, and flushed skin. We advise people to stay indoors during peak hours of the day, keep well hydrated, and wear light cotton clothing and a hat with sunglasses."

She highlighted that intense heat waves are being reported across many parts of the globe due to global warming. "It is very important to educate the public about the

symptoms associated with extreme heat exposure, she said, adding, they are tiredness, dizziness, muscle cramps, nausea, sweating, rapid heartbeat, dark-colored urine etc."

"When people prepare properly through heat acclimatization and carry fluids and eat properly, they can do very well in hot environments," she said.

She suggested that people should stay hydrated, drink plenty of fluids throughout the day, especially water and electrolyte-rich beverages, to prevent dehydration. Avoid excessive consumption of caffeinated or alcoholic beverages, as they can contribute to dehydration.

Availability of clean drinking water directed

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak here on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to ensure the availability of clean drinking water across the division.

Chairing a Divisional Coordination Committee meeting, Engineer Aamir Khattak also instructed the officers to make functional water filtration plants in all the districts and ensure their cleanliness.

The Commissioner said private hospitals should also be checked by activating the Health Care Commission. Drug control activities should be enhanced as nothing is more important than human

health, he added.

He warned that those who risk human health for petty profit do not deserve any concession.

The Environment Department should make any newly established industrial unit or housing society bound to implement the Environment Protection Code, he said. The Commissioner was briefed about the performance of the government departments and informed that during the last 24 hours, the departments erased wall chalking on 7.2 km long walls in total 178 Urban and rural Union Councils and Municipal Corporations across the division.

The officers briefed that

out of 428 filtration plants across the division, 423 are operational while proper cleaning and safety arrangements were made for them.

Out of 1473 complaints registered by the Special Branch about health facilities, 1442 were resolved. Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners should make daily visits to medical centers, he said and directed the authorities concerned to review the presence of the doctors, availability of required drugs, and other administrative matters.

All possible steps should be made to provide the best treatment to the patients, he added.

New appointments announced

KABUL (BNA): New appointments have been made in the security leadership of three provinces, signaling a strategic move towards bolstering governance and stability in the region. Mullah Abdul-Haq, police chief of Kunar, has been appointed as the police chief of Baghlan, Mullah Jan Mohammad Hamza, police chief of Baghlan, has been appointed as the police chief of Takhar, and Mawlawi Zia-ul-Haq, the police chief of Takhar, has been appointed as the police chief of Kunar.

EU provides aid to victims

KABUL (Ariana News): The European Union announced Tuesday it has made available 400,000 euros in response to widespread flooding in the north of Afghanistan in the past few weeks. This humanitarian aid will provide immediate emergency assistance to beneficiaries in the regions of Baghlan, Badakhshan, and Takhar, the EU said in a statement. The assistance will be delivered by EU humanitarian partners ACTED and DACAAR.

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

IE: We stand with govt, people of Iran

KABUL (TOLONews): The Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate has expressed Afghanistan's solidarity with the people and government of Iran in response to the death of Ebrahim Raisi, the President of Iran.

Leaders from several countries, including India, Pakistan, Turkey, Qatar, and Russia, have sent messages of condolence, describing the incident as shocking, in which Ebrahim Raisi and seven others, including Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, lost their lives.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, said: "The Islamic Emirate and all Afghans are deeply saddened and affected by this tragic incident. We express our condolences to the Islamic Republic of Iran

and its people, and extend our sympathies to all the families of the victims, the nation, and the government of Iran."

Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting Foreign Minister, also highlighted the significant role of the Iranian President and Foreign Minister in promoting regional cooperation, especially with Afghanistan, during a meeting with the ambassador and special representative of Iran to Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister of Pakistan has declared a day of national mourning in solidarity with the people of Iran.

The Prime Minister of India mentioned Ebrahim Raisi's role in strengthening bilateral relations between India and Iran.

The President of Russia

also referred to Ebrahim Raisi as a prominent politician who commanded great respect outside Iran.

"We had cultural and linguistic ties and good relations with Iran; therefore, we stand with the people of Iran in this tragedy," Salim Paigir, a political analyst, told TOLONews.

"The countries in the region and Afghanistan expressed their feelings about the incident, and it is hoped that the relations between the two countries will continue to progress well under the future government of Iran," said Tariq Farhadi, an international relations analyst.

The helicopter carrying the President of Iran crashed while he and his delegation were returning to Iran after meeting with the President of Azerbaijan.

SIGAR claims \$10.9m paid

KABUL (TOLONews): John Sopko, the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), said that from August 2021 to the present, \$10.9 million of US funds have been paid to Islamic Emirate institutions.

According to SIGAR's report, out of the 65 organizations, 38 responded to the questionnaire, revealing that since August 2021, \$10.9 million of US aid has been paid to various departments of the Islamic Emirate for customs expenses, taxes, electricity bills, and other costs.

Economist, Siyar Quraishi told TOLONews: "If these payments are from taxes that these organizations have agreed upon in contracts and must pay to the Ministry of Finance, or for electricity bills and other expenses related to the government, I think it is legal."

However, the spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate rejected this SIGAR report, stating that the Ministry of Economy only oversees the activities of aid organizations and does not interfere in their expenditures.

The spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate said: "The Islamic Emirate has not used any foreign funds in any department, and international organizations have full authority over their work. The Islamic Emirate only provides general oversight through the Ministry of Economy and does not interfere in the internal affairs and expenditures of these organizations. This claim is incorrect."

Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy, told TOLONews regarding US aid to Afghanistan: "The actual humanitarian and development aid from the United States to the people of Afghanistan amounts to only \$2.8 billion. The remaining funds, which include administrative, ceremonial, luxury, relocation, and resettlement expenses for US allies, do not count as aid to the people of Afghanistan."

Some economic experts say that taxing foreign organizations is important and that the increase in aid organizations and their activities benefits the national economy.

Abdul Zahoar Madbar, an economist, told TOLONews: "To the extent that the activities of aid organizations in Afghanistan increase, it can positively impact the country's economy and increase liquidity." Three weeks ago, SIGAR reported in its quarterly report that since the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, over \$17 billion has been provided to Afghanistan and Afghan refugees.

In addition to considering the \$3.5 billion of Afghanistan's central bank assets held in a trust fund in Switzerland as part of the US aid, \$2.8 billion has been allocated for humanitarian and development assistance in Afghanistan, and \$10.89 billion has been spent on the evacuation, resettlement, and accommodation programs for Afghan refugees in US.

Qashqari oil revenue to fund construction projects

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum announced that the revenue from Qashqari oil will be utilized for building a power plant, a hospital, and constructing roads in Sar-e-Pul.

According to Homayoun Afghan, the spokesperson for the ministry, the oil extraction level from the Qashqari oil field is expected to increase from 1,350 tons per day to 3,000 tons.

"The revenue will be used for the construction of a standard hospital in Sar-e Pol, the building of a power plant named Sultan Ibrahim Dam in Sar-e Pol, and for road construction in Sar-e Pol province," Hamayoun Afghan said.

Meanwhile, the Afghanistan Industrial Association described the use of internally generated revenue in construction and development sectors as impactful.

Abdul Jabar Safi, the head of the Union of Industrialists, said, "We are compelled and obligated to use these revenues to build roads, hospitals, and elec-



tricity infrastructure so that employment opportunities are created for people, and they do not flee from our country."

The marble mine in Chisht of Herat, which has been leased to a private company for extraction with an investment of twelve million dollars, has provided job opportunities for 5,000 people.

According to the

Ministry of Mines, the marble extracted from this mine is currently processed in the industrial parks of Herat province, and after processing it will be exported to Turkmenistan, Iran, China, Uzbekistan, Germany, Oman, Kuwait, and India.

Shams Rahman Ahmadi, an economic analyst, told TOLONews, "If processing factories are established

here [within the country], it will be very beneficial for us and our economy."

According to information from the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, 150 small mines have been contracted to domestic companies, and 30 large mines have been contracted with companies from China, Iran, Turkey, Qatar, and other countries that have Afghan partners.

Purchasing power declined in Afghanistan, says WB report

KABUL (Khaama Press): The World Bank reported in April of this year that Afghanistan's inflation rate has decreased due to what is perceived as a decrease in people's purchasing power.

The Central Bank, under the control of the Taliban, indirectly confirmed this report, stating that the decrease in people's purchasing power in Afghanistan is due to international sanctions.

Hajji Badri, the head of Afghanistan's Central Bank operating under the Taliban administration, met and discussed with Ramiz Alakbarov, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations in Kabul.

In this meeting, Mr. Badri confirmed that "people's purchasing power in Afghanistan" has decreased but attributed it to international sanctions without providing further details.

According to him, "sanctions imposed on Afghanistan's banking sector have had a negative impact on the country's financial stability and inflicted further losses on the people."

During the meeting with Ramiz Alakbarov, the head of the Central Bank, he also mentioned international transactions through unofficial channels, which he claimed was also a result of sanctions.

Meanwhile, the World

Bank reported in April of this year that people's purchasing power in Afghanistan had decreased, leading to a reduction in the inflation rate, which the Taliban authorities consider an achievement.

This comes amid a dire humanitarian crisis in the country since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan due to their failure to fulfil their international obligations and their restrictions on women's basic rights, including education, employment, and free movement.

According to the World Bank report, Afghanistan's economy experienced a severe 26% contraction in the first two years of the

Taliban rule, alongside a 9.7% decrease in inflation (negative 14.4% in food and negative 4.4% in non-food) until February 2024.

The report outlined a "bleak" economic outlook for Afghanistan's future until at least 2025.

It's worth mentioning that per capita income is what leads to an increase or decrease in demand. The World Bank reported in early 2022 that the per capita income of Afghan citizens had decreased by over 30% in the first four months of 2021, restricting people's purchasing power and ultimately leading to a decrease in the country's inflation rate.

Minister unveils database system for private health institutes

KABUL (BNA): In a significant milestone in healthcare management, Dr. Qalandar Ibad, Acting Minister of Public Health of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, inaugurated and handed over the operation of the private health sciences institutes' database system.

During the meeting held for this occasion, Dr. Qalandar Ibad lauded the launch of the private health sciences institutes' database section as a significant leap toward digitalization and healthcare enhancement nationwide. He extended gratitude to all involved in its development.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's leadership, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health, is dedicated to fostering a healthcare environment



that prioritizes citizen well-being and accessibility. Their ongoing efforts signal a promising commitment to advancing healthcare services for all Afghan citizens." He further remarked.

Moreover, Dr. Ibad underscored the signifi-

cance of monitoring and alignment with this system, stressing the crucial role of private health sciences institute officials in collaborating fully with the Ministry of Public Health to ensure seamless integration of this program.

It is noteworthy that the

database system for private health sciences institutes was developed within six months. This system provides advancements in curriculum alignment, student enrollment, license distribution, transparency, and trust-building among citizens.

Priority to be granted to visas holders for foreign

KABUL (Khaama Press): The General Passport Directorate has announced that applicants with residency or visas for foreign countries other than Iran and Pakistan will be prioritized in the passport issuance process.

In a message posted on its social media platform X, the Passport Directorate stated that these applicants can receive their passports without delay through the online passport application process.

The Passport Directorate's message states, "Our goal is to ensure that those who are in the most

need and whose visa or residency validity has not expired can receive their passports without delay."

This comes as passport issuance within the country and at many Afghan embassies abroad has been halted since the rise of the Taliban to power.

According to reports, tens of thousands of passports have been distributed over the past year to citizens in provinces such as Balkh, Kabul, Bamyan, Herat, and several other provinces, benefiting millions of Afghans.

Since the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan,

there has been a surge in people wanting to leave the country mass migration. This is primarily due to the lack of job opportunities and the dire economic situation within the nation.

Simultaneously, neighboring countries have intensified forced deportations of Afghan migrants, exacerbating the situation.

These developments unfold against the backdrop of a severe humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, with over 23 million people urgently requiring assistance, as reported by the United Nations.

Afghanistan situation would get 'very bad, very fast': Miller



KABUL (Khaama Press): The former commander of US forces in Afghanistan warned Congress that he had repeatedly cautioned Biden about the "very bad" consequences of withdrawing from Afghanistan.

Scott Miller told the House Foreign Affairs Committee, "I did not predict a bright future for Afghanistan after the withdrawal."

Scott Miller testified behind closed doors last month to the House Foreign Affairs Committee about the

withdrawal from Afghanistan.

He is one of 20 witnesses who testified before the House Foreign Affairs Committee following the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan. According to the newspaper, Miller's statements are available in The Washington Post, which provides fresh political ammunition to Biden's foreign policy critics.

Michael McCaul, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and a critic of America's withdrawal

from Afghanistan, told the newspaper that Miller's testimony shows how Biden's order of "rapid withdrawal to the last man" hastened the fall of Afghanistan and the subsequent tragedy in the country.

Miller, who commanded US and NATO forces in Afghanistan from September 2018 to July 2021, told lawmakers that when he received the order to withdraw all foreign forces in 2020, he saw that "Afghanistan was burning."

According to experts, the Doha agreement with the Taliban in February 2020 weakened the Afghan government significantly, ultimately resulting in the withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan without consulting the Afghan government. The Trump administration signed a deal with the Taliban in February 2020, sidelining senior Afghan officials. Later that year, Trump ordered the reduction of troops first to 4,500 and then to 2,500.

After taking office, Biden implemented Trump's government agreement with the Taliban to withdraw all troops from Afghanistan, but before the last American soldier left, the Afghan government collapsed with the president fleeing on August 15, 2021.

UNICEF assures more collaboration

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Noor Ahmad Islam Jar, the governor of Herat, in a meeting with Sediq Ibrahim, Chief of UNICEF office, requested increased cooperation from this organization in equipping health centers and schools in the province.

According to BNA report, in the meeting, Sediq Ibrahim, Chief of the UNICEF office, provided information about the activities and programs of this organization, particularly regarding the payment of salaries to health workers in 113 centers under its coverage in that province.

Sediq Ibrahim added that, in addition to paying the doctors' salaries, medicines and necessary supplies for 170 health centers in this province have also been provided by this organization.

Special forces commando base inaugurates in Kabul



KABUL (BNA): For the first time, the Special Forces Commando Unit of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan National Army, aimed at ensuring better security in the country, was inaugurated at the Kabul Garrison.

According to a statement

from Defense Ministry, the officials considered the opening of specialized forces centers in the branches and divisions of the Ministry of National Defense as a significant step.

The Ministry further announced the expansion of this division to other

provinces of the country.

The commando Army forces of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan are equipped with modern weapons and have advanced and professional training.

They continue their sacred duties under any circumstances.



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

Sindh to fight Kacha bandits, tells Memon

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sindh Sharjeel Inam Memon said Tuesday that the Sindh government will buy weapons to fight the Kacha bandits, and modern weapons will be delivered to the police as soon as possible.

While talking to the media in Karachi, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that Operations against dacoits are ongoing in Katcha. Police and Rangers are jointly conducting these operations. Even now, Rangers are present where there is a need. The dacoits have modern weapons, and the Sindh government has written a letter to the federal government requesting modern weapons.

He said that President Asif Zardari has addressed various issues of law and order in his recent meeting, emphasizing that his first priority is to end the scourge of drugs. Serious actions are being taken against drug trafficking and abuse, as drugs have infiltrated different sectors of society. Drugs are being supplied to innocent children in educational institutions, making them addicts.

The government cannot sit idly by and is committed to combating this crisis. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Operations against drugs have been initiated by the Excise Department, with additional operations being carried out by the police. The Chief Minister of Sindh, the Home Minister, and the IG Sindh are also providing assistance. We are conducting operations wherever necessary and have already arrested many drug dealers.

He said that currently, crystal meth and ice are dangerous drugs present in society.

People using these drugs are like suicide bombers for the community, capable of unpredictable and concerning reactions. We are doing our utmost to prevent drug abuse. Operations are taking place not only in the cities but also at various joint checkpoints.

The Excise Police have been strictly instructed to remain vigilant and to take this issue seriously. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that we urge parents to take any changes in their children's behavior seriously. We will conduct random drug tests in schools. If any child tests positive, we will inform the parents while respecting their privacy, and inquire about the source of the drugs from the child.

He said that A drug dealer has been apprehended in Clifton, Karachi, who was involved in supplying drugs to schools, colleges, and affluent areas. Substantial evidence has been uncovered from his mobile device, leading to the identification of prominent individuals. However, our primary objective is drug prevention, not defamation.

Memon said that we are planning to enhance the capacity of the Narcotics Control Wing of the Excise Department, and the Sindh Chief Minister has pledged support in this endeavor. We are striving to ensure its success. As long as the PPP government is in power, the anti-drug operation will persist, and no individual will be exempted. We urge the media to assist us in this endeavor. The fight against drugs is not the responsibility of one person alone; it requires collective efforts from everyone. He said that the Sindh government will establish rehabilitation centers for the treatment of drug addicts.

526 more students return from Bishkek

F.P. Report

LAHORE: A group of 179 Pakistani students, both male and female, have safely returned to Lahore from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Their arrival was warmly welcomed by the officers and staff of the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF), who made special arrangements to facilitate their journey back home.

To ensure the students' comfort and safety, the OPF organized transportation to take them directly to their homes. Additionally, paramedical staff and ambulances were on hand to provide any necessary medical assistance, demonstrating a comprehensive effort to support the returning students.

In a related development, another batch of 347 students from Kyrgyzstan arrived in Islamabad. Among them, 180 students landed in Islamabad via a private flight at 5:30am, while a national airline flight brought an additional 167 students to Islamabad airport. This brings the total number of students who have returned to Islamabad through five separate flights to 810.

The return of these students marks a significant effort by the Pakistani authorities to ensure the safe repatriation of its nationals amid the ongoing global challenges. On May 18, dozens of students, including 14 Pakistanis, were reportedly injured in a mob attack on foreign students by locals in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, according to news reports.

According to details, an angry mob of hundreds of locals entered the hostels of foreign medical students, ransacked them, broke windows and glass, and damaged property. Indian, Bangladeshi and Egyptian students were also brutally tortured, including several women students. According to Pakistan's Embassy in Bishkek, foreign students living in Bishkek, including those from Pakistan, were attacked by locals in the aftermath of their brawl with Egyptian nationals a few days ago. "According to the Kyrgyz press, the matter boiled over due to sharing online of videos of a fight between Kyrgyz students and medical students from Egypt on 13th of May," the embassy said in a statement posted on social media.

The next day, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the making of special arrangements to bring back the Pakistani students from Kyrgyzstan in line with the Bishkek mob attack.

Our mission to enable nation to stand on its feet: KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As an important initiative to improve health emergency response to road traffic accidents in the province, 8 number of Satellite Rescue Stations have been handed over to the provincial government under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Reconstruction Program (KPRP) funded by USAID.

The handing/taking over ceremony to this effect was held here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Tuesday, with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur as a chief guest. Provincial minister for health Qasim Ali Shah, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, administrative secretaries of concerned departments, US Consul General in Peshawar Shante Moore and other relevant authorities attended the ceremony. On this occasion, 8 Satellite Rescue Stations and 14 Ambulances were formally handed over to the provincial government.

The Satellite Rescue Stations connected with Wireless Equipment and other state of the art medical and technical facilities including fully functional Mini Operation Theatre, would be placed strategically throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at major highways, that include: Shahbaz Khel, Lakki Marwat (Indus

Highway), Speena More, Karak (Indus Highway), Charsadda and Karnal Sher Khan Interchanges at M-1 Motorway, Haripur Interchange (Hazara Motorway), Katlang Interchange (Swat Motorway), near Besham at Karakorum Highway and Lowari Tunnel at Upper Dir side (N-45 Highway). Similarly, 4 Ambulances with ventilator facilities would be provided to Saidu Group of Teaching Hospital, whereas other 10 ambulances would be provided to different districts of Malakand Division including Shangla, Chitral, Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Buner and Malakand.

Addressing the ceremony on the occasion, the chief minister lauded the efforts of USAID for improving health emergency services in the province, adding that Satellite Rescue Stations would ensure an immediate and effective response to road accidents, thereby reducing loss to precious human life and disabilities. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been affected badly in the war against terrorism, adding that people from across the sectors have rendered huge sacrifices in the struggle against militancy in this region.

Despite the difficult financial situation, the provincial government is going all out to rehabilitate the damaged infrastructure and to provide livelihood opportunities to the people of war affected and backward areas of

the province, he said. The chief minister maintained that providing quality healthcare facilities to people was one of the top most priority of his government; and as a first step in this regard, free healthcare facilities under health card scheme had been restored for entire population of the province.

Similarly, he said that efforts are also underway to overcome the deficiencies in the hospitals across the province. This time, not only Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but the entire country is faced with huge financial crunches, he remarked and said that cooperation from our partners in all this situation is of vital importance. USAID is already supporting the provincial government in different sectors, especially in the construction and rehabilitation of damages caused by militancy and floods in the province.

"The provincial government, for the sake of the country, will play its part in a timely manner to fulfill the terms agreed with the IMF", he said and added that it is our mission to enable the nation to stand on its feet; and incumbent provincial government is utilizing all available resources in an efficient and judicious manner in this regard. The ceremony was also addressed by Provincial Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, US Counsel General in Peshawar, Shante Moore and other speakers.

Israel, Hamas reject bid before ICC to arrest leaders

RAFAH (AFP): Israel and Hamas, engaged in heavy fighting in the Gaza Strip, both angrily rejected moves to arrest their leaders for war crimes made before an international court. The International Criminal Court's prosecutor Karim Khan said he had applied for arrest warrants for top Israeli and Hamas leaders over the conflict.

Israel slammed as a "historical disgrace" the demand targeting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, while the Palestinian militant group Hamas said it "strongly condemns" the move. Israel's top ally the United States joined the condemnation, while France said it supported the court's independence and its "fight against impunity."

Netanyahu said he rejected "with disgust The Hague prosecutor's comparison between democratic Israel and the mass murderers of Hamas." Khan said in a statement that he was seeking warrants against the Israeli leaders for crimes including "wilful killing," "extermination and/or murder," and "starvation." He said Israel had committed "crimes against humanity" during the war, started by Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack, as part "of a widespread and systematic attack against the Palestinian civilian population."

Khan also said the leaders of Hamas, including Qatar-based Ismail Haniyeh and Gaza chief Yahya Sinwar, "bear criminal responsibility" for actions committed during the October 7 attack. These included "taking hostages," "rape and other acts of sexual violence," and "torture," he said. "International law and the laws of armed conflict apply to all," Khan said. "No foot soldier, no commander, no civilian leader — no one — can act with impunity."

The warrants, if granted by the ICC judges, would mean that any of the 122 ICC member states would technically be obliged to arrest Netanyahu and the others if they traveled there, a point noted by EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. However, the court has no mechanism to enforce its warrants. US President Joe Biden denounced the ICC bid as "outrageous" and said "there is no equivalence — none — between Israel and Hamas."

Germany agreed, with a foreign ministry spokesman saying the warrants gave "a false impression of equivalence." Biden also rejected accusations in a separate tribunal, the UN International Court of Justice, where South Africa has alleged that Israel's war in Gaza is genocidal. "What's happening is not genocide," Biden told a Jewish American Heritage Month event at the White House on Monday. South Africa welcomed the move at the ICC. The war ground on unabated, with Israeli forces battling Hamas in Gaza's far-southern city of Rafah, as well as in other flashpoints in central and northern areas. Israel defied international opposition almost two weeks ago when it sent

troops into Rafah, which is crowded with civilians and which the military has described as the last Hamas stronghold. Netanyahu has vowed to keep fighting Hamas in Gaza until the Iran-backed Islamist group is defeated and all remaining hostages are released.

The United Nations said more than 812,000 Palestinians had fled Rafah, near the Egyptian border. "The question that haunts us is: where will we go?" said Sarhan Abu Al-Saeed, 46, a desperate Palestinian resident. "Certain death is chasing us from all directions." Witnesses said that Israeli naval forces had also struck Rafah, and medics reported an air strike on a residential building in the city's west.

The military said Israeli troops were "conducting targeted raids on terrorist infrastructure" in eastern Rafah, where they had found "dozens of tunnel shafts" and "eliminated over 130 terrorists." The war broke out after Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel, which resulted in the deaths of more than 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures. Hamas also took about 250 hostages during the attack, of whom 124 remain in Gaza including 37 the army says are dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive against Hamas has killed at least 35,562 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. The Israeli military said on Monday the bodies of four hostages retrieved from Gaza last week had been found in tunnels under Jabalia in the north.

Israeli forces have been fighting in northern and central areas previously declared largely cleared of militants, with the military saying its troops had killed 200 militants in Jabalia. Israel has imposed a siege on the long-blockaded Gaza Strip, depriving its 2.4 million people of normal access to clean water, food, medicines and fuel. The suffering has been eased only by sporadic aid shipments by land, air and sea, but truck arrivals have slowed to a trickle amid the Rafah operation. The European Union warned that 31 of Gaza's 36 hospitals are no longer functioning and that the rest are "on the verge of collapse, with more than 9,000 severely injured people at risk of dying." Air strikes continued across Gaza, including on Gaza City in the north, the military said.

Gaza's civil defense said the bodies of eight dead, along with several wounded, were retrieved after an air strike on the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood of Gaza City. US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met Netanyahu on Sunday and told him Israel must link the military operation against Hamas with a "political strategy" for Gaza's future. Washington has pushed for a post-war plan for Gaza involving Palestinians and supported by regional powers, as well as for a broader diplomatic deal under which Israel and Saudi Arabia would normalize relations.

AJK ex-PM Tanveer Ilyas handed over to FIA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: District Courts Islamabad Tuesday granted the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) a 3-day physical remand of former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Tanveer Ilyas to recover his diplomatic passport as he did not return and also misused it after leaving the post.

The FIA presented former premier of AJK Sardar Tanveer Ilyas before Civil Judge Abbas Shah. Advocates Sabir Malik and Naveed Raza Mughal were also present in the court as defence lawyers from the accused former premier Sardar Tanveer Ilyas.

In the court, the FIA prosecutor argued that former premier AJK Sardar Tanveer Ilyas had used his diplomatic passport for travel to Saudi Arabia after leaving office, which is illegal. The FIA prosecutor also argued that despite the passport being canceled, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas had not returned it. He requested an 8-day remand to recover the diplomatic passport, but the court approved a 3-day physical remand for further investigation.

The lawyers of former PM said Sardar Tanveer Ilyas is former prime minister and he can use diplomatic passport. Yesterday, AJK's former premier Sardar Tanveer Ilyas was presented before Judicial Magistrate of Islamabad Mureed Abbas's district court in a case involving the torture on a private mall's security in-charge and the breaking of locks.

The court sent the former Prime Minister (PM) of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Tanveer Ilyas to jail on judicial remand. During the hearing, former PM Tanveer Ilyas's lawyer informed the court that a settlement had been reached between both parties. In response, Judicial Magistrate Mureed Abbas stated, "Alright, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas will be sent to judicial custody now."

Pakistan improves on WEF's TTDI 2024

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has shown significant improvements in its global rankings of the Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI). Keeping the base year 2019, Pakistan has improved 20 ranks and scores at 101 on the TTDI in 2024.

According to the press release, Pakistan is classified as a lower-middle-income economy and part of the Asia-Pacific regional group in the Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) 2024.

The top countries on the Travel & Tourism Development Index (TTDI) in 2024 are the United States, Spain, Japan, France, Australia, Germany, the United Kingdom, China, Italy, and Switzerland. These countries have been recognized for their favorable business environments, open travel policies, well-developed transport, tourism, and ICT infrastructure, as well as rich natural, cultural, and non-leisure attractions.

They collectively accounted for over 75% of the Travel & Tourism industry GDP in 2022 and 70%

of GDP growth between 2020 and Within the Asia-Pacific region, Pakistan shows potential, especially in natural resources and cultural assets.

However, challenges remain, particularly in air transport infrastructure and tourist services. Pakistan's efforts to enhance its tourism sector are evident, with various initiatives to improve ICT readiness and cultural resources. Speaking on the occasion, Amir Jahangir, Chief Executive Officer of Mishaal Pakistan and the Country Partner Institute of the World Economic Forum said, "Pakistan's scores identify the struggling efforts done by the institutional efforts in the country. Institutions like the Pakistan Tourism Development

Authority and its team have made significant efforts in making Pakistan a more attractive and affordable tourism destination". He further said, "The efforts of the World Bank have been pivotal in supporting integrated tourism in the country". Jahangir said that the collective efforts put in by PTDC and other institutions along with the World

Bank have brought the stakeholders on a single platform and successfully created public policy dialogues.

This is enabling the provinces to learn best practices from each other". The initiatives under PTDC on the National Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (NTTCI) have enabled a structure of institutional learning. This is impacting the improvement of Pakistan's rankings manifold. The data from the National Index can further improve rankings if the international travel and tourism data are reflected in the national and provincial strategies. It is worth mentioned here that The T&T sector's post-pandemic growth continues, but recovery has been mixed, with challenges such as labor shortages and infrastructure constraints.

Europe and Asia-Pacific regions, along with high-income economies, continue to have the most favorable conditions for T&T development. Developing economies like Pakistan have shown improvement in TTDI scores but need further investment in enabling conditions.

Economy on right track, says PM

(Continued from Page 1)

different sectors. The prime minister directed for submission of comprehensive recommendations in the next meeting related to necessary steps for increasing country's exports.

Shehbaz for maximum utilization of IT sector's potential: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif stressed upon the need of maximum utilization of opportunities in the Information and Technology sector as the country possessed immense potential in this field.

He said the government was taking all possible steps for the promotion of IT sector and urged the IT industry to play its role in the country's economy by supporting the government. The prime minister chaired a meeting on the matters related to Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications and National Information Technology Board.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal (via video link), Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja, PM's Coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal and relevant senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister observed that Pakistani entrepreneurs had played a very critical role in the promotion and development of IT sector. He directed for taking of suitable steps for improving the quality of 4G services in the country.

The prime minister while underscoring the need of taking practical steps, on priority basis, to enhance IT export, directed for resolution of issues faced by the IT industry for further enhancing of harmony between the government and the IT industry. The Governor State Bank of Pakistan was directed that there should be no hurdles from the banks with regard to the debit cards and foreign currency issues of the exporters of software products.

The prime minister also underlined that the Higher Education Commission, universities and the training institutes should work on priority basis to increase the number of IT professionals, adding that the IT courses should be brought in conformity with the requirements of the relevant industry. He directed for holding of consultations with the private sector aimed at encouragement of startups and provision of facilities to them.

The prime minister, in the meeting,

asked for constitution of a special committee to evaluate the performance of National Information Technology Board. The meeting was apprised that to achieve the target of country's IT exports worth \$25 billion till 2029, tech services and captive IT business would be broadened, besides Pakistan Digital Commission was also being established and in this regard, required legislation was being made.

With automation in the government to government, government to business transactions, innovations would be brought in health, education and agriculture sectors. Under Pakistan DigitalNation project, the government affairs and economy would be digitized, it was further added.

The prime minister was apprised that in the next five years, a target of imparting training to about 1.5 million people in IT sector had been set. A total of 200,000 persons would be given training in cloud computing, artificial intelligence and cyber security in the next five-year. The meeting was further informed that under public private partnership, the international certifications would be ensured for the IT professionals whereas master training programmes would be initiated for the IT professionals.

Three IT parks and 250 e-Rozgar centers would be established, it was further added.

During the meeting, various proposals were presented for the promotion of telecommunication sector through short, medium and long terms measures. The target for taking mobile broadband coverage upto 100MBPS was also set while the fiber penetration would be enhanced to 12 percent. The prime minister was apprised that facilities would be provided to startups with regard to health tech, AI, financial tech and agri tech, while tax exemption steps would be taken for the startups.

Pakistan desires to expand trade, investment ties with Germany: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif highlighting immense potential of boosting German investment, said that Pakistan desired to enhance its bilateral trade and investment portfolio with Germany.

He, talking to a delegation of a German NGO Global Bridges Berlin, said that his government was resolved to strengthen Pak-German cooperation in the fields of industry, alternative energy, mining, information technology, agriculture and others. The prime minister, who most of the time spoke in German with the delegation, said that Pakistan always

greatly valued its relationship with Germany and considered it as its significant partner in Europe.

The delegation members appreciated the prime minister's fluent conversation in their language and thanked him for the gesture. Prime Minister Shehbaz told the delegation that despite meager contribution to the carbon emission, Pakistan was among the countries most affected by the impacts of climate change.

He told the delegation that Pakistan wanted to benefit from Germany's experiences in the field of alternative energy, agriculture, and food security. Besides, he said the capacity building of Pakistan's manpower was being done through quality skill training to make them employable abroad.

The delegation members, which also included German Ambassador in Pakistan Alfred Grannas and German businessman and investors, expressed their keen interest in investing in Pakistan's carbon credit market, as well as climate change and agriculture. Federal Ministers Jam Kamal Khan, Rana Tanveer Hussain and Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State Shaza Fatima Khawaja and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Peace in South Asia linked with just settlement of Kashmir dis-

pute: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasized that a durable peace in South Asia was contingent upon a just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of Kashmiri people.

The prime minister, talking to a delegation of Kashmiri diaspora activists, led by Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Secretary General World Kashmir Awareness Forum which called on him here, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering moral, diplomatic and political support for Kashmiri people's struggle for realization of their inalienable right to self-determination.

He lauded the Kashmiri activists' efforts to increase global awareness about the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and the plight of people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The prime minister recalled that he had never missed any opportunity to raise the voice in support of Kashmiri brothers and sisters, as evident from his address at the 2022 UN General Assembly, as well as at other forums including SCO and with other world leaders.

The Kashmiri activists thanked the prime minister for Pakistan's consistent support to the Kashmir cause. They also apprised him of the latest developments in the region and shared their efforts to highlight the Kashmir freedom struggle in various parts of the world.