

Nawaz case hearing puts off  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court (AC) in Islamabad on Thursday adjourned the hearing of the petition, seeking the acquittal of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in Toshakhana vehicles reference until May 28. AC judge Nasir Javed Rana heard the petition. Nawaz's lawyer Qazi Misbahul Hassan Advocate and pleader Rana Muhammad Irfan appeared in the court.



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PM rejects  
hike in sugar  
price  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday rejected the increase in the price of sugar in the country, saying that sugar mills should ensure Rs140 ex-factory rate for the whole year.

A special meeting was held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in which issues related to the export of sugar were reviewed. While briefing the Prime Minister in the meeting, it was told that if sugar is not exported, sugar mills will go bankrupt in the next season and 40 sugar mills will be closed.

In the briefing, it was stated that sugar mills paid 760 billion rupees out of 800 billion rupees to sugarcane farmers this season, they still have to pay 40 billion rupees to farmers this season. If sugar is not exported, sugar mills will not be able to crush in November.

The Prime Minister was told that currently there is an excess of 1.5 million tons of sugar in the country, if five million tons of sugar is exported, 26 million dollars will be earned. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said on this occasion that the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) will decide on the export of sugar. The ECC should review the stock of sugar and the global market. The increase in the price of sugar in the country will not be accepted under any circumstances, sugar mills must ensure the supply of Rs140 ex-factory price for the whole year.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif constituted a 25-member committee headed by Deputy Premier Ishaq Dar to review current status of medical education in the country. According to a report, besides federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema and Azam Nazeer Tarar, the committee also comprises vice chancellors of several medical universities, Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) and secretaries, according to a notification. The notification stated that the committee has been asked to assess demand and supply gap of medical education in the country and recommend an action plan to fill the gap.

The committee will review the standard of recognition of Private sector's Medical colleges to ensure quality education. Similarly, it will also review the phenomenon of students getting admission in unrecognised foreign institutions, besides proposing policy options.

The committee has been also asked to suggest measures to improve existing regulatory framework if so required. It will establish a coordination framework between public and private sectors, medical institutions, to ensure uniform quality of education. Ishaq Dar-led committee has been directed to submit its report within 10 days for the perusal of the Prime Minister through the Ministry of HSR&C.

‘Will not allow  
incumbent  
govt to run’

CHAMAN (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader Hafiz Hamdullah on Thursday said they will not allow the incumbent government to run.

“This government cannot run, neither we will allow it”, the JUI-F central leader said in an exclusive interview. Terming the Parliament a ‘rubber stamp’, Hamdullah said the JUI-F will not sit quiet and will launch a movement to protect the constitution of Pakistan.

It will be early to comment on the alliance with the other opposition parties, he replied to a question. The JUI-F leader said JUI-F would organise a ‘People’s Assembly’ in Muzzaffargarh on June 1. On meetings with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders, the JUI-F leader said the party’s delegation visited Maulana Fazlur Rehman thrice. TORs needed to move forward with PTI, he added.



ABU DHABI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif exchanging views with President of UAE Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan during a meeting.

KP CM not invited  
to SIFC meeting

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Blaming the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led federal government for making “biased moves”, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government expressed displeasure for not getting an invitation for the upcoming apex committee's session of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif summoned the SIFC's session at 11:45am on May 25 (Saturday), however, it emerged that KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur was not invited to the forthcoming meeting. Chief ministers of other provinces — Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan — have been invited to the SIFC session, however, CM Gandapur was not given a formal invitation to attend it.

The upcoming session will be attended by the top officials, including deputy prime minister-cum-foreign

minister Senator Ishaq Dar, ministers for information, finance, defence, planning and development, commerce, law and justice, water resources, and provincial chief secretaries. Reacting to the development, KP government's spokesperson Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif censured the federal government, saying that the “Form 47 government of Shehbaz Sharif” exhibited bias towards the province.

“Fake ‘Form 47’ government is pushing the country towards provincialism. We would not accept any decision regarding the fate of our province possessing natural resources in the absence of the chief minister. The KP government strongly condemns this biased step,” he added. Adviser to KP CM on Finance Muzammil Aslam slammed the Centre's decision for not inviting CM Gandapur to the SIFC apex committee's session bearing “malice” and an “insult of the public mandate”.

Aslam claimed that PM Office was involved in neglecting the KP province and demanded the Centre to review the decision. He blamed the forum for failing to bring reasonable investments to the country in one and a half year. He clarified that the province was not involved in the confrontation, except for demanding its dues from the federal government.

Earlier this month, CM Gandapur had come down hard on the federal government, again, and warned of a strong reaction if the Centre failed to give an exact timeframe for resolving the province's core issues. Gandapur warned the federal government of a strong reaction if it fails to give an exact timeline for resolving the province's core issues, including payments of dues, new taxes, promised funds for countering law and order issues, loadshedding, and special funds for tribal areas.

Pakistan faces  
5,000MW  
power scarcity  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan faces 5,000MW power scarcity as the electricity demand has surged to a staggering 25,500 megawatts against the total production of 20,200MW, according to National Power Control Centre (NPCC) information on Thursday.

his shortfall has led to an increase in load shedding, exacerbating the plight of both urban and rural areas. In rural regions, load shedding has extended to over eight hours, while urban areas face four to six hours of power outages. Moreover, maintenance-related load shedding further burdens urban residents with additional six-hour blackouts. Areas plagued by high losses and theft are experiencing load shedding of up to 12 to 16 hours.

The twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi are also experiencing four to six hours of load shedding in the name of maintenance. NPCC sources said that despite efforts to augment power generation, the energy deficit persists. Currently, 6,200MW of electricity are generated from hydropower sources, with 2,200MW from Tarbela Dam alone, they added.

Additionally, Tarbela-4 is contributing 1,100MW of electricity, 1,200MW from Ghazi Barotha, and 950MW from Mangla Dam, the sources said, adding that 750MW are being generated from other small hydropower sources.

Moreover, government thermal power plants contribute 1,100MW, while independent power producers (IPPs) contribute 8,250MW. Nuclear power plants generate 3,540MW, with wind, solar, and biomass contributing 820, 203, and 145 megawatts, respectively. The Power Division refuted claims of announced load shedding but acknowledged that areas with high losses or theft and low recovery rates were experiencing power outages.

31,057 Pak  
pilgrims reach  
S Arabia

RIYADH (INP): The arrival of Pakistani pilgrims in the Holy land of Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj 2024 rituals, is continuing. According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, said that so far, 31,057 intending pilgrims have arrived in

Madinah Munawwarah through 126 flights under the government scheme. Besides, more than 2,000 pilgrims have reached Makkah Mukarramah under the private Hajj 2024 scheme.

From the airport, the passengers were transported to residential buildings located in Markazia, just a 15-20 minute walk from Masjid e Nabvi and Rozae-Rasool (SAW), via luxurious buses.

UAE to invest  
\$10b in Pakistan

Broke the begging bowl as nations  
prospered through hard work, not aid: PM

ABU DHABI (APP): Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif held a bilateral meeting with His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi today.

Prime Minister was accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi. The Prime Minister offered condolences on the passing away of close family members of Al Nahyan family, late Sheikh Tahnoun bin Mohamed Al Nahyan and late Sheikh Hazza bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss whole gamut of bilateral relations including cooperation in political, economic, social, cultural and defence sectors. Prime Minister underscored the importance of galvanizing existing cooperation and strengthening strategic partnership including in the field of information technology, renewable energy and tourism.

Prime Minister highlighted steps taken by the government aimed at ensuring socio-economic stability in the country and building investors' confidence. He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to ensure meaningful implementation of investment cooperation agreements in the areas of Energy, Port Operations Projects, Wastewater Treatment, Food Security, Logistics, Minerals, and Banking & Financial Services.

President of the UAE His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan assured UAE's support in all circumstances and made commitment of investing US\$ 10 billion in multiple sectors in Pakistan. Prime Minister conveyed gratitude to the UAE leadership for hosting 1.8 million Pakistani diaspora and highlighted Pakistan's huge human resource potential that could be engaged in multiple sectors.

Both leaders exchanged views on other issues of mutual interest including regional and global developments. The Prime Minister reiterated his invitation to the

Pemra's order challenged  
F.P. Report

LAHORE: A petition has been filed in the Lahore High Court (LHC) challenging the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority's (PEMRA) notification prohibiting court reporting. The petition, moved by Advocate Samra Malik, has made PEMRA, the federal government, and information secretary as respondents in the case.

UAE President for an official visit to Pakistan. The UAE

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also said that he had broken the begging bowl as no nation had ever achieved prosperity through the begging bowl or aid rather through sacrifice and hard work.

“Gone are the days when I will go to a brotherly country with a begging bowl. I have broken that bowl. The bowl will lead us nowhere. When was the last time that a country prospered through aid and bowls? Only the nations made their mark and left indelible footprints through sacrifice, hard work, sweat and blood,” he said addressing a roundtable conference on “Innovate together: UAE-Pakistan Tech Collaboration” during his daylong visit here. This event was organized by Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA) and Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) in collaboration with the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication and Pakistan's Embassy in Abu Dhabi. It was attended by representatives and heads of Information Technology (IT) companies based in the UAE as well as Pakistani IT experts.

The prime minister, who was on a day-long visit to the UAE, said that in his scheduled meeting with UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, he would not seek any loan but joint collaboration and joint investments to have mutual benefits for investors. Explaining the parameters of his government's programme, he said the Pakistani workers would be imparted the highest standard of vocational training so that they come to the UAE and open their offices, provide remote services and make livelihood. “I am prepared to take that risk because nothing can be achieved without taking risks. I am ready to move forward in this field,” he told the ceremony which marked the signing of three memorandums of understanding (MOUs) between Pakistani and UAE IT companies to implement digital transformation.

(Continued on Back Page)

Pakistan Army's role in war  
on terror acknowledged

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff is on an official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany.

During the visit he was received at the Federal Ministry of Defence by General Carsten Breuer, Chief of Defence where he was presented with Honour Guard by the contingent of German Armed Forces.

Chief of Army Staff also met Lieutenant General Alfons Mais, Chief of the German Army and visited the Army Combat Training Centre, Gardelegen along with the German Army Chief. The COAS was briefed on various facets of the centre and the training being imparted to the German Army and contingents of other Armies. He also witnessed a demonstration on urban warfare and visited different training facilities.

COAS also met Mr Jens



Plötner, Foreign Policy and Security advisor to Federal Chancellor; Mr Tobias Linder, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Mr Nils Hilmer, State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence. During meetings with the civilian and military leadership matters of mutual interest came under discussion.

German leadership acknowledged Pakistan Army's role in fight against

Terrorism and for maintaining peace and stability in the region. COAS will also be visiting the German Armed Forces Command & Staff College, Hamburg where he will address the students attending the course from various countries to dilate upon Pakistan's Regional and International Security Perspective and contributions of Pakistan Armed Forces in the United Nations Missions.

Iran's Raisi buried

TEHRAN (AFP): Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi was laid to rest on Thursday, concluding days of funeral rites attended by throngs of mourners after his death in a helicopter crash, state media reported. Hundreds of thousands

marched in his home town Mashhad to bid farewell to Raisi ahead of his burial following processions in the cities of Tabriz, Qom, Tehran and Birjand.

The 63-year-old died on Sunday alongside his foreign minister and six others after their helicopter went down in the country's mountainous northwest while returning from a dam inauguration on the border with Azerbaijan. Once the five days of public mourning, announced on Monday, have passed, the authorities including acting President Mohammad Mokhber will focus on organizing an election for a new president set for June 28. Men and women, who were mainly clad in black chadors and clutching white flowers, crowded the main boulevard of Mashhad, the

Islamic republic's second city in the northeast where Raisi was born. Some held aloft placards paying tribute to Raisi as the “man of the battlefield” as a large truck carrying his body drove through the sea of mourners.

“I have come, O king, give me refuge,” said a slogan emblazoned on top of the truck, in reference to Imam Reza, the eighth imam of Shiite Islam. Posters of Raisi, black flags and Shiite symbols were erected along the streets of Mashhad, particularly around Raisi's final resting place — the Imam Reza shrine, a key mausoleum visited by millions of pilgrims every year. Earlier thousands of people holding images of Raisi and waving flags lined the streets of Birjand, capital of the eastern province of South Khorasan, for the procession of Raisi's coffin.

Raisi was South Khorasan's representative in the Assembly of Experts, a clerical body in charge of selecting or dismissing

Iran's supreme leader. Raisi had widely been expected to succeed supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who led prayers in Tehran on Wednesday for the late president and knelt before the coffins of the eight people killed in the helicopter crash. Among them was foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who was buried Thursday in the shrine of Shah Abdol-Azim in the town of Shahre Ray south of the capital.

Iranian officials and foreign dignitaries paid their respects to the late top diplomat at a ceremony in Tehran ahead of the burial. Massive crowds had gathered for a funeral procession in the Iranian capital on Wednesday to pay their final respects to the president, whom officials and media dubbed a “martyr.” Iran's conservative newspapers carried large front-page pictures of the gathering on Thursday, hailing the ceremonies as an “Epic farewell” and saying Raisi would forever remain “In the hearts of the people.





ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting regarding NADRA. —APP Photo

## Rana Sanaullah assumes IPC Ministry's charge

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Thursday assumed the additional charge of Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC).

He was welcomed by Federal Secretary Nadeem Irshad Kayani and other senior officials, said a statement issued here.

Earlier, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal was serving as IPC minister.

Rana Sanaullah has also been given the status of a federal minister. Rana Sanaullah was given a comprehensive briefing on the ministry's affairs, including preparations for the upcoming South Asian Games.

He expressed satisfaction on the arrangements and emphasized the need to meet international standards. He expressed the determination to host the coveted event on a modern model, with the support of business community and corporate sector.

He reiterated the government's commitment to promote sports in the country, in line with the Prime Minister's vision.

Rana Sanaullah directed Pakistan Sports Board to develop a comprehensive programme to engage the youth in sports.

He said that successful hosting of the South Asian Games and other international events would enhance Pakistan's positive image in the world.

## Naqvi presides meeting, directs NADRA to make national registration policy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi while presiding over a review meeting regarding National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) on Thursday directed to make National Registration Policy.

The minister in a meeting said that authenticity of identity card and citizenship is of utmost importance, therefore, a comprehensive policy should be evolved in this regard.

He also directed to develop consensus of all provinces on this policy because union council has the status of foundation and access of NADRA to Union Councils is necessary in this connection. He said that the policy

will make citizen's registration transparent and foolproof.

The new policy will also prevent illegal registration of citizenship, due to which the issue of releasing identity cards and passports to foreigners came to light, the minister said.

The plan to increase NADRA centers in six major cities was also reviewed in a meeting.

Apart from Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi, Multan had been decided to be included in this plan. The plan should be finalized and implemented in the next few days, so that people could avoid unnecessary rush and hassle, said the Interior Minister.

NADRA counters should also be started in service centers for the convenience of the people, he directed.

Home Minister's visits and subsequent measures have reduced the waiting time from 120 minutes to 75 minutes, Mohsin Naqvi was informed in a briefing. However, the minister directed measures to further reduce waiting time.

At present NADRA registration is 85% of the total population, the minister was briefed. Secretary Interior Khurram Ali Agha, Chairman NADRA Lieutenant General Mohammad Munir Afsar and senior officers also participated in the meeting.

### Darshan Lal visits Agha Khan hospital F.P. Report

MIRPUR: Central Vice President of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Dr. Darshan Lal visited Agha Khan Hospital, Senior Journalist Nasrullah Gadani, MNA Dr. Darshan met the brother and heirs of journalist Nasrullah Gadani and asked for his recovery.

MNA Dr. Darshan Lal while talking to journalists said that Nasrullah Gadani is a fearless and brave journalist, he has always raised the public voice of Ghotki. He demanded IGP Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon. The MNA of PML-N, Dr. Darshan Lal, further said that he will speak for Nasrullah Gadani in the National Assembly.

He was seriously injured and was transferred to Rahim Yar Khan Hospital in critical condition, but when his condition worsened, the injured journalist Nasrullah Gadani was transferred to Karachi Aga Khan Hospital by air ambulance, where he is undergoing treatment, and his condition is critical. It is reported outside and is gradually improving.

## Gilani: Budget to address Business Community's issues

Saqib Mushtaq

MULTAN: Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, lauding the role of business community in the national economy, assured them that their problems would be taken care of in the upcoming federal budget. He was speaking at a luncheon held in his honour by known industrialist Mian Tanvir A Sheikh, former president of Multan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, on Thursday.

Gilani stated that President Asif Ali Zardari had always encouraged friendly countries, including China, to invest in Pakistan. He extolled the president's efforts in launching game-changer projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Among others, MCCI President Mian Rashid Iqbal, Romana Tanvir Sheikh, President of Industrial Estate Board of Management Asif Majeed,



PCGA Chairman Chaudhry Waheed Arshad, ex-MCCI president Khawaja Jalaluddin Roomi and Khawaja Younis were also present on the occasion.

The business community congratulated Gilani on being elected as Senate chairman and on the victory of his son Ali Kaisam Gilani in the by-election for NA-148.

Earlier, the Acting President arrived here on a three-day official visit via PIA's commercial flight. He

was received at the Multan International Airport by MNAs Syed Abdul Qadir Gilani and Ali Qasim Gilani, MPAs Syed Ali Haider Gilani, Kamran Marral and Rana Iqbal Siraj, along with Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Fawad Hashim Rabbani, Commissioner Multan Maryam Khan, Deputy Commissioner Rizwan Qadeer, and other officials. During the three-day stay, the Acting President will meet various delegations.

## Federal Ombudsman praises Sindh's prison reforms

KARACHI (APP): Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi and Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Hyder Shah presided over a meeting regarding prison reforms on Thursday.

Senior Advisor to the Ombudsman Anwar Haider, the Secretary of Health, the Inspector General of Prisons and officials from the Home Department attended the meeting. The primary focus of the meeting was to comprehensively assess the current state of prisons across Sindh and devise strategies for their enhancement and reforms.

Chief Secretary Syed Asif Hyder Shah informed the

meeting about several key initiatives aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the province's correctional facilities.

Chief Secretary Sindh said that the provincial government plans to introduce audio and video link systems in all prisons across Sindh. This will enable prisoners to appear in court proceedings and talk with their families via video links. The Chief Secretary further stated that 500 acres of land will be allocated for the construction of a new prison in Karachi.

This development is expected to alleviate overcrowding issues and

improve living conditions for inmates. Furthermore, the budget for providing quality food to prisoners has been significantly increased from 1200 million to 2400 million, underscoring the commitment to ensuring the well-being of inmates.

To strengthen oversight and accountability within the prison system, Chief Secretary Shah announced the formation of 22 oversight committees, each dedicated to monitoring the conditions within a specific facility. Highlighting efforts to empower inmates through education and skill-building initiatives, it was

announced that educational and vocational training programs are being extended to 2824 prisoners.

Additionally, female prisoners in Karachi Central Jail are now being offered digital courses from prominent platforms such as Google and Amazon.

Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi expressed his satisfaction with the significant progress made in prison reforms across Sindh. He commended the efforts undertaken and emphasized the importance of ongoing initiatives in alignment with directives from the Supreme Court.

## FBR Chairman inaugurates New RTO building in Islamabad



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman FBR, Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana inaugurated the new building of Regional Tax Office, Islamabad on Thursday.

While addressing the inauguration ceremony, Chairman FBR said that this new state-of-the-art building of RTO Islamabad reflects our commitment to modernise FBR and making our tax system more efficient, transparent and taxpayer-friendly. He stated that establishment of this office underscores our dedication to promote a

culture of tax compliance and trust between the tax authorities and the citizens.

Chairman FBR added that the new facility is fully equipped with modern technology to provide better facilitation to taxpayers and to streamline the process of tax collection.

Chairman FBR emphasized that in these difficult economic times, our task is extremely challenging, but we are committed to maximizing revenue collection for economic prosperity. He urged all the officers to uphold the highest stan-

dards of integrity and professional commitment in discharging their duties.

Chairman FBR appreciated Member Admin/HR and Chief Projects, along with their teams, for successfully completing this challenging project. He also thanked Pak PWD and other stakeholders for their continuous support.

Earlier Ms. Sadia Sadaf Gilani, Member Admin/HR and Chief Commissioner RTO Islamabad Mr. Abid Mehmood also addressed the gathering. On the occasion, Chief Projects Mr. Shahid Soomro gave a brief presentation on the planning and designing of this new facility.

### PAF BASE, PESHAWAR TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from reputable, well-experienced, financially - sound and Income Tax - Registered Pakistani Firms / Contractors for Manufacturing / Repair of following items to PAF Base, Peshawar, during the Financial Years 2024 - 2026 (01 July, 2024 - 30 June, 2026). Firms which are not registered with PAF can also participate in the tender.

- Shoes B/L (Manufacturing / Repair)
- Shoes DMS (Manufacturing / Repair)
- Shoes Combat (Manufacturing I Repair)
- Shoes for Lady Officers / Airwomen (Manufacturing / Repair)
- Shoes Flying (Manufacturing / Repair)

#### Tender Forms

Tender Forms can be collected from the Office of Logistics Squadron, PAF Base, Peshawar, from 0800 hrs. to 1300 hrs., from the publishing date, on submission of Photocopies of NTN, GST, Computerized CNIC & Professional Tax Certificate. (Tel: 091-9503863, 091-9503877). Tender forms completed in all respects are to be submitted on **07 June 2024**, by 1000 hrs. Tender will be opened on the same date at 1100 hrs in the office of O /c Logistics Squadron, PAF Base, Peshawar.

#### Note:

- Any supplier whose contract has been terminated from PAF / Defence Organization due to poor performance is not eligible for the bidding / contract.
  - The Contract will have to be signed by the owner of the Firm.
  - If any Firm / Contractor is not already registered with PAF, then, relevant documents / information for registration can also be collected from the above-mentioned PAF Office.
  - Any information, if found incomplete / false at any stage, will result in immediate rejection of the application for the Tender.
  - Logistics Squadron, PAF Base, Peshawar can be contacted for any further information and details, if required.
  - Contractors / Firms are to deposit a Bank Draft of Rs 5,000/- as 2% of total Tender value, as Earnest Money in favor of the Officer Commanding PAF Base, Peshawar.
  - Contractors / Firms are to submit the details of their expertise / skilled labor and equipment, along with tender forms.
- Detailed specifications may be obtained from O /c Log Sqn PAF Base, Peshawar. Tel No. 091-9503861, Mobile: 03239411711.

**Support Wing**  
PAF Base, Peshawar  
Tele Ext 3861

### PAKISTAN AIR FORCE AHQs, PESHAWAR TENDER NOTICE

- AHQs, Peshawar (College of Education) requires different Conservancy Items [Mops, Surf, Wipers, Lime Stone, Acids, Brooms, Plastic Lota, Plastic Dustbin, Brush, Toilet Rolls, Soap, Hand Wash, Sanitizer, Sweep, Neel, Steel Dustbin, Vim Powder, Drain Opener, Trolley (for housekeeping), Floor Polish, Liquid and powder etc] for Financial Year 2023-24.
- Sealed tenders are invited for above mentioned items. Last date for submission of tender is **10 June, 2024 at 1000 hrs**, and will be opened on the same date at **1300 hrs**. The Officer Commanding reserves the right to accept / reject, any / all tenders, on technical grounds.
- The Firm must be FBR - registered.

**Note:** Quotation may be sent in favour of College of Education, AHQs, Peshawar. Detailed specification may be obtained on Tel No: 091-9210777-7231

### PAKISTAN AIR FORCE AHQs, PESHAWAR TENDER NOTICE

- AHQs, Peshawar (College of Education) requires different Contingency Items (Air Freshener, Sealing Wax, Flopping Ropes, Tissue Paper, Ready Reckoner, Office Seal / Stamps, Calendar, Maps and Office File Tray etc) for Financial Year 2023-24.
- Sealed tenders are invited for above mentioned items. Last date for submission of tender is **10 June, 2024 at 1000 hrs**, and will be opened on the same date at **1300 hrs**. The Officer Commanding reserves the right to accept / reject, any / all tenders, on technical grounds.
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### PAKISTAN AIR FORCE AHQs, PESHAWAR TENDER NOTICE

- AHQs, Peshawar (College of Education) requires different NCF Items (Fertilizer, Plants, Seasonal Paneri, Flower Pots, Bhall Mud, Manure, Grass, DAP Bags, Fruit Trees etc) for Financial Year 2023-24.
- Sealed tenders are invited for above mentioned items. Last date for submission of tender is **10 June, 2024 at 1000 hrs**, and will be opened on the same date at **1300 hrs**. The Officer Commanding reserves the right to accept / reject, any / all tenders, on technical grounds.
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### LOST

I have lost my vehicle registration No. YV 429, Islamabad, Chesses No. NFBGM1553DR135045, Colour Silver, Honda City. If anyone found please contact on Fazal Shah, Mobile No. 0336-9062570.





PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minsiter Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur offering fateha for the departed soul of Iranian President during his visit to Iranian Consulate.

## Ahmad Zeb appointed DG Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant administrative reshuffle, Ahmad Zeb, a senior grade 19 officer, has been appointed as the new Director General of the Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control Department. Zeb, known for his exemplary service record, assumed charge of his new office today with a strong commitment to instituting comprehensive

reforms within the department. The Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control Department has been facing severe criticism for its unsatisfactory performance in recent years. Public confidence has been eroded due to allegations of widespread corruption and inefficiency. The predecessor to Ahmad Zeb faced substantial censure for his perceived failure to effectively manage the department,

with numerous officials facing allegations of corrupt practices during his tenure. Addressing the challenges ahead, Director General Ahmad Zeb emphasized his dedication to transforming the department. The appointment of Ahmad Zeb has been met with optimism among the department's dedicated officials, particularly those working tirelessly in the fight against narcotics. It is

anticipated that his leadership will rejuvenate the morale of the workforce and enhance their efforts in combating narcotics trafficking and other illicit activities. As Ahmad Zeb steps into his new role, the expectation is that his administrative acumen and reformist vision will steer the Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control Department towards a more accountable and effective future.

### Raid on lawyer's home, torturing women

## AD&SJ orders SHO to appear before court today

Humayun Kham

PESHAWAR: Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) Peshawar Bakht Alam ordered Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Investigation for submission of reply against illegal raid on lawyer's residence and torturing women by Station House Officer (SHO) Gulbahar, on Thursday. AD&SJ Peshawar also issued a notice to the SHO of Gulbahar Police Station to appear before court

today (on Friday) in a case of illegal raid on a lawyer's house and violence against women. The lawyer named Ajmal Khan Mohmand had filed a petition under Section 22-A, alleging that the police raided his house without a search warrant and lady constable, and tortured his elderly mother. The counsel Amjad Ali Marwat advocate argued that police had also stolen Rs5 lac along with multiple files from lawyer's residence during the illegal raid. He argued for registration of First Information Report against SHO Gulbahar for illegal raid on lawyer's residence. AD&SJ Peshawar adjourned the hearing until today and summoned the SHO to appear before court and SSP Investigation to respond to the allegations. It is worthy to mention that Peshawar High Court Bar Association senior member Ishaq Ali Qazi condemned the incident and announced that he will take the matter to a higher forum.

tration of First Information Report against SHO Gulbahar for illegal raid on lawyer's residence. AD&SJ Peshawar adjourned the hearing until today and summoned the SHO to appear before court and SSP Investigation to respond to the allegations. It is worthy to mention that Peshawar High Court Bar Association senior member Ishaq Ali Qazi condemned the incident and announced that he will take the matter to a higher forum.

### PAFSTC lauds govt decision to impose tobacco levy

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control (PAFSTC) commends Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for its decisive action to levy a new tobacco tax in form of provincial excise duty.

Qamar Naseem, a civil society activist working on tobacco control said that the imposition of tobacco cess and taxes aligns with WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) guidelines that emphasize the need for economic measures to reduce tobacco consumption.

The Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control said that this forward-thinking approach

Would not only curb tobacco use but also significantly improve the healthcare system in KP. The fund generated through tobacco cess would help enhance medical facilities and support healthcare workers.

### Symposium held on Perception Management

PESHAWAR (APP): The Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in collaboration with Department of Media and Communication Studies University of Swat here Thursday organized a youth symposium on Perception Management, National Integration, and Entrepreneurship.

Addressing the event, Kashif Irshad, Senior Manager KPCVE emphasized the need to discuss critical strategies for fostering unity and economic development among the youth. "Fostering partnerships between youth organizations, government, NGOs, and international bodies can amplify the impact of youth-led peace initiatives," he said. Manager KPCVE, Dr. Irfan Ullah said that implementing educational programs that promote peace, tolerance, and conflict resolution is crucial for mutual coexistence and peace in our society.

He said that universities can play a vital role in integrating peace studies into their curricula to help young people understand root causes of violence and importance of peace.

Mutiullah, and other officials. On this occasion, the Sports Advisor praised Zakaria Hayat's achievement and said that the provincial government would provide all possible support to the players and stars of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as they are the valuable assets of the province.



## Rs1million given to hockey player

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhar Jihan, on Thursday, presented a check of Rs. 10 lakh to Zakaria Hayat, a hockey player from Mardan, who scored the first goal in the Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey

Tournament. It is merit to mentioned that the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, had announced a prize of Rs 10 lakh for Zakaria Hayat in recognition of his outstanding performance in the same international event. The ceremony was attended by Secretary Sports,

# Kundi commends tribal districts' Sacrifices

Vows to address unfulfilled promises

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, has praised the valiant people of the merged tribal districts for their immense sacrifices in protecting the state and upholding national dignity.

He acknowledged that while these tribal areas are now constitutionally part of the province, their residents still have reservations and face various issues post-merger.

Governor Kundi assured that the promises made to the tribal people at the time of the merger will be reviewed to identify unfulfilled commitments, which will then be addressed at relevant forums with strong arguments.

Speaking on Thursday at the Governor House in Peshawar to a representative jirga of 120 elders from all merged districts,

led by former Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Turi, Kundi highlighted the ongoing law and order issues in these areas.

He emphasized that these can be resolved sustainably through the positive roles and cooperation of tribal elders and the public with relevant institutions.

The jirga included representatives from Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, South Waziristan, North Waziristan, and the former FRs. During the event, Malik Khan Marjan from North Waziristan and Malik Bismillah Khan from Khyber district congratulated Kundi on assuming the governorship.

The governor and former Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Turi were presented with traditional lungis and gifts.

The tribal representatives, including Malik

Khan Marjan, Malik Bismillah Khan, and former candidate from PK70 Wahid Shah, informed the governor about the unfulfilled promises post-merger.

These include the 3% NFC Award, doubling the quota for tribal students in top educational institutions, the recruitment of 25,000 Levies personnel, and declaring tribal areas tax-free zones for ten years.

They also demanded an end to prolonged power outages, which are severely impacting daily life, and called for the protection of the minority Sikh community, urging justice for those involved in targeted killings.

Governor Kundi assured the jirga that the Governor House is their home, always open to them.

He pledged to effectively represent provincial rights, especially

regarding development initiatives and promises made to the merged tribal districts, to the federal government.

He requested the elders form a five-member committee to provide concrete proposals to address their issues, which he will present to relevant forums with their cooperation. Regarding the protection of the Sikh community, he affirmed that the safety of every Pakistani is the state's responsibility and promised to discuss this with the IG Police.

He concluded by stressing the importance of demanding rights through reasoned arguments and stated that provincial and federal governments must work together to bring basic facilities and development to the tribal districts, aligning them with other regions of the province.

## Muzammil for t austerity measures to achieve budgatry efficiency

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance Mr. Muzamil Aslam on Thursday held comprehensive joint budget review meeting with almost line departments to ensure that government policies and priorities are effectively translated into the budget.

These sessions were attended by Mr. Khuda Bakhsh Special Secretary Finance, Mr. Waqas Paracha from SNG and senior officials from the Finance Department, Planning and Development Department, and representatives from line departments.

This was comprehensive Joint Budget Review Committee Meetings to Align Budget with Government Policies, Fiscal Priorities, and Efficiency Measures while the primary objective was to discuss and evaluate 2024-25 total budget and prioritize public welfare projects and ensure the alignment of budgetary allocations with key performance indicators for service delivery.

During the sessions, the Finance Advisor emphasized several critical points including Policy-Driven

Budgeting, Austerity Measures, Investment in Service Delivery, addressing Financial Losses, detailed Variance Analysis, Public Welfare Priorities etc.

Mr. Muzammil Aslam insisted that the budget should be driven by policy objectives rather than merely being a numerical exercise.

This approach ensures that budget allocations reflect strategic priorities, such as improving education quality and healthcare access, rather than just expanding physical infrastructure.

Advisor on finance mandated strict austerity measures to achieve budgetary efficiency. This involves cutting unnecessary expenses and focusing resources on essential projects, thus ensuring the optimal use of public funds. The goal is to bring efficiency savings into the budget through prudent financial management.

Emphasizing the completion of high-impact and near-completion projects, the Advisor highlighted the importance of projects that directly enhance public welfare and service delivery. This aligns with broader governmental goals of improving infrastructure

and public services efficiently.

A shift in investment focus was recommended, moving away from constructing new buildings for schools and hospitals to enhancing the quality of services provided. This includes the introduction of policies for renting school buildings, which allows for a more flexible and immediate response to educational needs without the delays and costs associated with new construction.

The Advisor noted the financial losses incurred due to the delayed completion of projects, which have resulted in millions of rupees in losses annually. To mitigate this, he recommended completing these projects swiftly to start generating revenue and enhance service delivery.

A detailed variance analysis was advised to understand the increases from the previous year's revised estimates to identify areas where additional steps can be taken to reduce costs.

The Advisor stressed that the budget must be closely linked to policy outcomes to ensure that every allocation supports the government's strategic goals.

The Advisor highlighted the need to reduce subsidies

by identifying potential savings during the review process. This approach aims to ensure fiscal sustainability and efficient allocation of resources, redirecting funds to areas that provide the most significant public benefit.

Advisor on Finance said that All public sector entities including universities, WSSCs are mandated to submit the required data to the Finance Department. No grants or subsidies will be issued without meeting this data requirement. The Finance Department has informed the forum about the development of an online portal designed to enhance the governance of Public Sector Entities (PSEs) by facilitating the collection of necessary data.

This initiative aims to streamline processes and ensure greater transparency and accountability within the sector. By incorporating these measures, the budget review process aims to create a more efficient, policy-driven financial plan that addresses immediate public needs and long-term strategic goals. These steps will help ensure that the government's priorities are effectively translated into actionable and impactful budgetary decisions.

## KMU hosts taxpayer rights awareness session

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU) on Thursday hosted an awareness session on safeguarding taxpayers' rights at Dr. Hafeezullah Hall.

The event featured the Honorable Federal Tax Ombudsman, Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah (Hilal Intiaz, Sitara Intiaz), as the main guest speaker. The session aimed at educating participants on the rights of taxpayers and the mechanisms available for addressing their complaints.

The seminar was organized by the Finance Wing of KMU under supervision of Treasurer Wasim Riaz.

Distinguished attendees included KMU Registrar Inamullah Khan Wazir, Dean of Basic Medical Sciences Professor Dr. Rubina Nazli, Treasurer Waseem Riaz, and heads of all KMU departments.

During the session, Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah provided an in-depth overview of the role and mandate of the Federal Tax Ombudsman in resolving taxpayers' complaints.

He also addressed various tax-related queries from the participants, offering valuable insights into the complexities of the taxation system. Mr. Almas Jvindah, Advisor Legal, addressed the legal aspects

of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO). Sardar Ali Khawaja shared his experiences as the former Chief Commissioner of FBR and informed attendees about the FTO Office in Peshawar, where students and faculty can file their complaints and grievances.

Treasurer KMU, Waseem Riaz and Registrar Inamullah Khan, expressed their gratitude to Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah for his presence and the valuable knowledge he shared.

Special recognition was given to Mr. Muhammad Umair Zeb, who received a Performance Award in

recognition of his contributions as a tax advisor to both KMU and the Federal Tax Ombudsman.

The contributions of Muhammad Umair Zeb, along with the cooperation of the guests and the active participation of the Heads of Departments, were highly appreciated.

The session underscored KMU's commitment to promoting a better understanding of taxpayers' rights and facilitating the effective resolution of tax issues. The session also emphasized the KMU's dedication to taxpayer education and the valuable insights provided by Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah, Federal Tax Ombudsman.

## Traffic police in action against two stroke rickshaws

PESHAWAR (APP): The city traffic police have started a crackdown against two stroke rickshaws in the district and impounded around 500 such three-wheelers to ease the traffic chaos and disorder.

According to Traffic Police, these rickshaws were not being allowed renewal of permit and registration for the last many years adding that most of these rickshaws were plying on roads without valid and proper documents.

Besides, the traffic police said these two stroke rickshaws were also a main source of noise and

air pollution and creating traffic problems in the city. Most of the drivers of these rickshaws apply lubricants in their fuel tanks that result in smoke emission and cause a bad impact on the city's environment.

Adding his comments, the SP Traffic Peshawar said a seven-point agenda was signed between the rickshaw union and traffic police in 2022 to gradually shift from the two stroke rickshaws to four stroke that are less hazardous to the environment.

However, with passage of time rather than a decrease in such rick-

shaws, its number was further increased causing problems in streamlining the traffic flow and discipline.

The traffic police said around 500 two stroke rickshaws having no proper documents have been impounded and the campaign would continue till achieving the desired goal.

On the other hand, the drivers of these rickshaws have demanded of the government to arrange some other source of livelihood for them as with no alternate remedial incentives, their financial condition would further deteriorate.

### Dheer Motorway: A Priority for KP

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister of Communications and Works, Shakeel Ahmed, emphasized the significance of the Dheer Motorway project for the province's development, stating that it is among the government's top priorities. Efforts are being made to expedite the construction of this public project to meet the aspirations of the people. He made these remarks while presiding over a high-level meeting regarding the construction of the Dheer Motorway on Thursday.





## In brief

### Dispensary inaugurated F.P. Report

BUNER: The first ever medical dispensary has been established at District Courts Daggar where a qualified medical technician will be present during court hours to provide immediate relief to court staff or litigants in health problems on emergency basis. In this medical dispensary, the necessary medicines and drips will be available, claimed the medical technician. According to medical technician Barkat Ali, emergency coverage will be provided in this medical dispensary and with immediate medical assistance, the risks to the patient's life will be reduced and the patient will be able to be transferred to a major hospital. While for common diseases of a minor nature, it will be facilitated by giving drugs, injection or drip, which will save the staff from transporting them to distant hospitals in case of minor headache, diarrhea, and illness, and save valuable time and resources. In this regard, the court staff and those who came for the appearance court litigations have appreciated this initiative and have expressed good wishes to further improve the medical facilities in this medical dispensary and keep it active and established in future too.

### Sustainable peace urged F.P. Report

WANA: In a high-stakes gathering, tribal leaders, political figures, and social activists convened in Kari Kot against rapidly deteriorating law and order situation in the region and demanded redressal of public's grievance by establishing sustainable peace, on Thursday. Former provincial assembly candidate Taj Muhammad Wazir and respected tribal leader, sounded the alarm, warning that the worsening security situation in Lower Waziristan threatened to unravel the fragile peace in the region. He praised the efforts of the Ahmadzai Wazir tribes in driving out foreign elements and establishing peace, but lamented that the recent wave of terrorism had once again pushed the region to the brink. "If the government fails to act decisively, the remaining patriotism of the tribal people will be lost, and anti-state forces will exploit their sentiments, putting the country's integrity at risk," Taj Wazir cautioned. "The government must take immediate action to establish peace in the area, or risk a catastrophic relapse into chaos and violence." The speakers unanimously appealed to the government and state institutions to take concrete steps to establish peace in Lower Waziristan, emphasizing that the current uncertain situation and lawlessness were not conducive to the country's progress.

### Mayor upheld issues with Ghani F.P. Report

LARKANA: Mayor Larkana Anwar Ali Luhar met with Sindh Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani in the Sindh Assembly. According to details, Mayor Larkana discussed various issues including providing development scheme funds for the city to Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani, Mayor Larkana Anwar Ali Luhar also emphasized on new budget and increasing OZT share to strengthen the council while the Corporation. The Minister of Municipalities Sindh Saeed Ghani also gave a briefing for the welfare schemes of the employees and the office structure.



**QUETTA:** A boy pushing wheelbarrow loaded with empty water cans going to water filtration plant due to shortage of water supply in the City.

## Anti-encroachment operation directed

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad has directed the all concerned departments to ensure removal of all kind of encroachments from all roads of the district not only to provide better communicational facilities to the people but also to overcome road accidents while officers of District Road Transport Authority, Highway Department, Traffic Police and Rescue 1122 to formulate comprehensive strategy to contain encroachments in future under the public welfare vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz.

DC was addressing a meeting of Excel Load Managements committee Hafizabad. ADCR Secretary Regional Transport Authority Hamadullah, AC Munawar Hussain and other officers attended the meeting. She directed the officers to launch crackdown on overloaded vehicles and to ensure implantation on Excel Load Managements Policy. She said that encroachments on roads, overloading and rush drive were major causes of road accidents. Lose of precious human lives in road accident will not be tolerate at all and violators of load management policy and rush driving did not deserving any mercy, she determined.

Meanwhile, officers of district administration Hafizabad have launch campaign against decanting of LPG whereas 13 decanting shops have been sealed and imposed Rs. 36000/- fine on shopkeepers involved in decanting, AC Hafizabad Munawar Hussain, AC Pindi Bhattian Ishfaq Ahmad and District Civil Defence Officer Shahid Pervaiz are visiting different places to eliminate illegal decanting in the district.

**Fertilizer seized:** Deputy Director Agriculture Hafizabad Muhammad Yousaf seized spurious fertilizer from a shop FIR against shopkeeper got registered in police station Hafizabad.

According to details, Deputy Director

Agriculture checked a shop situated at Madhrianwala Road in the city and found spurious fertilizer. He took fertilizer in his custody and got registered a case against accused Khalil Ahmad.

**Police commits to overcome gap with traders:** District Police Officer Faisal Gulzar said that on the directions of the IG Punjab, police department is focusing on bridge gap between police and traders and get proposal regarding reanimating law and order situation and artificial inflation.

He was talking to a delegation of Chamber of Commerce and Industries Hafizabad consisting of Senior Vice-president Shafaqat Hussain Tarar, Vice-president Abudl Jabbar Ansari, Executive Members Gul Nawaz Tarar, Malik Muhammad Shahbaz.

On the demand of Shafaqat Hussain Tarar, DPO announced to setup police chowki on Sagar Head to Qadirabad Head Road to ensure protection of commuters. It was decided in the meeting that members of chamber will arrange construction of building on self-help basis while DPO will appoint police force.

**PAU delegation visits Iranian Embassy:** A delegation of Pakistan Association of Uganda visited Iranian Embassy at Uganda led by Chairman Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad Hafizabadi, General Secretary Mehmood Haroon and Information Secretary Abid Ali Zain.

The delegation presented condolence letter to the Iranian Ambassador Majid Safar on the tragic death of Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hussain Ameer in helicopter crash. Sheikh Rasheed said on this occasion that the whole Pakistani nation is standing with Iranian brethren on this time of trail.

Iranian Ambassador thanked the delegation for expressing their love and affection with People of the Iran in this time of grief and sorrow. He said that we respect sentiments of Pakistani Community and pray for strengthening bilateral relations of brother countries Iran and Pakistan.

## Sacked EPI technicians demand reinstatement

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: President of the sacked EPI technicians Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sanaullah Shinwari has hoped the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister Ali Ameen Gandapur would take up their issue of stopped salaries for eight months to provide relief to 1000 families.

Talking to local journalists at Timergara, he said that 1000 EPI technicians were hired during the Covid-19 pandemic in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province but were fired during the previous caretaker government. He said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister during a

meeting with them at Peshawar had promised to release their salaries which were not paid to them.

Sanaullah said the chief minister had also promised to reinstate the sacked EPI technicians. He thanked the CM for his sincerity to them and said that neither the chief ministers nor health minister had ever promised to reinstate them and pay their stopped salaries. He said a delegation of the sacked employees would again meet the CM at his office to remind him of his pledge.

**Research thesis conference:** The post graduate college Timergara organized a research thesis conference for BS students

which was attended by male and female students from Lower and Upper Dir districts. The students from 16 different departments presented their research thesis and got applause from the audience.

Director higher education Prof Syed Wali Khan was chief guest while Principal of the PGC Timergara Sirajud Din also spoke on the occasion. The speakers said that it was the first ever conference for BS students across the province. They appreciated the young scholars and asked them to utilize their research work for the welfare of human beings. The position holder students were awarded with shields.

## LG members to oppose proposed taxes: Mayor

F.P. Report

MINGORA: Tehsil Mayor Shahid Ali Khan has come out strongly against the proposed taxes in Malakand Division, vowing to resist any attempts to impose them on the already struggling population. In a press statement, Khan praised Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur for announcing that the province will not impose taxes, saying it has won the hearts of the people. However, he emphasized that the government needs to do more to address the economic woes of the region.

"The people of Swat and Malakand Division have made immense sac-

rifices in the war against terrorism and have faced natural disasters, which has devastated their economy," Khan said. "Instead of imposing taxes, the government should provide employment opportunities and address their issues."

Khan warned that if the government tries to impose taxes, it will face strong resistance from the people. "We will not let the government impose taxes on our people without a fight," he said. "We demand that the government takes the stakeholders into confidence and prepares a plan of action with their consultation."

The Mayor's statement comes amid growing resentment among the people of Malakand Division over the proposed taxes. The region has been facing economic hardship for years, and the proposed taxes are seen as an additional burden on the already struggling population.

He vowed to resist the proposed taxes has been welcomed by the people of Swat and Malakand Division, who see it as a bold stance against the government's policies. The issue is likely to gain momentum in the coming days, with more protests and demonstrations expected in the region.

## NPC team visits Rescue 1122 HQs Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: A delegation of Nowshera Press Club (NPC) led by President Mushtaq Paracha visited the Rescue 1122 Headquarters Nowshera on the special invitation of District Emergency Officer Malik Ashfaq Hussain, on Thursday.

The delegation comprising of Finance Secretary Haji Zahoor Ahmed, Member Wajid Ali, General Secretary Waliullah Shah, Member Khalid Nazeer, former President Jahan Zeb and Adnan.

DEO and Rescue 1122 spokesperson Nabil Khan welcomed the guests and briefed them on the rescue operations, equipment, and vehicles used by Rescue 1122. The delegation visited the Rescue 1122 control room and praised the professional services of the rescue staff.

District Emergency Officer also thanked the Nowshera Press Club for their positive reporting on Rescue 1122 and appreciated the role of electronic and print media representatives in highlighting the positive aspects of Rescue 1122.

## Wild bear kills mother of 3 children F.P. Report

BALAKOT: In a gruesome attack, a wild bear killed a woman in Juggan area of Balakot tehsil of Mansehra, local police informed on Thursday. Police said the unfortunate incident occurred in the Juggan area where an enraged wild bear attacked and killed the mother of three children.

The relatives of the deceased woman staged a protest demonstration in front of the DSP Office and demanded action against the responsible officials.

Talking to the protestors, DSP Balakot Circle, Muhammad Farood said after identification of the responsible wildlife officials, legal action will be initiated against them. He asked the protesting people to remain calm saying that no one was above the law and they will be provided justice at all cost. The protesting people said bear attacks have become a routine in their area but the departments concerned were not taking tangible steps towards this end.

## Traders express grief F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Former Chairman Market Committee Kamalia Chaudhry Faisal Qazafi, former Chairman Union Council Chaudhry Rizwan Ahmad Nusrat and former City President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chaudhry Kamran Ahmed Nusrat Expressing grief over the death of Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi and others.

They said that Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi was a good friend of Pakistan. Hoped for good news but it didn't happen. The great Iranian nation will overcome this tragedy with its traditional courage. We express our condolences and sympathy to the Iranian people on behalf of the people of Pakistan.

## Youth symposium on perception management held



Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: The Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (KPCVE), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, organized a Youth Symposium on Perception Management, National Integration, and Entrepreneurship in collaboration with the Department of Media & Communication Studies, University of Swat.

The event aimed to engage youth in discussions on promoting unity and economic development. Kashif Irshad, senior manager of KPCVE, emphasized the need for policymakers and experts to discuss critical strategies for fostering unity and economic development among the youth. "Fostering partnerships between youth organizations, government, NGOs, and international bodies can amplify the impact of youth-led peace initiatives," added Kashif Irshad.

Manager KPCVE, Dr.

Irfan Ullah, while addressing the symposium, said that implementing educational programs that promote peace, tolerance, and conflict resolution is crucial for peace and tolerance in our society. He said that universities can play a vital role in integrating peace studies into their curricula to help young people understand the root causes of violence and the importance of peace.

Dr. Jamal Ud Din, Head of the Department of Media & Communication Studies, highlighted the significance of youth in fostering a peaceful and economically vibrant society through perception management, grand narratives, and consensus-building, an expert on perception management, discussed the media's role in shaping public perception and emphasized the importance of awareness, education, and promoting a positive role in the present era.

The symposium featured interactive sessions on perception management, entre-

preneurship training, and networking opportunities, leading to actionable recommendations for integrating these themes into the university curriculum and establishing ongoing youth forums and mentorship programs.

Principal Research Officer KPCVE, Sahar Ali Khan, Ibrahim Shah, Aimal Riaz Khan, and a large number of students and faculty members from the University of Swat participated in the symposium.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Swat, Prof. Dr. Hassan Sher, concluded the event with precious remarks in his address, that the Muslim community is known for its emphasis on peace and harmony, and the University of Swat is committed to promote peace, unity, and economic empowerment. He thanked the Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism KP and all the participants for their contributions in the symposium.

## Clearing agents' attack on press club condemned

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Local media personnel condemned offence on Landi Kotal press club, district by the head of Clearing Agent Association, Torkham and vowed for upholding free and fair journalism while executing their professional duties.

The views were expressed by the scores of journalists in a meeting chaired by the President of the press club Ahmad Nabi held in local press club here on Thursday. They said that last day the head of the

clearing association intruded press club and threatened the cabinet members of bad consequences for unearthing corruption and always raise voice of the voiceless persons in Khyber.

We have been playing a frontline role for the highlighting problems of the tribesmen, however harassment of the journalism is injustice and is equivalent to bar them from fair journalism, they remarked.

It was unanimously decided in the moot that keeping in view rules and regulations of law and jour-

nalism, they would continue their free and active journalism without any bias. They also criticized some members of the association for character assassination of media persons on social media and said they preserved legal suits against them.

The journalists have always raised the voice of the voiceless persons in Khyber. They threatened that if the harassment of the journalists was continued then they would seek assistance from the country wide journalist communities for stern agitation.



**HYDERABAD:** A view of accumulated sewerage water in front of General Hospital creating problems for people.

## KKKUK grants Emeritus Professor title to founding VC Ibrahim

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) Karak, has felicitated the elevation of its founding Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Khattak, to the prestigious status of Professor Emeritus, in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the academia.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Khattak, who served as the university's First Vice Chancellor from January 2013 to January 2017, has been an instrumental figure in shaping the academic

landscape of the institution. Under his leadership, KKKU has grown into a beacon of excellence, fostering a culture of learning and innovation.

The faculty and administrative staff of KKKU extended their heartfelt congratulations to Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Khattak on this landmark achievement. They acknowledged his dedication and commitment to the advancement of education.

"We are immensely proud to offer congratulations to Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Khattak on the title

of Professor Emeritus. His profound impact on our institution and the field of academia at large is truly commendable," remarked by Senior Faculty members and admin officers. "We express our deepest gratitude for his invaluable contributions and wish him continued success in all his future endeavors."

In light of this momentous occasion, the faculty and staff of KKKU join together in celebrating Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ibrahim Khattak's remarkable achievements. They extended their heartfelt prayers for his health and prosperity.

## PPP organises rallies in AJK

MUZAFFARABAD (INP):

Stability of Pakistan rallies were organized across Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday. The rallies were organized under the auspices of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). A rally was taken out from Chatter to Soheli Sarkar Darbar in Muzaffarabad. The participants of the rally

shouted slogans of Pakistan Zindabad.

The participants were carrying the flags of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The rally was led by Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, while the arrangements for the rally were made by District President Syed Ali Naqvi. Government

Minister Sardar Javed Ayub, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Sardar Mubarak Haider, Jahangir Mughal, Shujaat Kazmi, Mubashir Munir Awan, Sheikh Azhar, Khurshheed Kayani, Qalb Abbas, Mohsin Rafiq, Ali Raza and other party leaders and workers in large numbers participated in the rally.





# Shaken passengers from deadly turbulence-hit flight arrive in Singapore

BANGKOK: More than 140 passengers and crew from a Singapore Airlines flight hit by severe turbulence that left dozens injured and one man dead have arrived in Singapore, a day after their aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing in Bangkok.

The 131 passengers and 12 crew arrived on a relief flight after their original flight from London struck "sudden extreme turbulence" about 10 hours into the flight over the Irrawaddy Basin in Myanmar. A 73-year-old British passenger died of a suspected heart attack, and more than 100 people were injured after the Boeing 777-300ER dropped 6,000 feet (1,800 metres) in about three minutes.

Twenty people were in intensive care in Bangkok hospitals. "I saw people from across the aisle going completely horizontal, hitting the ceiling and landing back down in like really awkward positions. People, like, getting massive gashes in the head, concussions," Dzafran Azmir, a 28-year-old Malaysian student who was on the flight, told the Reuters news agency after arriving in Singapore. Videos and photos posted on social media showed frightened passengers grabbing the armrests, dishevelled members of the cabin crew - one with blood on her face - oxygen masks, sheets of plastic from the overhead cabin panels and other parts of the interior dangling from the ceiling with food, drink bottles and belongings strewn across the floor.

There were 211 passengers on board including people from Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and the United Kingdom. The injured and their families remained in Bangkok. "We are very sorry for the traumatic experience that everyone on board went through," Singapore Airlines CEO Goh Choon Phong said in a video on social media. He said the



airline was providing all necessary support and would fully cooperate in investigations into the incident. Officers from Singapore's Transport Safety Investigation Bureau arrived in Bangkok, Singapore's Transport Minister Chee Hong Tat said in a statement on Facebook.

Goh said the plane encountered sudden extreme turbulence, and the pilot then declared a medical emergency and diverted to Bangkok. Andrew Davies, a British passenger, told BBC radio that the aircraft "suddenly dropped" and there was "very little warning". "During the few seconds of the plane dropping, there was an awful screaming and what sounded like a thud," he said, adding that he helped a woman who was "screaming in agony" with a "gash on her head". Weather forecasting service AccuWeather said that rapidly developing, explosive thunderstorms near the flight path of SQ321 probably contributed to the violent turbulence.

"Developing thunderstorms often have strong updrafts, a zone of upward moving air, that rises very rapidly, sometimes at more than 100

mph, and can leave pilots with little time to react if it occurs directly in front of the plane," said Dan DePodwin, AccuWeather's senior director of forecasting operations. Media in the UK identified the man who died as retired insurance professional Geoff Kitchen, who was from the west of England and on his way to Australia for a holiday with his wife, Linda. She was among the passengers taken to hospital in Bangkok. Officials from the British and Malaysian embassies in Bangkok visited hospitals to check on the injured. Malaysia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said nine Malaysians, including a crew member, were receiving treatment for their injuries. One was in a critical, but stable condition, it said in a statement. Scientists have long warned that climate change is likely to increase the incidence of so-called clear air turbulence, which cannot be detected by radar. A 2023 study found the annual duration of clear air turbulence increased by 17 percent from 1979 to 2020, with the most severe cases increasing more than 50 percent. — Aljazeera

## Police blocking traffic in protest

MEXICO CITY (AP): Mexico's drought, heat-wave and water shortages have gotten so bad that even police blocked traffic in protest. In recent months, residents of some Mexico City neighborhoods have regularly taken to forming human chains to block boulevards to demand water. In April, complaints about contaminated water sparked a weeks-long crisis in one upscale neighborhood.

Normally, police seek to redirect traffic, but some officers were themselves manning a protest blockade, near the capital's iconic Independence Monument. The officers stood blocking six lanes of traffic, saying their barracks hadn't had water for a week, and that the bathrooms were unusable. "We don't have water in the bathrooms," said one female officer who would not give her name for fear of reprisals, adding that conditions in the barracks were intolerable. "They make us sleep on the floor," she said. The lack of water has worsened longstanding tensions between police officers and their supervisors over issues like sexual harassment and unfair working conditions. "The bosses have water in their offices, but we're not allowed to go in there," said the female officer. "They don't give us solutions. Today they brought in a water truck, after they saw the news media show up." In the midst of record temperatures and a severe drought, many buildings in the capital have to get water brought in by tanker trucks, but they have been in short supply and are expensive. About 85 percent of the country was expected to see highs of at least 104 degrees (40 Celsius), with about a third of the country reaching 113 degrees (45 Celsius) or more. Almost 40% of the country's dams are below 20% of capacity, and another 40% are between 20 and 50% full. Mexico City has been forced to reduce water supplies because the reservoirs that feed the city are drying up. Some stores are running of mineral water.

Nationwide, authorities have had to truck in water for everything from hospitals to fire-fighting teams. Low levels at hydroelectric dams have contributed to power blackouts in some parts of the country. Consumers are feeling the heat as well. The nationwide chain of OXXO convenience stores - the nation's largest - said it was limiting purchases of ice to just two or three bags per customer in some places. Meanwhile, the heatwave has been so bad that in the Gulf coast state of Tabasco, howler monkeys are falling from the trees due to apparent heat stroke. At least 138 of the midsize primates, who are known for their roaring vocal calls, were found dead in Tabasco since May 16, according to the Biodiversity Conservation of The Usumacinta group.

German far-right party bans its European election candidate

BERLIN (AP): Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany party banned its top candidate for next month's European election from making any further campaign appearances and said he would resign from the party's board immediately. The public demotion came after Maximilian Krah told an Italian newspaper that not all members of the Nazis' elite SS unit, which was involved in major war crimes during World War II, were war criminals.

Krah, 47, had already been under scrutiny after authorities in Brussels searched his offices at the European Parliament in connection with one of his assistants who was arrested last month on suspicion of spying for China. German media have alleged that Krah has had ties himself to China and also Russia. The scandals involving Krah come at a most inconvenient time for the Alternative for Germany, or AfD - only a few weeks before the party is hoping to make big gains at the European election.

# As Brazil copes with floods, officials face another scourge: Disinformation

FLORIANOPOLIS, Brazil: The floodwaters in southern Brazil lapped near rooftops, turning roads into rivers and engulfing entire towns. More than 2.3 million people have felt the effects of the rising waters. A total of 161 people have been confirmed dead, with more bodies expected to be found.

Officials have called the torrential rains and flooding in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul "the worst climate disaster" the area has ever seen. But they have said the tragedy is being amplified by another phenomenon: disinformation, intentionally designed to mislead.

Some articles, videos and posts claimed that the government of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva had blocked shipments of aid and medicine to the region. Others said Lula deliberately slowed the arrival of supplies so he could present them in person. Still more asserted that government rescue workers were pulling out of southern Brazil, leaving residents to fend for themselves. All three claims are false. But experts in media and political science told Al Jazeera that the disinformation has nonetheless continued to spread, often with real-world ramifications.

"I'm very concerned about it," said Rogerio Christoforetti, a media professor who studies ethics and transparency at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, just north of Rio Grande do Sul. "The volume of the fake news is very large, and it can foster a climate of mistrust." Some of the fake news, for instance, has cast doubt on government flood warnings, meant to give citizens vital information about life-threatening circumstances. Christoforetti added that the disinformation may have even discouraged some vol-

unteers and donations, as residents in Rio Grande do Sul continue to suffer. Volunteers were crucial in the early rescue efforts. Concerned citizens arrived on boats and jet skis from nearby neighbourhoods and towns to pluck stranded residents from rooftops and shuttle them to safety. But false messages warned that government officials were blocking volunteers from using their own boats in the rescue efforts. Other pieces of disinformation have had consequences even in areas far from the floods. Supermarket shelves have been emptied of rice, as rumours fly online. Fake social media posts warned that, since Rio Grande do Sul produces 70 percent of Brazil's rice, the country was running out of the staple food.

But rice producers in the region have dismissed such concerns as overblown, telling local media that more than 84 percent of the season's harvest had already been collected by the time the rains fell. Nevertheless, the federal government responded to concerns by announcing that it would import one million tonnes of rice. It also suspended tariffs on rice imports. The researchers who spoke to Al Jazeera explained that much of the disinformation shares a common theme: undermining the government. False information often arises after a disaster, as people scramble to react to developing - and sometimes perilous - circumstances. And yet, not all misinformation is purposefully misleading. Still, research released last week by the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul found that the bulk of the false information had been spread by "far-right influencers, websites and politicians". That puts it in a separate category: disinformation, or the intentional spread of inac-

curate materials. The researchers in the study concluded that bad actors "have used the commotion to self-promote and spread disinformation, with the aim of attacking and discrediting the government". "They want to divert people's attention," said Christoforetti. "It's a perfect moment for these opportunists who want to attack the state, attack other political groups, and take advantage of the situation." One of the leading targets for the disinformation is Lula, a prominent left-wing leader in Latin America who is currently serving his third term as president.

"What we're really talking about is a coordinated, industrial-strength disinformation campaign designed to delegitimise the government and its actions to provide relief to flood victims," said Brian Mier, an editor at BrasilWire who is covering the recovery in Rio Grande do Sul. "And in many cases, it's actually sabotaging some of the relief efforts." Lula has visited Rio Grande do Sul three times since the beginning of the floods on April 29. Within the first week of the torrential rains, his government reported sending 14,500 federal workers to help with relief efforts, including military and medical professionals. Lula's administration has also pledged \$10bn to help address the damage. Another billion is set to come from a development bank founded by BRICS, an international trade alliance of which Brazil is a founding member.

"We are gonna build a new home for everyone who lost one," Lula announced at a shelter in flood-stricken Sao Leopoldo last week. But posts have downplayed the scale of the government's rescue efforts or played up tensions with local residents. — Aljazeera

# French police to stay in New Caledonia: Macron

PARIS (BBC): President Emmanuel Macron has vowed that French police forces will remain for "as long as necessary" in New Caledonia, as he arrived in the riot-plagued French Pacific territory. Mr Macron said the 3,000-strong force deployed from France would stay put - even during the Paris Summer Olympics if required.

Six people, including two police officers, have been killed and hundreds injured in the riots triggered by a controversial electoral reform proposed last week. Indigenous Kanaks say the political influence of native people will be diluted if more French residents are allowed to vote in local elections. There have long been tensions between the central government in Paris and New Caledonia's pro-independence Kanaks, who make up about 40% of the tiny archipelago. The group of islands, located between Australia and Fiji, has been a French territory since the 19th Century. The riots have marked the worst

unrest it has seen since the 1980s. After flying to New Caledonia's capital Nouméa on Thursday, President Macron said he wanted the return of peace, calm and security "as quickly as possible". "That is the absolute priority," the French leader said. He paid respects to the victims of the riots, as he met local political and business leaders. The summit included separatist leaders, who said beforehand that they hoped it could "breathe new life" into discussions with France. Mr Macron admitted that the most delicate conversation to be had was that of politics - and of the future of New Caledonia, the BBC's Australia correspondent Katy Watson reports, adding that he will have a huge job on his hands. Police have held 269 people since the violence began on 13 May, and New Caledonia is currently under a state of emergency.

But Mr Macron hinted that the emergency status could be lifted in the coming days, saying: "I personally believe that the state of

emergency should not be extended". New Caledonia has a population of about 300,000 people, including 112,000 indigenous Kanaks. Under the 1998 Nouméa Accord, France agreed to give the territory more political autonomy and to limit voting in provincial and assembly elections to those who were residents then. More than 40,000 French nationals have moved to New Caledonia since. Last week, the National Assembly in Paris proposed granting voting rights to French residents who have lived in the territory for 10 years. Because this requires a change to the constitution, the measure faces further hurdles. The Nouméa agreement allowed for three referendums on the country's future. Independence was rejected in all instances. The first two showed slim majorities for remaining part of France. The third, in December 2021, was boycotted by pro-independence parties because it was held during the Covid pandemic.

# Island states win historic climate case in world oceans court

NEW YORK: Nine small island states have won a historic climate change case at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), which ruled that all signatories to a United Nations treaty on marine activities must do more to protect the world's oceans from climate change.

The tribunal found that signatories to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea's responsibilities to prevent marine pollution extend to greenhouse gas emissions, which harm oceans by altering the earth's atmosphere. The island states had asked the court to clarify what was considered marine pollution under the convention, amid rising oceans, soaring ocean temperatures and ocean acidification caused by fossil fuels and other greenhouse gas emissions.

Gaston Browne, the prime minister of Antigua

and Barbuda, one of the countries that brought the case, said small island nations were "fighting for their survival" due to the emissions of big polluters. "Some will become uninhabitable in the near future because of the failure to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions," he said. "We demand that the major polluters respect international law and stop the catastrophic harm against us before it is too late."

The 1994 convention, signed by 169 countries, already provides the legal basis for countries to protect the marine environment from polluting substances, including oil from ships, but the tribunal's decision acknowledges that atmospheric emissions are also harming oceans. The tribunal ruled that states had an obligation to act, noting "the high risks of serious and irreversible harm to the marine environment".

The Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS), which brought the case on behalf of nine countries, hailed the advisory opinion from the world court as a "tremendous legal victory". "[The court made] history by delivering the first ever advisory opinion on climate change and oceans," COSIS said. Island countries have fought for more decisive action on climate change for decades and battled disinformation spread by fossil fuel companies.

The nine states that joined the COSIS case are Antigua and Barbuda, Niue, Palau, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, which last year experienced two Category 4 storms within 24 hours. In addition to more severe and frequent storms,

island states are also facing more gradual changes from climate change, such as the loss of vegetable gardens when salty seawater mixes with groundwater.

Eselealofa Apinelu, representing the South Pacific island of Tuvalu, said opinion made clear that all states were legally bound to protect the marine environment, and other states, from the existential threats of climate change. She called it "an important first step in holding the major polluters accountable".

The ITLOS case is just one of several ongoing international efforts to address fossil fuels polluting oceans. Dirty bunker fuels used by cargo ships have been coming under increased scrutiny by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), while a planned Global Plastics Treaty will address plastics and microplastic pollution. — Aljazeera

# Missing man faces Spain extradition on rape charges

MADRID (BBC): A man accused of rape who has been missing for two years has been arrested in Spain and faces extradition to the UK. James Clacher, 55, from Bellshill in

Lanarkshire, was last seen in Airdrie on 30 May 2022. His car was found at the Loch Long car park in Arrochar, Argyll, the following day and he was formally reported missing.

The gym boss was facing trial on rape charges at the time. Police launched a fresh appeal to trace him in November, after he had been missing for 18 months. A police spokesperson said:

"It is understood he was arrested in Spain on an international arrest warrant. "We are liaising with partner agencies, and he will be subject to extradition proceedings."



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# Taliban must stop terrorist activities

**T**HE recent escalation of terrorist activities originating from Afghan soil presents a grave threat to regional stability and bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Reports from Rawalpindi indicate a significant uptick in terrorist incidents, with militants from Afghanistan attempting to infiltrate the Pakistan-Afghanistan border to target both security forces and innocent civilians.

This alarming trend necessitates immediate and decisive action from the Taliban leadership in Afghanistan. In the past month, Pakistan's security forces have intensified their operations along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, particularly in the Sambaza area of Zhob District in Balochistan. These operations, which began on April 21, 2024, have successfully neutralized 29 terrorists. However, the cost has been high, with the tragic loss of Maj Babar Khan, who was martyred during an intelligence-based operation on May 14, 2024.

This underscores the ongoing sacrifices made by Pakistan's security personnel to protect the nation from the scourge of terrorism. The persistence of cross-border terrorism highlights the urgent need for effective border management and cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan has consistently called upon the Interim Afghan Government to take concrete steps to prevent its territory from being used as a launching pad for terrorist attacks against Pakistan.

This plea for responsible governance and adherence to international obligations cannot be ignored. The Taliban leadership must wake up to the seriousness of this issue and act swiftly to curb these activities. If the Taliban leadership fails to address this critical problem, the consequences for Afghan-Pakistan relations could be dire. Sustained terrorist activities emanating from Afghanistan will inevitably strain diplomatic ties and foster mistrust between the two neighbors. Such a scenario would be detrimental to both countries, undermining regional security and hindering economic cooperation. Pakistan, on its part, must continue to fortify its borders and ensure the safety of its citizens.

The ongoing operations by security forces are a testament to Pakistan's commitment to combating terrorism. However, unilateral efforts may not suffice. Pakistan must engage the international community, presenting compelling evidence of cross-border terrorism and seeking broader support for its counter-terrorism initiatives. International support is crucial in exerting pressure on the Taliban regime to fulfill its obligations. The global community, particularly those with influence over the Taliban, should be encouraged to advocate for stringent measures against terrorist groups operating from Afghan soil. This collective effort is essential to achieving lasting peace and stability in the region. The Taliban leadership must recognize that harboring or turning a blind eye to terrorist activities will only lead to further isolation and economic hardship for Afghanistan.

The international community remains wary of engaging with a regime that fails to uphold basic principles of sovereignty and security. Therefore, it is in the Taliban's interest to demonstrate a genuine commitment to combating terrorism and fostering good relations with its neighbors. In conclusion, the surge in terrorist incidents from Afghan soil poses a significant challenge to regional peace and security. The Taliban leadership must urgently address this issue, ensuring that Afghan territory is not used for terrorist activities against Pakistan.

Failure to do so could severely damage bilateral relations and have far-reaching consequences for both countries. Pakistan, while continuing its robust security measures, must also seek international support to pressure the Taliban into compliance. Only through concerted efforts can the menace of cross-border terrorism be effectively countered, paving the way for a more secure and prosperous region.

## Countermeasures against US sanctions called for

**T**HE unilateral sanctions Washington has imposed on a number of Chinese entities under the pretext of so-called Russia-related factors are unjustifiable. It is natural that Beijing should respond to such “bullying and economic coercion”.

That explains why China took measures on Tuesday against 12 US companies involved in the US arms sales to Taiwan and their senior executives. They include units of Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and General Dynamics. Their assets in China will be frozen and their senior executives banned from entering China. These companies have seriously infringed on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China. The sanctions are what they deserve.

There is indeed trade between China and Russia, and the trade volume between the two countries is rapidly increasing. There is no reason for the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine to become a factor that prohibits China from doing business with either country. Nor any reason why China should snap to attention at the US' command and cut its normal trade ties with Russia just because Washington tells it to. China has long taken an objective and impartial position on the Ukraine crisis, and has been doing whatever it can to broker a cease-fire for the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Washington, however, has sought to distort perceptions of China's stand and what it has been doing for the settlement of the conflict. China is doing business with many countries, including the United States. In doing so, it adheres to the established trade rules and the principle of not harming any third party. It is Washington that should reflect on what it has done with regard to the Ukraine crisis and what has been taking place in Gaza. Has Washington done anything for the peaceful settlement of the crises? No. Just the opposite. China treasures bilateral relations with the United States, and it continues to believe that the two largest economies can do a lot of things together for the development of the global economy and world peace. They can work together to address a lot of common challenges the world faces.

However, Washington fears that China's rise will challenge the US' status as the global hegemon, and it has been doing whatever it can to contain the rise of China.

Russia-related factors are nothing but one more excuse Washington has employed to contain the development of China. Even without this excuse, Washington would find another to impose sanctions against Chinese companies.

Yet China's rise is unstoppable. What Washington does will only do a disservice to the development of bilateral relations between the two countries and to the recovery of the global economy.

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# ICC action brings an end to Israel's exceptionalism

Dr. Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg

**I**NTERNATIONAL Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan on Monday announced that he would file applications for arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant, as well as against three Hamas leaders, for gross violations of international humanitarian law.

There was universal support for the long-awaited announcement, with the exception of the unhinged reaction of a handful of American lawmakers, who threatened to impose sanctions on the court and its staff. Sen. Chris Van Hollen denounced his colleagues for interfering in a “judicial matter by threatening judicial officers, their family members and their employees with retribution. This thuggery is something befitting the mafia, not US senators.” A handful of countries, such as Hungary, also objected to the announcement.

For decades, Israel's claim of exceptionalism has been used to exempt it from rules of war and laws governing the use of arms exports.

But this false claim of exceptionalism has had a destabilizing effect, leading Israeli leaders to act outside the law and commit increasingly cruel atrocities against the Palestinians without facing consequences. This lack of accountability has only emboldened bad behavior, as can be clearly seen in the ongoing war against Gaza.

When the International Court of Justice in January ruled that it was “plausible” that Israel had engaged in acts of genocide in Gaza, it implicitly rejected Israel's claims of exceptionalism.

The ICC prosecutor has now effectively put the final nail in that coffin, asserting that Israel should be judged by the same yardstick as all states.

These developments have lent support to the rising voices in the US that are demanding the application of American law on Israel's use of the country's weapons. Despite the noises made by the Israeli-can-do-wrong chorus, they have called for abandoning the “Israeli exceptionalism” argument in US military assistance, which amounts to about \$3.3 billion a year.

For decades, US administrations have overlooked Israel's violations of human rights and US laws, including the Leahy Law, which was passed 25 years ago and requires the administration to cut off transfers of US military aid to any foreign military unit “if the Secretary of State has credible information that such unit has committed a gross violation of human rights.”

Despite numerous killings in the West Bank and Gaza by Israeli security forces, including of American citizens, the US government has never invoked these laws, disregarding demands by Sen. Patrick Leahy and others to apply them with respect to Israel.

On the contrary, according to press reports, the State Department set up a special process for Israel

the overwhelming evidence that Tel Aviv is violating international humanitarian law in its war against Gaza.

The protestations by Israeli leaders, including accusing the ICC of anti-semitism, are meant to thwart the expected additional steps required for the court to issue the arrest warrants, work to execute them and then start the prosecutions.

The warrants will have both legal and political repercussions. While it is unlikely that Netanyahu or Gallant would voluntarily surrender to the court, the warrants, once issued, would make it difficult for them to travel to any of the 120-plus countries that are signatories to the Rome Statute, the ICC's charter.

They could also weaken them domestically, as their rivals could argue that the fact they are being pursued

**For decades, Israel's claim of exceptionalism has been used to exempt it from rules of war and laws governing the use of arms exports. But this false claim of exceptionalism has had a destabilizing effect, leading Israeli leaders to act outside the law and commit increasingly cruel atrocities against the Palestinians without facing consequences. This lack of accountability has only emboldened bad behavior, as can be clearly seen in the ongoing war against Gaza. When the International Court of Justice in January ruled that it was “plausible” that Israel had engaged in acts of genocide in Gaza, it implicitly rejected Israel's claims of exceptionalism.**

that effectively circumvented the Leahy Law; an exemption that was codified in a 2021 US-Israel agreement, during the Biden administration.

Exceptionalism has also been cited or implied by other arms exporters, such as Germany and the UK, to justify their continued exports to Israel, despite

by international law enforcement would make them less effective advocates for Israel.

Similarly, for the three Hamas leaders, their lawyers may be able to persuade them to surrender to the ICC once the warrants are issued and face their day in court. That action would demonstrate

courage and put the Israeli leaders in a bad light if they continued their defiance of the court orders. Defendants, whether Hamas or Israeli leaders, would have ample opportunity to defend themselves in The Hague and they would be absolved if the evidence was not strong enough.

Removing Netanyahu, Gallant and the three Hamas leaders may, in fact, make it easier to resolve the conflict in Gaza and pave the way for the arrival of an international force, as the Arab League recently suggested, to prepare Gaza for an eventual reunification with the West Bank.

In addition to the cases announced this week, there has been a wider ICC investigation into possible violations in the Occupied Territories.

It was started several years ago and has yet to conclude. In 2019, the ICC prosecutor at the time announced an investigation into war crimes committed in Palestine by members of the Israeli military or Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups since June 2014.

They included the establishment of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and violations of the laws of war by members of the Israeli military during the 2014 Gaza War, including by targeting Red Cross installations.

Members of armed Palestinian organizations, including Hamas, were accused of deliberately attacking Israeli civilians and using Palestinians as human shields.

The earlier investigation faced stiff resistance from Israel and some of its supporters, who tried to derail it.

But the ICC prosecutor's staff managed to carry on, sending formal notices in March 2021 and gathering information. If that wider investigation results in the issuing of new arrest warrants, it would further reinforce accountability in this conflict and bury forever any claims of Israeli exceptionalism. Applying the rules of international law on all nations in our region can have a stabilizing effect by reining in impulses to act outside of the law, as Israel has clearly done in its 75-year war against the Palestinians.

Makram Rabah

Hochstein successfully demarcated the maritime border between Lebanon and Israel over a year ago, his current mission to halt hostilities and persuade Hezbollah to withdraw from southern Lebanon has proven challenging. This is particularly true after Hezbollah's unprovoked attack on Israel the day following October 7, a fact proudly proclaimed by Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's Secretary-General, in his latest televised speech.

Hochstein emphasized during his trip that discussions on a Lebanese-Israeli land border would only proceed once Hezbollah's withdrawal is secured. Until then, Israel has no intention of stopping its targeted strikes against valuable assets across Lebanon.

The delusional mindset of

North Korea is mirrored by its Iranian counterparts, who boast of their capability to destroy Israel and “liberate” Palestine, particularly Jerusalem. However, recent events suggest that this objective is low on the IRGC's list of priorities. Kim Jong Un, in his typical bluster, has declared his “lawful right” to annihilate South Korea. Ironically, both North Korea and the Iranian regime believe their ailing economies and outdated technology are superior to those of their adversaries.

In reality, South Korea's GDP is significantly higher than that of North Korea as South Korea's gross domestic product (GDP) amounts to “2,080 trillion South Korean won, while that of North Korea was approximately 36.2 trillion South Korean won, 57 times greater than that of North Korea.”

Recently, Hassan

# How RFK Jr. and Shanahan help deliver false hope to parents of children with autism

Catherine Tan

**R**OBERT F. Kennedy Jr., a longtime critic of vaccinations whose third-party presidential candidacy has drawn strong opposition from his famous family, found his ideological match in vice presidential pick Nicole Shanahan, a California lawyer and philanthropist.

Shanahan, who has a child with autism, was largely unknown to mass audiences when Kennedy selected her — but she is well known to the anti-vaccine movement. While claiming she is “not an anti-vaxxer,” during her first campaign speech Shanahan drew a connection between vaccinations and autism that touched on many tenets of the movement continually pushing disproven claims.

“Pharmaceutical medicine has its place, but no single safety study can assess the cumulative impact of one prescription on top of another prescription, and one shot on top of another shot on top of another shot, throughout the course of childhood,” Shanahan said, adding that “we can and we will” research her claimed link between vaccinations and autism. “Conditions like autism used to be 1 in 10,000. Now here in the state of California it is 1 in 22.”

Nationally, autism impacts 1 in 36 children. Experts attribute the rise in diagnoses to a number of social and historical factors including deinstitutionalization, social influence and awareness and changing diagnostic criteria.

Kennedy (who also claims he has “never been anti-vax”) and Shanahan have brought their anti-vaccine beliefs — including linking vaccines to autism — to their presidential campaign through key hires and a track record of activism.

Facts are facts: Numerous studies have shown that vaccines do not cause autism and, in 2010, The Lancet retracted the study by Andrew Wakefield that helped popularize the myth. Yet, thousands of parents in the United States continue to believe in the vaccine-autism link. What many do not understand is that for a significant number of parents of children with autism, anti-vaccination beliefs carry the pernicious and agonizing false hope of a cure. Blaming vaccines for a child's autism is cruel and misleading, and preys on parents and families at their most vulnerable. Currently, there is no medical “cure” for the core symptoms of autism. Children with autism typically receive behavior and educational interventions for skill development.

I know this genre well, having spent three years studying parents of children with autism, practitioners and researchers who are convinced that early childhood vaccines contribute to autism. A vaccine-autism link proposes that children are born non-autistic and later are made autistic by environmental “triggers,” most notably vaccines. Wakefield and other vaccine skeptics argue that these triggers set off physiological problems, like gastrointestinal disease, that are related to autistic behaviors.

This causal framework also suggests that autism “recovery” is possible with treatments that claim to target the physiological problems induced by vaccines

and other environmental insults during early childhood. In other words, the hope of treating autism depends on this causal relationship being true. Yet, as studies have shown again and again, vaccines do not cause autism and children do not develop autism after birth. Shanahan herself runs a foundation that is researching a cure for autism.

Behind the vaccine-autism myth is a multimillion-dollar industry dedicated to reversing autism. The autism recovery industry is populated by a number of entrepreneurs and businesses, but most common are specialized laboratories, compounding pharmacies and purveyors of experimental treatments.

The majority of these experimental treatments lack scientific support and, in some cases, are incredibly harmful as well as wildly expensive. During my study, I observed parents of children with autism experimenting with parasite therapy to address inflammation, hormone therapy to delay puberty, and even stem cell therapies in Mexico and India.

The parents I interviewed have spent thousands of dollars on the hope that one day, with enough experimentation, their children can be closer to “normal” — or less autistic. One mother sold her house and accrued \$125,000 in credit card debt to pay for her son's “recovery.” While I was observing a prominent vaccine-skeptic doctor, he charged a low-income, immigrant family \$1,700 in cash for an autism consultation, at the end of which he sold them helminth worm larvae and essential oils to treat their son.

The vaccine-autism industry preys on desperate parents. It is heartbreaking. We live in a country without sufficient safety nets to support disabled people, so it is understandable why parents chase after the hope of recovery, the hope of neurotypicality. The vaccine-autism myth encourages them to do so.

Up until recently, anti-vaccination beliefs were relatively fringe, finding an audience among certain parents of young children, wellness movements and libertarians. Then, the Covid-19 pandemic happened. The politicization of vaccines and lockdowns during the pandemic and an out-of-control misinformation industry on social media unfortunately mainstreamed large planks of the anti-vaccine movement.

And now, a presidential campaign, however much of a political longshot, is anchored by two people who have championed a message that threatens to expose many more vulnerable families and children not only to a chimeric mirage, but to extreme physical and emotional danger.

Misinformation about vaccines has led to declining vaccination rates and the return of vaccine-preventable diseases, as we see now with measles outbreaks across the United States.

We cannot afford to think of RFK Jr.'s campaign as just a possible election spoiler. Kennedy and Shanahan are sowers of misinformation and the lasting damage they may have on vaccine trust should not be underestimated. As a researcher and an educator, it is my hope that

Nasrallah, in a televised speech, claimed that Israel is losing the war in both Gaza and southern Lebanon. He spent an hour extolling the virtues of the “axis of resistance,” without acknowledging the dire situation of Gaza's civilians or the devastation in southern Lebanon, which has likely displaced its inhabitants permanently. Nasrallah's refusal to recognize that his actions have put Lebanon on a collision course with a full-scale Israeli war exacerbates Lebanon's ongoing economic and political crises.

The case of Cuba distancing itself from the so-called axis of resistance illustrates that countries like North Korea and Iran are gradually losing allies willing to support the prioritization of military arsenals over economic stability and the well-being of their citizens.



# Biden’s Morehouse address was a farewell speech

Shermichael Singleton

**SUNDAY served up more than its share of symbolism as the 140th Commencement Exercises at Morehouse College were conducted. Four hundred and fourteen graduates became Morehouse Men with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities to be candles in a dark world through leadership and service.**

The ceremony is reverent and ritualistic and mirrors the formal rigorous academic Baptist roots of the college. The awarding of degrees is similar to a baptism after the doors of the church have been opened. Having had the privilege of attending Morehouse, I know all too well the reverence of such an occasion, particularly when reflecting on the history of the countless number of Black people — some known, but many often forgotten by history — who sacrificed more than I can imagine for those of us who today have the opportunity to be educated and foster change. Simply put: We are their dreams and desires.

This old-school religious tradition prizes one segment of religious worship above all else — that of the sermon, the preaching moment. The honor this year fell to President Joseph R. Biden Jr. It was an important occasion for the president. He suffers from double-digit defections from his 2020 Black electoral coalition, according to the polls. That exodus is led by Black men.

Morehouse extended him the wonderful opportunity to speak directly to a constituency the Biden-Harris administration cannot afford to lose support from. But despite the opportunity, the speech was inadequate.

The address was heavy on personal anecdotes and reflections of a history of Morehouse largely known to Black America. Biden also discussed his focus on spending the federal government’s money and critiquing whether election administrators in Georgia provide water to voters while they wait in line during election time, which is important. But the Biden

address at Morehouse was devoid of vision. It did not speak to the majority of Black men who do not apply to college, gain admission or complete their undergraduate degrees. It did not speak to the absence of access to the American Dream.

The shortcomings of the president’s speech highlight the broader set of problems he’s having with Black voters as revealed consistently by the polls. It’s clear that Biden and his campaign are acutely aware of these problems given the president’s recent series of outreach efforts aimed at Black voters.

Before his appearance at Morehouse, he spoke at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. There he reflected on the historical significance of the museum in maintaining and telling the story of Black people, while noting his commitment to tackling disparities in education and wealth.

At the NAACP dinner in Detroit, Michigan — a key

city with a strong Black voting bloc in a crucial battleground state — he discussed protecting voting rights and economic opportunities. In these and other public remarks to Black audiences, Biden highlighted key accomplishments of his tenure, such as increased funding for historically Black colleges and universities and the expansion of the child tax credit.

But the Morehouse crowd, at least, understood that no matter how much Biden talks about his proximity to HBCU graduates and having worked with President Barack Obama and Vice President Kamala Harris, his policies have yet to fully meet their expectations, and while some may argue that a little progress is better than no progress at all, it begs the question for many of how long they should accept minimal change when the needs are far greater.

Democrats dismissing Biden’s bad poll numbers showcases the disconnect between wealthy

Washington elites whose hubris does not allow them to understand the very real and salient experiences of many working-class Black people who feel disillusioned and often forgotten by a political class that only shows up when it’s time to vote.

Democrats are frankly delusional if they think they can take these voters’ sentiments for granted. There’s a strong chance they will not vote for Biden at the same level they did in 2020.

It’s not enough for Biden to discuss history or accomplishments that don’t move the needle in any significant way for the average Black person, who has yet to notice any reprieve from their daily plight.

Younger Black voters see what their ancestors saw: a permanent state of hard times that require more than the blame games that Biden tried to play with the Supreme Court or Republicans. Young voters are focusing their expectations on who can deliver and who prioritizes their needs

— and the current perception is that Biden can’t, which will undoubtedly lead to many staying home.

What do the CHIPS Act and the Inflation Reduction Act mean when the primary beneficiaries of such laws are large institutions? State and local governments or businesses are the ones responsible for executing the design, finance, construction, maintenance and operations of the legislation touted constantly by the Biden administration and are the real winners.

Black-owned businesses do not build wafers for microchips and construction companies have structural barriers to hiring Black men — among them a preference for low-wage, undocumented immigrant labor promoted by Democrats.

At present, the Biden administration thinks criminal justice reform is discussing reclassifying marijuana. While that is important for a sector of Black men, the relief for Black men writ large comes from a robust economic plan. It should focus on financial lit-

eracy, grant opportunities through the Small Business Administration and policies that emphasize ownership and entrepreneurship that promote prolonged economic growth that can be sustained and generationally passed on.

Similarly, spending money for new roads and encouraging prescription drug costs to be lower are poll-tested ideas that sound nice on public opinion surveys but don’t address the structural economic problems that Black Americans face.

The Biden campaign is just entering the valley of despair that Black men have to navigate every day of their lives. The late arrival has been noticed. The damage done is in many ways irreparable.

By accepting the invitation to address the Morehouse College Class of 2024 and receive an honorary degree, Biden had the opportunity to meet the moment and the magnitude of his audience.

The families of the Morehouse College Class of

2024 and alumni of the college were polite in their acknowledgments of the office of the presidency. The concerns of many about the nation’s foreign policy and war footing were largely subdued. That’s because the constituencies of Morehouse are focused on making Black America’s leaders of tomorrow. They refused to embrace spectacle and instead were celebrating the transition to the next stage of their lives.

But Biden’s public addresses over the last 50 years have never inspired audiences and the noticeable decline in his speaking abilities during his presidency did not suggest there would be much for the listening audience to gain from his speaking presentation. In that sense, he didn’t disappear.

The speech was more a farewell from a past ally than an invitation to a new vision for a prosperous future. Biden is in the valley as Black voters led by young men abandon him, even while speaking from a red clay hill.

## In Darfur, justice will be key to sustainable peace

Tafi Mkaha

**ON May 6, 2004, Human Rights Watch (HRW) published a report alleging that the Sudanese government and its allied “Janjaweed” militias had committed systematic attacks on the civilian populations of the African Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups that amounted to “ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.”**

The government and its Janjaweed allies, the report said, deliberately slaughtered thousands of Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa; raped women; and demolished villages, food stockpiles and other critical supplies.

On May 9, 2024, almost 20 years to the day it had exposed genocide in Darfur, the HRW released another report titled “The Massalit Will Not Come Home”: Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan.

In it, the HRW alleged the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) — the formalised version of the Janjaweed militia — and allied paramilitaries have committed a new genocide in el-Genaina, the capital city of Sudan’s West Darfur state, from April to November last year, killing thousands of people and leaving hundreds of thousands as refugees.

And the carnage in Darfur is far from over. The HRW’s Belkis Wille decried the RSF’s ongoing siege of North Darfur’s capital, el-Fasher, and called for an end to “the new cycle of atrocities in Darfur” just last week on this very page.

The RSF and its allies are still able to systematically kill, maim and displace Darfuris with near complete impunity because Africa’s leaders have repeatedly missed opportunities to deliver justice to the region over the years.

Indeed, the atrocities we are witnessing in

Darfur and across Sudan today could well have been avoided if the architects and perpetrators of the genocidal atrocities of the 2000s were brought to book in the first place.

Countless opportunities for justice have been missed in the past 20 years.

In 2004, then-United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan established the International Commission of Inquiry on violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Darfur.

The commission’s damning report, published in January 2005, led to the UN Security Council referring Sudan to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

In 2009, the court issued an arrest warrant for then-Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed under his watch in Darfur. Later, it added genocide to the charges.

The president’s arrest and prosecution then would have undoubtedly changed the trajectory of the country and curtailed the powers and reach of the genocidal militias it armed and supported.

Claiming the pursuit of justice and accountability would be an obstacle to the realisation of peace in Sudan, the leaders of the African Union (AU) refused to cooperate with the ICC and arrest al-Bashir. As such, they helped al-Bashir evade international justice.

Regrettably, while undermining the ICC’s efforts to deliver justice in the international arena, African leaders also failed to heed the advice of the AU’s own officials and experts, missing opportunity after opportunity to deliver justice to long suffering Darfuris within the region.

In 2004, acknowledging its responsibility to deliver justice to the people of Sudan, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) undertook

steps to investigate human rights violations and chart a path forward for the country.

To this end, the Mission of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights to Sudan took place July 8-18, 2004.

The fact-finding mission visited camps for displaced people and met officials from the Sudanese government, senior civil servants, and representatives of national and international humanitarian organisations in Khartoum.

After the visit, the mission recommended the establishment of an International Commission of Enquiry, comprising the UN, AU, Arab states, and international humanitarian and human rights organisation, to probe human rights violations in Sudan and to ensure perpetrators of atrocities were brought to justice.

Specifically, the mission wanted the commission to investigate the role of the military, police and other security forces in the Darfur conflict as well as the involvement of rebel movements and armed militias, in particular the Janjaweed, the Pashtun, the Pashmerga and the Torabora.

The commission, it further explained, would identify those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the country and ensure that they were held accountable for their actions. The mission’s recommendations included the disarmament and demobilisation of all irregular armed groups operating illegally within the Darfur region.

And it urged the government of Sudan to abide by its obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law and in particular under the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights to guarantee the basic human rights of the Sudanese people.

Al-Bashir, as expected, ignored an overwhelming majority of the mission’s recommendations.

However, African leaders, surprisingly, also failed to follow through on the well-meaning advice from their top human rights experts.

So the International Commission of Enquiry, as envisioned by the ACHPR, failed to materialise, and al-Bashir continued his reign with impunity.

Any talk of regional accountability and justice mechanisms for Sudan was practically abandoned until the ICC took action in the international arena.

In July 2008, just a week after the ICC prosecutors announced their request for an arrest warrant for al-Bashir, the AU’s Peace and Security Council voiced its demand for a homegrown judicial process for Sudan.

It called for the creation of an African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur to submit recommendations on “accountability and combating impunity, on the one hand, and reconciliation and healing on the other”.

Led by former South African President Thabo Mbeki, the panel consulted widely in Sudan and finally recommended a hybrid court for Darfur with Sudanese and non-Sudanese legal experts, a truth and reconciliation panel, and wide-ranging reforms of the country’s criminal justice system.

Al-Bashir balked at the idea of launching a comprehensive judicial process, especially one that involved foreign experts, and mostly disregarded this panel’s advice as well.

In the following years, African leaders refused to push for any other transitional justice instrument, international or regional, seemingly due to fears that the pursuit of justice would derail efforts for peace. As a result, al-Bashir never faced any accountability for the

crimes he facilitated in Darfur and the RSF remained able to continue its abuse of Darfuris with impunity.

Today, as Darfur suffers a devastating new wave of atrocities, the AU must change course. It must acknowledge sustainable peace requires accountability and an end to impunity. It must make a strong and explicit commitment to achieving justice for all in Darfur, be it through Sudanese, African or global legal instruments.

Of course, Africa’s leaders have every right to criticise the methods and approaches of the ICC. They also have every right to demand justice is delivered through local and regional instruments in Africa.

In their approach to the conflict in Sudan, however, they missed a crucial opportunity to make this point and lay the foundations for a strong, independent and responsive human rights culture in Africa.

Had they agreed to implement the proposals advanced by the ACHPR and the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur, they would have not only helped Darfuris find justice but also showed the ICC that it is indeed not needed in the region.

Regrettably, they chose to ignore the advice of their own experts and allowed the perpetrators of egregious human rights violations to get away scot-free.

As a result, we are where we are today. The culture of impunity is still strong in Sudan, and the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa communities are still facing slaughter.

All who have facilitated genocide in Darfur must be subjected to transitional justice processes and mechanisms and other accountability processes, irrespective of their positions. This is the only way to achieve peace. Africa’s leaders can no longer afford to deny justice to Africans.

## Saudi-Japan ties: From transactional to strategic

Faisal J. Abbas

**GEOGRAPHICALLY, Saudi Arabia and Japan could not be much farther apart, but the past few days have shown just how close the two countries have become politically, economically and strategically.**

It is true that the eleventh hour cancellation of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman’s presence in a delegation to Japan this week — due to the health condition of King Salman, who was admitted to hospital for checks just hours before the trip was due to begin — subverted what was meant to be a grandiose presence on the Saudi side.

However, the indication from Riyadh was very clear: the show must go on.

There was still a delegation of heavyweight ministers on the flight to Tokyo, including Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman (the crown prince’s brother and the world’s most influential energy minister); Prince Badr bin Farhan, the minister of culture; Minister of Communications and Information Technology Abdullah Al-Swaha; and last but certainly not least, Khalid Al-Falih, the veteran minister of investment, former head of Saudi Aramco and the very capable man entrusted with coordinating the Kingdom’s strategic relationship with Japan.

Furthermore, a video call was conducted between the crown prince and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to ensure this message was well received in Tokyo: Japan is an important country, we understand your needs and we see eye to eye on many points.

Perhaps the strongest message from the crown

prince was restressing the Saudi commitment to providing a stable supply of crude oil to Japan, which is known for being a net importer of energy, with about 45 percent of its oil coming from the Kingdom.

However, the last few days also signaled many other important indicators, including that Saudi Arabia intends to diversify its energy offerings to Japan to include cleaner options. Both countries agree that this should be done in a practical and scientific way.

But energy is only one of the many aspects in Saudi Arabia and Japan’s multifaceted journey to transform their relationship from a transactional one into a strategic one, as it surely should be. With the two countries preparing to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2025, the crown prince and prime minister agreed to establish a Strategic Partnership Council.

During the call, Kishida “expressed his hopes for direct investment from Saudi Arabia into Japan in a wide range of fields, as well as cooperation in the fields of construction, power transmission, utilization of hydrogen, digital, ICT, space, health, medicine, food, agriculture and other sectors, which will lead to creating business opportunities.”

Not many countries share what Saudi Arabia and Japan have.

In essence, while the Kingdom’s public and declared policy is regional stability, it is absolutely in Japan’s interest that this is the case, as its lifeline of energy supply depends on it.

So, the two countries can closely collaborate on bringing peace and prosperity to the region.

Like us here in the Middle East, Japan also has regional problems, and Saudi Arabia, with its diplomatic and economic clout, can play a role in bringing points of view closer together. We both want to see a reduction in the number of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, which is also in the global interest.

Both countries are close to the US and seek to ensure the best of relations with Washington in a mutually beneficial way.

Meanwhile, Japanese investors have huge potential in Saudi Arabia, and vice versa.

The challenge is to safeguard this vision against political turmoil and changing governments in Japan, but this is exactly why creating multi-stakeholder value is important.

In essence, business is secular and arguably apolitical, so a big chunk of responsibility lies with business leaders on both sides ensuring there is enough interdependence so that the shared vision, which is for the benefit of both peoples, goes forward regardless.

The Japanese prime minister stated that he was pleased he will be handing over the torch of the World Expo from Osaka 2025 to Saudi Arabia ahead of Expo 2030 in Riyadh, and that he seeks to further encourage the growth of exchanges, including in the fields of entertainment, tourism, academia and sports.

Meanwhile, the torch of friendship that was lit by Saudi Arabia and Japan almost 70 years ago will burn ever more brightly in the years to come.

## Saudi Arabia is not abandoning upstream investment

**S**audi Arabia’s recent announcement of shelving plans to boost its oil production capacity to 13 million barrels per day (bpd) by 2027 and instead focusing on maintaining 12 million bpd caused a stir among energy news watchers.

The knee-jerk reaction to the decision came in the form of questions surrounding the future of oil demand and how the Kingdom’s U-turn represents a win for all those advocating to “keep oil in the ground.” The reality of the situation is a lot more nuanced.

When Saudi Arabia announced the plan to increase capacity by 1 million bpd, it was in March 2020, the year of the coronavirus pandemic, which rocked the global economy and caused

oil prices to trade in negative territory for the first time in history. In short, the upstream industry needed a boost of confidence, and this partially came through Saudi Arabia’s willingness to see past the crisis and expand its capacity.

This is not to say that the announcement was all talk; Saudi’s state oil giant, Saudi Aramco, quickly shifted gears and rolled out a plan to see an accelerated expansion of its offshore fields that would add the extra capacity.

So what prompted the change in plan this year? Many factors played into the decision which was reviewed for a year ahead of the official announcement.

But, it mainly comes down to a shift in policy and the need to reallocate

funds more efficiently.

**A shift in policy**

Traditionally under Saudi Arabia’s former oil minister Ali al-Naimi, the Kingdom had a policy to always maintain a global security buffer of 1.5-2 million bpd in spare capacity, which would only be used in emergencies to meet global demand. This policy has now changed under the current leadership, as the Kingdom’s own national interests are coming more into focus.

Now, any spare capacity buffer will only be maintained for market management purposes, and the volume will depend on the oil production policy adopted at the time which places the Kingdom’s national interests first.

There’s a thin line between the motivations

of maintaining spare capacity, but this shift comes as the Kingdom’s leadership feels an increased underappreciation from some countries for its efforts in balancing oil markets.

Moreover, to stay in the driver’s seat when it comes to market management, Saudi Arabia needs to use multiple levers to ensure that fundamentals are balanced, which would reflect a favourable price range. Already under the current set of OPEC+ cuts, Saudi Arabia is capping its production to around 9 million bpd.

Another way to manage markets is shaping strategy around the future capacity growth plans, which in this case involves halting the 13

Amena Bakr

million bpd plan, which signals less future supply.

**Reallocation of funds**  
The 13 million bpd capacity expansion plan would have cost Aramco \$40 billion.

A big focus area that was stressed by Aramco’s management this year is increasing gas production by 60 percent by the year 2030.

The gas will mainly come from the Jaffoura basin and will help Aramco displace around 1 million bpd of liquids that are currently being burnt for power generation in the Kingdom.

Freeing up domestic liquid burning means freeing up additional oil production capacity that could be exported.

Aramco also announced an increase in

this year’s capex spend to be in the range of \$48-\$58 billion of which 60 percent will go into upstream, 30 percent downstream and 10 percent in new energies.

The company, which is 82.2 percent owned by the state, also hiked its dividend for 2023 by 30 percent on the year.

The state dividends are understood to be mainly used to fund projects related to “Vision 2030” and diversifying the economy. However, it remains unclear how much of the \$40 billion saved by not going ahead with capacity plans will be granted as additional dividends to the state in the years to come.

An element sometimes overlooked is that maintaining oil production capacity at a certain level has a cost.

For Aramco, this means continuing to expand several of its offshore fields, including Zuluf, Berri, Dammam, and Marjan, while pressing the pause button on Manifa and Safaniya.

A look at demand On the demand front, Saudi Arabia, like other Gulf and OPEC+ oil producers, sees oil staying relevant for decades to come. Even if there is a shift into alternative transport fuels, crude oil will still be utilized heavily in the downstream sector to produce plastics and specialty chemicals.

However, forecasts may have shown that Aramco might not need a capacity of 13 million bpd in the coming seven years, especially as the country’s oil export capacity will be increased anyway by more gas and

renewables used domestically.

Increased oil supply growth from producers outside the OPEC+ group is also an additional factor in the equation. But as reliable, low cost and low carbon emitting oil producer, Aramco will continue to have an edge over meeting global demand needs, which even after reaching a so-called “peak” by 2030 or so, won’t fall off a cliff and instead maintain a steady plateau in the years that follow.

In any case, the decision to halt Aramco’s expansion now is not set in stone, and might even be reversed if conditions change, the company’s management made it clear that they stand ready and can add another 1 million bpd to capacity in a span of 4-5 years.





FAISALABAD: President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry Dr. Khurram Tariq addressing a press conference during Pre-Budget Proposals at FCCI Complex.

## CCP takes notice of beverages ads sans disclaimers

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has taken notice of extremely dangerous stunts performed in the TV Commercials (TVCs) of leading beverage manufacturers. These stunts promote soft and energy drinks without advising viewers not to attempt similar stunts independently on their own, as they have been performed by professional experts under proper safety arrangements and are fictional displays.

The Commission has issued letters to various beverages firms to explain their position vis-à-vis showcasing physical stunts with bikes, cars and other extraordinary performances enabled by or for a few sips of the advertised drinks.

While, screening of such stunts is not a violation of Pakistan's Competition Law, the absence of proper disclaimers advising viewers to avoid attempting such stunts amounts to withholding material information from their consumers, especially young adults.

CCP has warned these companies of their potential violation of Section 10(2) (b) of the Competition Act, 2010. This section prohibits the dissemination of false or misleading information to consumers. The non-disclosure of material information or relevant disclaimers also amounts to deceptive marketing practices and constitutes a violation of this section.

The Commission has explained that 'misleading information' refers to state-

ments that can give a wrong impression, lead to errors in conduct, thought or judgment, misinform due to vagueness or omission, and may not necessarily be deliberate. It further clarified that 'false information' includes statements that are contrary to truth or fact, imply conscious wrongdoing or culpable negligence, have stricter and stronger connotations, and are not readily open to interpretation.

The CCP has directed the companies to explain their non-compliance with the explicit provisions of Section 10 of the Competition Act, 2010, regarding the subject TV Commercials. The companies are required to furnish their explanations within seven days of the issuance of the Commission's letters.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships, Marathopolis and Ammos carrying container and steel coil, berthed at container terminal and multi-purpose terminal respectively here on Thursday.

Meanwhile, three more ships, Maersk Phuket, Addison and Al-Daayen carrying container and LNG also arrived at outer anchorage of the Port Qasim on Thursday.

Eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them seven ships, Marathopolis, Tethis-7, Ammos, Scio Spirit, Blue Jamaica, Advantage Paradise and Al-Thakhira are expected to sail on Thursday. Cargo volume of 132,235 tonnes, comprising 112,626 tonnes imports cargo and 19,609 tonnes export cargo carried in 1,937 containers (817 TEUs imports and 1,120 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 10 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, VTC Phoenix, Kourios Glory, Peace Victoria and Al-Daayen & five more ships, Epic Bolivia, Athenian, One Reinforcement, Wan Hai-316 and Maersk Denver scheduled load/offload Rice, Cement, Mogas, LNG, Gas oil and other containers are expected to take berths at respectively MW-1, MW-2, FOTCO, PGPCL, EVTIL and QICT on Thursday, while two more container ships, Atlantic Ibis and Mynar are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Friday.

### Meeting held at SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): A meeting of the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) committee on employers/vendors disputes was held at the SCCI on Thursday. During the meeting, Chairperson SCCI Committee Lubna Tabassum highlighted the issues faced by employers due to the shortage of skilled labour in the industry.

The participants actively participated in the discussion during the meeting.

The committee decided to organize an awareness campaign for the industry workers which would prove to be beneficial for workers. The committee also decided to develop a systematic mechanism from chamber's platform to address issues/disputes between the parties.

## PSX turns bullish, gains 157 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 157.80 points, a positive change of 0.21 per cent, closing at 75,114.47 points against 74,956.67 points the previous trading day.

A total of 758,944,398 shares valuing Rs 16.708 billion were traded during the day as compared to 584,484,020 shares valuing Rs 17.714 billion on the last day.

Some 376 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 192 of them recorded gains and 156 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 28 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 191,624,790 shares at Rs 5.24 per share, WorldCall Telecom with

94,786,291 shares at Rs 1.45 per share and Symmetry Group Limited with 47,718,249 shares at Rs 5.74 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 84.44 per share price closing at Rs 18,500.00, whereas the runner-up was Pakistan Tobacco Company Limited with Rs 38.10 increase to close at Rs 918.10.

Mehmood Textile Mills Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 38.18 per share closing at Rs 470.92, followed by Hallmark Company Limited with Rs 28.33 decline to close at Rs 574.07.

**Rupee gains 17 paise against dollar**

Pakistani Rupee on Thursday gained 17 paise against US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.30 against the previous day's closing

at Rs 278.47.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.35 and Rs 280.10 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 64 paise to close at Rs 301.67 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.31, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paise to close at Rs 1.77, whereas a decrease of Rs1.03, was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 353.85 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 354.88.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham decreased by 05 paise to close at Rs 75.76, and the Saudi Riyal by 04 paise to close at Rs 74.20.

**Gold rates decrease by Rs6,200 per tola to Rs242,000**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 6,200 and was sold at Rs 242,000 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs 248,200 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 5,315 to Rs 207,476 from Rs 212,791 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 190,186 from Rs 195,059, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver declined by Rs50 to Rs2,800 whereas that of ten gram silver decreased by Rs.42.87 to Rs.2,400.54.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$60 to \$2,355 from \$2,415, the association reported.

## Engro Fertilizers recognized with IFA Green Leaf Award 2024

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Engro Fertilizers, Pakistan's premier seed-to-harvest solutions provider, has been recognized as the winner of the prestigious International Fertilizers Association (IFA) Green Leaf Award 2024 in the Nitrogen Category, for its exceptional performance in health, safety and environmental (HSE) practices.

Presented every two years, the IFA Green Leaf Award is regarded as the gold standard for fertilizer manufacturers globally. In 2024, a record 47 eligible applications from 27 member companies were received by IFA. An independent panel of judges evaluated the award based on performance records in key areas such as lost-time injury, sickness rate, and annual emissions over the previous five years. Previously, Engro Fertilizers secured the first runner up position in nitrogen category at the IFA Green Leaf Award 2020.

Commenting on this achievement, Ali Rathore -



CEO of Engro Fertilizers said, "At Engro Fertilizers, safety, health, and environmental management are the cornerstone of our operations. Our steadfast dedication to HSE principles, upheld by every member of our team, has earned us the trust of stakeholders across the value chain. With our initiatives to advance innovation and sustainable practices, we look forward to

making continuous impact for all stakeholders and contribute towards enabling the food security of Pakistan."

According to the IFA team, Engro Fertilizers has demonstrated strong dedication to reducing emissions and promoting sustainability, reflected through its HSE programs and the ECO-GREEN project. The 60-day ECO-GREEN project enhanced

plant energy efficiency by inspecting and repairing 400 pieces of equipment and installing low NOx burners, and positioned the Company at forefront for their exemplary environmental stewardship practices. In 2023, the Company reported a remarkable TRIR rate of 0.03 across its facilities, with zero loss workday injuries registered at the manufacturing facilities.

### Pakistan and China diplomatic relations:

## PCJCCI, UMT celebrate anniversary

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) organized a session for the celebration of Pakistan and China diplomatic relations at the PCJCCI Secretariat, here.

Moazzam Ali Ghurki, the President PCJCCI, said that Pakistan and China established these relations on 21 May 1951; this bond had been developed on the strength of its successive achievements, and had become formidable with each passing day and year.

Col Ashraf, an Executive Committee Member PCJCCI, said while sharing his views on this auspicious occasion that: "I believe the bilateral relationship between the two neighboring countries is characterized

by feelings of mutual trust, respect and goodwill towards each other".

Fang Yulong, Senior VP PCJCCI, said that the combination of Chinese technological advancements and Pakistan's natural and human resources could bring about revolutionary changes in the region. "It is quite clear that CPEC is the strongest pillar of economic, commercial and cultural connectivity between Pakistan and China" he added.

He shared that the friendship started almost 70 years ago and it had been further strengthened with every passing decade.

Nazir Hussain, Ex-additional foreign secretary and chairman Standing Committee on Strategy and International Relations PCJCCI, said that the rising of China as an international economic power was proving beneficial for Pakistan with every passing day. Along with the governments of both the countries, the business leaderships of private sectors were also playing an important role in strengthening economic relations.

Hamza, VP PCJCCI and Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI said while highlighting the importance of the CPEC in the ongoing scenario, PCJCCI facilitated this development regime by overcoming the communication barriers by imparting Chinese language to every discipline of society in order to prepare professionals from all walks of life having proficiency in Chinese language.

### Tokyo stocks end higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks ended higher on Thursday on the back of bumper results from US chip giant Nvidia. The benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 1.26 percent, or 486.12 points, to end at 39,103.22, while the broader Topix index was up 0.64 percent, or 17.39 points, at 2,754.75.

Nvidia said its quarterly revenue hit a new high on demand for chips to power artificial intelligence in data centres.

The California-based company reported net profit of \$14.9 billion, while its revenue of \$26 billion was up almost four times on-year. Nvidia "saw the future earlier than anyone else and was thus well positioned to take advantage of the major shifts in the computing industry towards parallelisation and advancements in machine learning," said Peter Gamry, head of equity strategy at Saxo Bank.

## 58 gas connections disconnected by SNGPL

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 58 connections; Rs 1.25 million fine imposed.

In Lahore, the team disconnected 06 connections for the illegal use of gas and another two for the use of a compressor and imposed a fine of Rs 0.68 million against gas theft cases.

In Multan, the team disconnected 04 connections on the illegal use of gas and another 03 on the use of a compressor.

In Karak, the company disconnected 05 connections on account of direct use and illegal use of gas and an amount of Rs 0.22 million have been booked against gas theft cases. The team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas theft cases.

The regional team of Shiekhpura disconnected 04 connections on illegal

use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.2 million against gas theft cases.

In Faisalabad, the team disconnected 02 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.05 million against gas theft cases.

In Peshawar, the team disconnected 33 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.1 million against pilferers.

In Sahiwal, the team disconnected 01 connection on the illegal use of gas.

## Fruit exports up by 17.85% to \$274.227m

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of fruits surged by 17.85 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

According latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the exports of fruits were recorded at \$274.227 million during July-April (2023-24) as compared to the exports of \$232.700 million during July-April (2022-23).

On year-on-year basis the exports of fruits

increased by 29.32 percent during the month of April 2024. The fruit exports during the months stood at \$8.161 million as compared to the exports of \$6.311 million in April 2023.

On month-on-month basis, the exports however decreased by 58.51 percent in April 2024 when compared to the exports of \$19.629 million in March 2024, according to PBS data.

It is pertinent to mention here that the overall merchandise exports from the country witnessed an

increase of 9.10 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

The exports during July-April (2023-24) were recorded at \$25.280 billion against the exports of \$23.171 billion, according to latest PBS data. On the other hand, imports into the country declined by 4.09 percent to \$44.794 billion this year against the imports of \$46.706 billion last year.

## NCHR launches report on irregular migration from Pakistan



### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) has called for addressing root causes of migration through sector-specific programs

and local development initiatives.

The recommendation was made in a study titled "Perilous Journeys: Unravelling Irregular Migration from Pakistan," launched by NCHR in col-

laboration with International Organisation on Migration (IOM) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denmark on Tuesday. Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar was the chief guest on

the occasion.

The report calls for dedicated awareness units in smuggling-prone areas, awareness campaigns, special investigation units within districts, investment in training systems to enhance human capital development and fiscal benefits and improved coordination and data sharing among the stakeholders.

The report also recommends clarity on responsibilities among law enforcement agencies, establishment of well-defined pathways for regular migration, inter-institutional coordination, poverty alleviation and literacy promotion among vulnerable communities, enhancing the prospects of safe, orderly and regular migration accommodating diverse skills and provision of incentives to retain high-

skilled professionals in the country.

Speaking on this occasion, Chairperson Rabiya Javeri Agha said that the Commission, through this report, aims to comprehensively examine the landscape of irregular migration originating from Pakistan. "It also emphasizes the distinction between human trafficking and migrant smuggling while shedding light on the drivers of migration, gaps in policy and legislation and the associated human rights abuses.

Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar appreciated the efforts of NCHR and said that irregular migration is a serious global issue. He said that primarily it is the state's responsibility to provide its citizens with the environment where could see their

future in the country but that environment could be created only with collaborative efforts of all stakeholders. "Such studies guide these efforts in the right direction," he said.

Chief of Mission IOM Mio Sato said that irregular migration is one of the most pressing issue of the time. She said that there are 281 million international migrants worldwide, almost 3.6 per cent of the total population of the world and the trend is increasing due to conflict, violence, political instability as well as climate change and other disasters. She called for joining hands to address the issue at every level.

The report says that the primary driver of migration from Pakistan is economic opportunity, along with factors such as job availability, education access, social

network influencing destination choices. It says that a significant portion of Pakistan's population expresses a desire to leave the country, particularly in Urban areas.

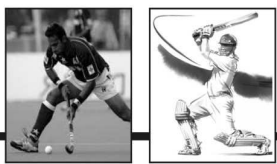
The report mentions that Pakistani authorities, while noting the complexity in measuring irregular migration, have highlighted a new route via Dubai to Egypt or Libya leading to Europe. In the first half of 2023, around 13,000 left Pakistan for Libya or Egypt. Notably, about 10,000 of these migrants have not returned.

The report further states that in 2022, Pakistan was not even among Europe's top ten countries for migration. "However, by mid-2023, it became the tenth most prominent, with arrivals reaching 8778 December. This surge reflects factors such as

political and economic uncertainty, terrorist attacks, inflation, and declining education and job opportunities. Furthermore, the devastating floods in 2023 worsened economic prospects, with forecasts predicting a slowdown to 2.8 per cent growth," says the report.

It recommends that efforts to address irregular migration requires a multi-faceted approach involving collaboration among government agencies, civil society organisations, and international stakeholders. It says that by addressing the underlying factors driving migration and ensuring the protection of migrants' rights, policy makers can work towards creating a more secure and prosperous future for individuals and communities affected by irregular migration.





In brief

Patel joins national football team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Trishan Patel has joined the national football team as an assistant coach. Previously, he was working as an online performance analyst for the team, said a press release issued here on Thursday. Trishan will take on dual responsibilities as assistant coach and performance analyst for the Pakistan's upcoming matches against Saudi Arabia and Tajikistan. This appointment marks a significant development in the team's preparation for the crucial matches ahead. The Pakistan national football team was undergoing intensive training camp in Islamabad for the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qualifiers Round 2 home match against Saudi Arabia on June 6 in Islamabad followed by an away match in Tajikistan on June 11. The preliminary squad of Pakistan includes-Goalkeepers: Hassan Ali and Tanveer; Defenders: Haseeb Khan, Mamoon Moosa Khan, Huzaifa, Waqar Ihtisham, Abdul Rehman, Umar Hayat, Muhammad Adeel, Muhammad Saddam and Zain ul Abideen; Midfielders: Yasir Arafat, Alamgir Ghazi, Ali Uzair, Rajab Ali, Moin Ali, Junaid Ahmed and Fahim; Forwards: Adeel Younas, Shayak Dost, Ali Zafar and Fareedullah. The names of diaspora players who would join the national training camp later will be included in the final squad.

Nepali smashes women's record

KATHMANDU (AFP/APP): Nepali climber Phunjo Lama on Thursday reached Everest's summit in 14 hours and 31 minutes, smashing the record for the world's fastest ascent of the mountain by a woman. Climbers usually take days to reach the top of the 8,849-metre (29,000-foot) mountain, spending nights on its different camps to rest and acclimatise. But Lama, who is in her thirties, shaved more than 11 hours off the previous best that had stood since 2021. It means she has reclaimed her own record. "She started (from the base camp) at 15:52 on May 22, summited 6:23 am May 23," Khim Lal Gautam, chief of the tourism's department field office at the base camp, told AFP. Earlier this month, when Lama was still at Everest's base camp, she said in a post on Facebook that she was "100 percent sure" she would reach the top of "the Mother Goddess". In 2018, Lama clinched the record for the fastest ascent by a woman by climbing Everest in 39 hours and six minutes. That record was broken in 2021 by Ada Tsang Yin-hung from Hong Kong, who conquered the mountain in 25 hours and 50 minutes. Nepali climber Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa holds the record for the record for the fastest-ever ascent of Everest, reaching the summit in 10 hours and 56 minutes in 2003.

Ponting not in race to be India coach

NEW DELHI (INP): Australia great Ricky Ponting was sounded out for the India head coach's role but the 49-year-old said he is not in the race to succeed Rahul Dravid in that high-profile job. The India cricket board has advertised the job as Dravid's contract expires at the end of the T20 World Cup next month and the former India captain is reportedly reluctant to carry on. Ponting has been the head coach of the Delhi franchise in the Indian Premier League (IPL) since 2018 and also filled in as Australia's T20 coach on an interim basis in the past.

Nadal faces Zverev at farewell French Open

PARIS (AFP/APP): Rafael Nadal will face world number four Alexander Zverev in a blockbuster first round match at his farewell French Open while women's champion Iga Swiatek and fellow four-time major winner Naomi Osaka are on a second round collision course.

Defending men's champion and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic will face French veteran Pierre Hugues-Herbert in his opener.

Nadal, who has won Roland Garros on 14 occasions, is unseeded after injury saw his ranking plummet to 276. He and Zverev met in the semi-finals in 2022 when the German was forced to retire after suffering a serious ankle injury.

Nadal, the winner of 22 Grand Slam titles, will turn 38 next week and this season will be his last on tour.

He holds a 7-3 winning head-to-head record against Germany's Zverev with five of those victories coming on clay. Zverev, 27, arrives in Paris on the back of lifting the Rome Open title last weekend.

"I'm going to play the French Open thinking that I can give my all, 100 per cent," said Nadal after a second round exit in Rome last week. As well as 14 titles in Paris, Nadal can boast a



record of 112 wins and just three losses, two of which came against Djokovic who will be chasing a fourth French Open title.

Djokovic turned 37 on Wednesday and marked the occasion by winning the 1,100th match of his career in Geneva. The Serb has yet to win a title in 2024 with runs to the semi-finals at the Australian Open and Monte Carlo Masters his best performances.

Following Thursday's draw, Djokovic is seeded to face Zverev in the semi-finals. World number two Jannik Sinner, who took Djokovic's Australian Open title in January, faces Christopher Eubanks of the United States. Third-seeded Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz, a semi-finalist in Paris in 2023, plays a qualifier.

Sinner and Alcaraz are seeded to meet in the semi-finals but both men have

been suffering from injuries which forced them to skip the Rome event.

- Murray v Wawrinka - Andy Murray, the 2016 runner-up, is also competing at the tournament for the final time. The 37-year-old tackles 2015 champion Stan Wawrinka, 39, in a battle of grizzled Grand Slam veterans. The pair have met 22 times in a two-decade rivalry with Murray boasting a 13-9 edge.

Three of those clashes have come at Roland Garros with Murray winning in the semi-finals in 2016 while the Swiss came out on top in the last-four in 2017 and first round in 2020. In the women's draw, top seed and world number one Swiatek will take on a qualifier with Osaka facing Lucia Bronzetti of Italy in their openers before a potential second round clash.

Swiatek is bidding to win a fifth major and fourth

French Open title. "It feels like home here," said Swiatek who arrives at the tournament with clay-court titles in Madrid and Rome under her belt.

Former world number one Osaka, now ranked 134, has never got past the third round in Paris. Bronzetti, the world number 48, has yet to win a main draw in two visits.

Osaka, 26, has endured a bittersweet relationship with the French Open.

In 2021, she was fined for opting out of mandatory media commitments before withdrawing from the competition after just one match insisting she was protecting her mental health. Osaka missed the 2023 edition due to being pregnant before giving birth to a baby girl in July.

Swiatek, meanwhile, is bidding to become the first player to lift three successive women's titles in Paris since Justine Henin in 2007. World number two Aryna Sabalenka starts against 101-ranked Erika Andreeva of Russia. Third seed and US Open champion Coco Gauff faces a qualifier in the first round and is seeded to face Swiatek in the semi-finals.

Double Australian Open champion Sabalenka is seeded to take on former Wimbledon winner Elena Rybakina in the last four.

Akram named Cricket Australia's Multicultural Ambassador

PERTH (INP): Legendary Pakistan cricketer Wasim Akram has been named Cricket Australia's Multicultural Ambassador for two years. The Cricket Australia has named 54 persons in the list of ambassadors, who belong to Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, indigenous Australian, Bangladeshi, Nepali, and Afghan communities. The move aims at advocating inclusivity and drive positive change within the sport and wider community. Usman Khawaja, Mel Jones, Ravi Shastri, Lisa Shalekar, Kishwar Chowdhury, Alana King, Peter Varghese, Swati Dave and Fawad Ahmed have also been named in the list which features several former and current players.

"We are thrilled to welcome such a dynamic and diverse group as Multicultural Ambassadors. Their collective leadership, expertise and passion will be instrumental in driving meaningful change and fostering a more inclusive cricketing community," said Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley. "The Multicultural Ambassador Program represents Cricket Australia's unwavering commitment to creating a sport that reflects contemporary Australian society and embraces individuals from all backgrounds.

Pak team qualifies for ATF Team Competition final

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan team has displayed top notch performance qualifying for the ATF 12 & under Team Competition Regional Qualifying event of South Asia at Kathmandu, Nepal.

According to details, Pakistan team defeated Bangladesh in the semifinal to secure a spot in the final.

This victory not only propels Pakistan to the championship match but also qualifies them for the prestigious ITF Asia 12 & under finals to be held in Kazakhstan later this year.

The semifinal match showcased Pakistan's dominance, with outstanding performances in the singles and doubles.

This win has set the stage for an electrifying final where Pakistan will face their arch-rival India, on Friday.

The historic rivalry between Pakistan and India adds another layer of excitement and anticipation to the clash, as both teams vie for the championship title.

In addition to the immediate glory of the final,

Pakistan's qualification for the Asia finals in Kazakhstan marks a significant milestone.

This achievement highlights the team's hard work, dedication, and talent at the international stage.

In 1st singles, Rashid Ali Bachani beat Muhammad Haider by 6-1,6-1 while M. Shayan Afridi outplayed Jobair Islam by 6-1,6-0 in 2nd singles.

In doubles, Rashid Ali Bachani, M. Junaid Khan downed Faheem Surov Hossain, Jobair Islam by 6-1,6-1.

Australia Volleyball Team to Visit Pakistan for three-match series

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Volleyball Federation announced a three-match home series against Australia, scheduled to run from May 28 to 30.

According to the details, the Australian team, comprised of 20 members including players and officials, will arrive in Pakistan on May 26, 2024, to participate in the series.

The series will take place at the Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex here, and will feature three highly anticipated matches between the two teams.

Series Schedule

First Match: May 28, 2024, at 6:30 PM

Second Match: May 29, 2024, at 6:30 PM

Third Match: May 30, 2024, at 6:30 PM

Australia's Volleyball team will then depart from Pakistan on May 31 after the conclusion of the three-match series.

For the unversed, Pakistan were recently crowned the Central Asian Volleyball Champions with a dominant 3-1 victory over Turkmenistan in the final.

In the enthralling final, Pakistan emerged victorious by winning three sets while Turkmenistan managed to win only one.

The national Volleyball team secured a convincing victory with 25-21, 25-19, 20-25, and 25-14 points.

Notably, the home side remained unbeaten in the entirety of the Central Asian Volleyball

Championship, winning six matches in the process.

Pakistan won a total of 18 sets in the tournament and dropped only three.

The Green Shirts booked their place in the final after a thumping 3-0 victory over Kyrgyzstan in the semi-final on Thursday, winning the one-sided contest with the score of 25-18, 27-25, 27-25.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded the national team for winning the Central Asian Volleyball Championship and acknowledged their teamwork and performance.

"Superb performance! Pakistan wins the Central Asia Volleyball Championship. Talent and teamwork at its best," the Premier said on X, formerly Twitter.

Merlier sprints to Giro 18th stage win as Pogacar keeps lead

PADUA (Italy) (AFP): Tim Merlier won the 18th stage of the Giro d'Italia on Thursday in a messy bunch sprint as Tadej Pogacar held his massive lead on a quiet day for the championship-in-waiting.

Belgian Merlier pipped local hero Jonathan Milan over the line in Padova after 178 kilometres of riding to claim his second victory in this year's Giro.

The Soudal-Quick Step rider had to hold off Milan in the final few metres despite both him and his Italian rival being boxed in towards the chaotic climax of the race.

"Coming from the back is not that easy but we managed well to find a good position," said Merlier.

"I could feel someone coming on the left... then I saw it was Milan on my

left and I jumped. A really good jump was necessary."

Merlier's battles with Milan, who retains the cyclamen jersey prized by sprinters thanks to a 127-point lead over Kaden Groves, have been a feature of this Giro.

Milan had used Merlier's wheel to burst through and claim the 11th stage while Merlier also edged Milan on stage three.

The Giro has one more opportunity for the sprinters, in Sunday's final day procession around Rome, with Merlier eyeing a chance to move level at three stage wins this year with Milan.

"It would be nice to have 3-3 but we will see," added Merlier.

Pogacar is seven minutes and 42 seconds ahead of Daniel Martinez with

three stages left as he closes in on overall victory.

UAE rider Pogacar is bidding to become the first man to win both the Giro and the Tour de France since the late Marco Pantani in 1998.

"It was a perfect day, with good legs, I'm very happy with my day," said the Slovenian.

The next two stages take the peloton back to the mountains, with Friday's finishing in Sappada close to the border with Austria before Saturday's punishing double climb of Monte Grappa which is the last opportunity to make a move in the general classification.

Pogacar's position at the top of the tree is almost certainly sealed but a podium place is still up for grabs as the Top 10 remains hotly contested.

West Ham's Paqueta charged over alleged betting breaches

LONDON (AFP): West Ham midfielder Lucas Paqueta has been charged with alleged breaches of Football Association betting rules after a probe into claims the Brazilian deliberately earned yellow cards.

Paqueta has been charged with four breaches of FA rules in relation to his conduct in West Ham's Premier League matches against Leicester in November 2022, Aston Villa in March 2023, Leeds in May 2023 and Bournemouth in August 2023.

The 26-year-old has also been charged with two further breaches in respect of alleged failures to "comply pursuant to FA Rule F2".

Paqueta was interviewed by the FA in September and gave the English game's governing body access to his phone. The FA investigation started after suspicious betting patterns surrounding Paqueta's booking for shoving Bournemouth's Illia Zabarnyi in the closing minutes of a 1-1 draw on the opening day of this season.

"West Ham United's Lucas Paqueta has been charged with misconduct in relation to alleged breaches of FA Rules E5 and F3," an



FA statement said on Thursday.

"It's alleged that he directly sought to influence the progress, conduct, or any other aspect of, or occurrence in these matches by intentionally seeking to receive a card from the referee for the improper purpose of affecting the betting market in order for one or more persons to profit from betting."

Paqueta has until June 3 to respond to the charges, subject to any request for an extension to the dead-

line. Writing on his Instagram page, Paqueta was quick to deny the charges.

"I am extremely surprised and upset that the FA has decided to charge me," he said.

"For nine months, I have co-operated with every step of their investigation and provided all the information I can.

"I deny all the charges in their entirety and will fight with every breath to clear my name. Due to the ongoing process, I will not be

providing any further comment."

In their own statement, West Ham said: "The club acknowledges receipt of the FA charge received by Lucas Paqueta for alleged breaches of their Rules."

"Lucas categorically denies the breach and will continue to robustly defend his position."

"The club will continue to stand by and support the Player throughout the process and will make no further comment until the matter is concluded."

KP U23 Inter-Region Games to start from May 28

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa U23 Inter-Region Games would be commencing from May 28, 2023 here under the aegis of Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at Hayatabad Sports Complex in Peshawar.

Under the special instructions of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Fakhar Jahan, U23 Games are being organized in which 1848 male and female players from all over the province are participating.

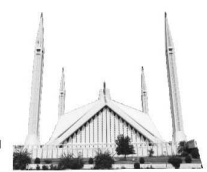
A total of 11 male and eight female players would participate in different sports at different venues including Peshawar, University of Peshawar Grounds, Abdul Wali

Khan Sports Complex Charasadda, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar, Peshawar Education Board Grounds.

The Men Games including Badminton, Squash, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Cricket, Handball, Karate, Athletics, Football, Hockey, Throwball and Taekwondo wherein 1078 male players will vie for the top honor while in female games under the supervision of Additional DG Sports Rashida Ghaznavi, a total 770 female players would compete in 8 different games comprising Badminton, Squash, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Cricket, Judo, Athletics, Hockey and Taekwondo.

Athletics Competition would be played at Kohat Sports Complex, Football Competition at Tahamas Football Ground, Peshawar, Hockey Competition at Lala Ayub Hockey Stadium, Throw Ball Competition at University of Peshawar Ground, Taekwondo Competition, Women Badminton, Table Tennis Volleyball, Judo and Hockey competitions will be held at Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex, Squash competitions at Peshawar Sports Complex, Cricket competitions at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Peshawar, Athletics and Taekwondo competitions will be held at Peshawar Education Board Ground.





## In brief

### PFA discards 3,000 litres of substandard milk

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) on Thursday discarded 3,000 litres of adulterated and substandard milk during the ongoing operation against contaminated milk in the city areas. According to a PFA spokesman, dairy safety teams while inspecting milk carrier vehicles at the Motorway, Thallian Interchange, checked 46 vehicles and recovered 3,000 litres of milk lacking fat and nutrients. The teams also imposed a fine of Rs 141,000 on nine milk carrier vehicles for supplying unhygienic milk to the residents. He said the purpose of the crackdown was to control the wicked practice of milk adulteration and ensure the implementation of Punjab Pure Food Regulations. He appealed to the public to keep an eye on adulteration in their surroundings and to inform PFA on the 1223 helpline number or PFA Facebook page in case of witnessing any suspicious activities related to the food.

### IRSA releases 272,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 272,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 302,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1468.31 feet and was 70.31 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 112,000 cusecs and 100,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1178.55 feet, which was 128.55 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 143,500, 136,700, 70,700 and 26,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 83,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 23,100 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Bani police arrest three robbers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Bani Police have arrested three robbers, members of the 'Sheri' gang and recovered cash Rs 28,000, two costly mobile phones, weapons and other items from their possession. A police spokesman on Thursday informed that a team under the supervision of Station House Officer (SHO), Bani Police Station managed to net three robbers namely Sheraz alias Sheri, Habib and Amir and recovered cash Rs 28,000, two costly mobile phones, weapons and other items from their possession. The arrested accused are being sent to jail for an identification parade. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Rawal, Faisal Saleem said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

### Police arrest two robbers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Saddar Baroni Police on Thursday have arrested two robbers and recovered five snatched motorcycles and other items from their possession. According to the police spokesperson, a team under the supervision of Station House Officer (SHO), Saddar Baroni Police Station managed to net two robbers namely Usman and Anas and recovered five snatched motorcycles, cash Rs 60,000, weapons and other items from their possession.



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan Ms. Leslie Scanlon called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar. —APP Photo

## Heatwave severely affects 26 districts across three provinces

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Thursday said almost 26 districts in Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan were severely affected by heatwave that would surge in three spells in the summers ahead.

Addressing a joint press conference flanked by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)'s Member Disaster Risk Reduction, Idrees Mahsud and technical expert Dr Tayyab, the PMs aide mentioned that elaborate guidelines and early warnings with detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs) to cope with the above normal high temperatures posing serious threat to human lives and ecology around.

Romina said Pakistan was facing severe heatwave and it was the first spell of simmering temperature rise that would continue in three waves starting from the preva-

lent May 22-30, the second from June 7-8 and the third to be in the last week of June.

The PM's aide commented that the heatwaves were more a man-made crisis than a natural hazard as it was spiking up in the areas with less green cover, excessive unsustainable and environment damaging anthropogenic activities.

She said the global warming was impacting the entire world and heatwave was on of its offshoots that had gripped our region, whereas well-prepared heatwave guidelines were shared repeatedly through electronic, print and social media. "Public must avoid unnecessary outdoor visits especially children, elderly and people suffering from serious illnesses," she urged.

The NDMA, she said being a national body was mostly working on early warnings and coordinating with the provincial departments on various natural disasters and calamities faced by the country.

The Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination was observing all mechanisms on routine basis as heatwave that used to be a slow-onset event had expedited along with abruptly changing weather patterns like erratic monsoon rainfalls, she added.

She underlined that with the beginning of heatwave phenomenon the glaciers of the country were rapidly melting, whereas the risk of glaring forest fires had also increased.

Romina mentioned that she was monitoring the entire situation on the directives of the Prime Minister who was very much keen on enhancing the country's climate and disaster resilience.

She requested the general public to observe extreme care while entering national parks and green areas and avoid throwing cigarette butts and inflammable materials like match sticks that could erupt infernos on mass scale.

## WAPDA discusses financing opportunities with ADB

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Asian Development Bank (ADB) Alternate Executive Directors visited WAPDA House the other day and discussed financing opportunities in WAPDA projects.

The meeting was attended by Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd), Member (Finance), GM (Projects) South and PDs of various WAPDA projects, said a press release issued on Thursday. GM (C&M) Water, GM Finance (Water/Power), Advisor (Hydro Resource Management) WAPDA and Advisor (Hydro Planning) WAPDA were also present in the meeting.

The delegation was briefed that Pakistan possesses about 70,000 MW identified potential of hydropower generation. WAPDA owns and operates 22 hydel power stations with cumulative generation capacity of 9459 MW, which will be more than

double with phased completion of its ongoing projects from 2025 to 2028-29, adding about 10,000 MW clean, green and economically most affordable electricity.

WAPDA plans to improve the ratio of low-cost hydel electricity in the National Grid from existing 29 percent to 40 percent by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050. The delegation was also informed about the progress on ADB-funded WAPDA projects namely Naulong Dam Multi-purpose Project, Kurram Tangi Dam Stage-II and Patan Hydropower Project.

WAPDA's development portfolio consisting of under-construction and ready-for-construction projects including Mohmand Dam, Diamer Basha Dam and Keyal Khwar were also presented to the ADB delegation for consideration of financial assistance. The Member (Finance), apprised the del-

egation about salient features of WAPDA's financial strategy.

He said WAPDA enjoys technical and financial credibility amongst the international financial institutions including the World Bank. The Chairman, in his welcome remarks, termed ADB a valuable partner, said that WAPDA has immensely benefitted from the Bank's support. Besides triggering socio-economic development of the people, WAPDA projects also contribute to the strategic goals of mitigating climate change and generating green energy.

The Chairman suggested that ADB may upscale its engagements with WAPDA from medium to large and then to strategic projects.

Appreciating the institutional strength of WAPDA, the delegation showed interest in exploring ways and means to enhance financing of upcoming WAPDA projects.

### ANF recovers 24 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover over 24 kg drugs and arrested four suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed that 28 grams weed was recovered from a parcel sent from England at a courier office in Rawalpindi. 12 kg opium was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near Swat Motorway Toll Plaza Nowshera.

In the third operation, 12 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested near GT Road, Attock.

In two separate operations in Quetta, 126 intoxicated tablets were recovered from two suspects. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

### ICT cracks down on alms-seekers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Assistant Commissioners of the Federal Capital have raided different areas of the city and arrested 41 alms-seekers to address the issue of professional begging.

The spokesman of ICT's administration told me on Thursday that, in response to directions from the Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, the ACs have arrested 41 professional beggars from various areas of the city. The arrested individuals have been handed over to the police, while minor children accompanying them have been placed in the care of the Edhi Center.

The spokesman said that this operation was part of an ongoing daily effort to tackle begging in the city.

"The Assistant Commissioners are leading these operations, ensuring that both adult and minor beggars are appropriately dealt with, in line with the city's regulations and support services," he added.

The ICT Administration aimed to curb begging through these continuous operations, providing a clear message that such activities would not be tolerated. By transferring minors to the Edhi Center, the administration also seeks to ensure the welfare and safety of vulnerable children found in such situations.

## Law minister meets Canadian High Commissioner

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar had a meeting with High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon here on Thursday at the Ministry of Law and Justice.

They discussed the Human Rights Commission and policies related to minorities and Canadian support for Judicial and Police trainings.

Senator Tarar reiterated the government's commitment to protecting and upholding human rights.

The honorable Minister emphasized that national development is Govt's top priority. He highlighted the collaborative roles of both the government and the opposition within the democratic system.

Talking about Climate Justice, Tarar also detailed the government's proactive measures for environmen-

tal sustainability, addressing climate change, and promoting eco-friendly practices.

This dialogue reflects the strong bilateral relations between Pakistan and Canada, focusing on mutual understanding and cooperation on critical issues.

Both parties agreed on the importance of continued collaboration to promote human rights, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

## All-out efforts being made to resolve problems of traders: CPO

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Hamdani on Thursday said that all-out efforts were being made to resolve problems of the traders.

He in a meeting with the delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) at Police Lines Headquarters said that the business community was backbone of any country's economy.

RCPI President, Saqib Rafique, Senior Vice President, Hamza Sarosh, Vice President, Faisal Shahzad and other office bearers were present in the

meeting. The police collaboration with the business community is essential to promote community policing, the CPO added.

He said that Safe City Project would help in taking more effective measures and remedies against criminal elements.

All major gangs involved in robberies and street crimes in the city had been arrested, he added.

Effective crackdown on motorcycle lifting, snatching and street crimes was going on successfully, the CPO informed.

Maintenance of law and order was indispensable for

the restoration of the country's economy, for which, the district Police were making joint efforts with the help of all the stakeholders, Syed Khalid said.

All possible efforts would be made to resolve difficulties being faced by the citizens, he added.

The RCPI President on the occasion said that the business community would continue to play a positive role in crime prevention.

The participants of the meeting thanked the CPO and appreciated the excellent policing of the police under the command of Syed Khalid Hamdani.

## Govt. to revamp passport policy for 'married women'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General Immigration and Passports, Mustafa Jamal Kazi said on Thursday that a committee was formed to revamp passport policy, pertaining to the condition of a "married woman's" passport bearing the name of her husband instead of the father.

The committee was tasked to address discrepancies between the policies of the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra) and the passport issuing authority regarding married women, Kazi told a private news channel.

He said according to current policy a married

woman's passport bear her husband's name instead of her father's that raised concerns about contradictions between the policies of these two institutions and perceived discrimination against women.

The DG Passport further explained that while Nadra's registration is local and used only within Pakistan, a passport is an international document and must comply with international agreements.

"Women often face difficulties when their passports use their father's name, especially when traveling with their children without the children's father.

This can complicate

establishing the biological relationship," said Kazi.

He noted that the passport authority has faced litigation in recent years due to issues arising from undeclared divorces.

According to the law, citizens must register and declare both marriage and divorce, but problems occur when these events are not officially documented and complicating custodianship matters, he added.

"It is legal for a married woman to enter her husband's name along with her own in the passport," Kazi said, emphasizing the need for proper registration and documentation to avoid complications.

## RDA gears up operation against illegal housing societies

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has geared up its ongoing operation against illegal housing societies. According to the RDA spokesman, the Authority on the directives of the Divisional Intelligence Committee had launched an operation against rules violators.

He informed that the Task Force constituted to take strict action against illegal housing schemes conducted operations against four illegal housing schemes, Capital Valley, New Airport Town, Banni Mehbob, and Gulshan-e-Bahar, located in Mouzas Katrian, Thalian, and Pilo, Rawalpindi. The enforcement squad sealed the site offices and demolished the

main gates, boundary walls, billboards and other infrastructure of the illegal schemes.

He said that the enforcement teams also demolished illegal construction on Plot No. 522, Phase-II, Gulraiz Housing Scheme. Earlier, notices were issued to the plot owners, Ilyas and Muhammad Jamal, he said.

The operation on the directives of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Muhammad Abdul Aamer Khattak was launched under the supervision of the Director General (DG) RDA, the Additional DG RDA, the Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, and City Police Officer Rawalpindi. He said that the crack-

down against illegal housing societies on the instructions of the DG RDA Kinza Murtaza would continue without any discrimination. The citizens were advised not to invest in illegal housing schemes and visit the RDA website [www.rda.gov.pk](http://www.rda.gov.pk), he added.

He said that officials from RDA, Muhammad Usman Bajwa, Assistant Director Building Control R D A / I n c h a r g e Enforcement Squad, Mehwish Naseem, Assistant Director Planning RDA, along with RDA Scheme/Building Inspectors and other team members, Dhiamyal Police Station team and representatives from the District Administration took part in the operation.

## Seminar held to highlight steps against women harassment

ISLAMABAD (APP):Shaheed Bhutto Organization (SBF) in collaboration with Pakistan Human Resource Network (PHRN) organized a seminar held at Quaid-e-Azam University, in the department of School of Politics and International Relation, to highlight steps against women harassment at work places, on Thursday.

The notable speaker in the session includes Asif Khan CEO of Shaheed Bhutto Foundation, Mehr Jami Law Officer of FOSPAH, Riasat Ali Azad President Islamabad High Court Bar Association, Hifza Bukhari Advocate Supreme Court, Mhian Zahid Sultan President Human Rights Council Pakistan and Senator Farhatullah Babar.

Asif Khan while addressing the session said that PPP has always upheld the status of women and it's

party that once led by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto being a woman never failed to uphold the dignity of every woman who was the victim of harassment. In this modern era, he underlined the need to take more measures for women empowerment.

Ms.Mehr Jami explained the work of FOSPAH, how their organization is helping many victims and one don't have to pay any registration or lawyer fee. The session can be held online and provided justice within ninety days ensuring security and confidentiality of the victim.

Ms.Hifza Bukhari speaking to the audience said that it is not only the role of law but society as well to develop maturity enough to realize the actual potential without diverting their strength in dominating women.

Mian Zahid Sultan explained the

concept how a girl feel that after extreme hard work and coming out with a distinction and faces harassment on the very first day of job. Instead of enjoying her hard work she is bewildered by the attitude of the society. He further said its duty of the companions to help harassment victim instead of doing the role of bystanders.

Senator Farhatullah Babar belonging to PPP also advocated Shaheed Benazir's role in combating harassment and believes in strengthening the morals of the citizens. As the victim is undergoing too much and not giving a helping hand by the society is a severe injustice. At first, the society should raise standard of the law which was basically meant for jobs and that has to be widened to educational institutions.



Medical equipment donated

KABUL (BNA): As part of assistance efforts, twenty medical equipment items valued at five hundred thousand US dollars were provided to three health centers in Oruzgan. These supports have been provided by UNICEF to equip these health centers to address the healthcare needs of the residents in the districts of Chinar-Tu, Khas Uruzgan, and Kaizab. Additionally, these health centers will soon be equipped to perform minor surgical procedures alongside childbirth services.

WHO distributes aid

GHOR (Khaama Press): The World Health Organization announced that it has provided 25 tons of essential aid to address the flood crisis in the Ghor province. The assistance includes medical packages, tents, and solar lamps for flood victims in Ghor province. Jamshid Tanoli, WHO representative in Afghanistan, stated, "Despite access challenges, emergency assistance has been delivered to flood-affected people through collaborative efforts of partner organizations."

IEA holds political commission meeting



KABUL (Ariana News): The Political Commission of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) met on Thursday at the Sepidar Palace in ARG for talks on the situation in the country, in the region and on the upcoming Doha meeting. Chaired by deputy prime minister for political

issues on the agenda. The United Nations said on Tuesday the next Doha meeting of Special Envoys for Afghanistan has been set for June 30 and July 1. The spokesperson for the United Nations Secretary-General, Stephane Dujarric, said at a briefing on Tuesday that civil society activists will also attend the Doha meeting. He said an invitation has been extended to the Islamic Emirate to attend the meeting. He said the Islamic Emirate's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amir Khan Muttaqi, has received an advance invitation from the UN Secretary-General to participate at the upcoming meeting of Special Envoys.

Ghor residents criticized

KABUL (TOLOnews): Some residents, local officials, and social activists in Ghor criticize the delay in delivering aid to the flood victims of this province. They say that as a result of recent floods in this province, more than 100 people have died, over 150 people have been injured, and more than 5,000 houses have been destroyed. Yasin Matin, spokesperson for the Ghor People's Committee, who has come to Kabul to draw the government's and national and international organizations' attention to this matter, said: "We request national and international organizations and charities to deliver their aid promptly to prevent a humanitarian disaster in Ghor." The commander of the 3rd Brigade in Badghis also stated that the aid provided by official organizations is not sufficient and called on national and international charities to provide more assistance to the people of Ghor. Anas Motaki, commander of the 3rd Brigade in Badghis, said: "We have had about 100 fatalities in Ghor province and its related districts. There are 150 injured people, and so far, no aid or cooperation has been provided." Meanwhile, a representative of Ghor social activists warns of the risk of the Jam Minaret collapsing and urges officials and international organizations to take this historical monument seriously. Ahmad Wali Sazesh, a representative of Ghor social activists, said: "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and UNESCO, which has registered this minaret, should at least not remain silent in this situation. The Jam Minaret is of cultural value to every Ghor resident." Recent floods in most of the country's provinces have caused significant financial and human losses to the residents, and many of these residents also criticize the delay in receiving aid.

Qatari Deputy FM urges IE to attend Doha meeting

KABUL (Ariana News): Qatar's deputy foreign minister Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi met with Afghanistan's deputy prime minister for economic affairs Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar on Thursday and urged the IEA to attend the upcoming Doha meeting. During this meeting, which took place in Kabul, political, economic and commercial relations were discussed between the two sides. Baradar thanked Qatar for its cooperation with Afghanistan in various fields and said that these relations should be expanded and strengthened. He also said currently there are numerous investment opportunities in Afghanistan and Qatari investors are welcome to invest. According to Baradar, the Islamic Emirate has provided necessary facilities to foreign investors and fully supports them. Al-Khulaifi in turn said Qatar will encourage investors to invest in Afghanistan and for this purpose,



Qatari investors will visit Kabul in the near future. Al-Khulaifi added that they are working closely with Qatar Airlines to start flights to Afghanistan and to strengthen commercial relations between the two countries. Khalifi meanwhile asked the Islamic Emirate to attend the upcoming meeting of special envoys for Afghanistan in Doha. He said Qatar would like the IEA to attend the meeting so that definite conclusions can be reached. He added that without the presence of the IEA, such meetings are fruitless. He said he had clarified his position to the United Nations in this regard. Baradar meanwhile said that the Islamic Emirate wants broad political-economic relations with all countries. He emphasized that without IEA representation at meetings, no results can be reached and therefore, it is necessary to respect the position of the Islamic Emirate in such gatherings. This comes after Baradar and foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi met with the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sherpur Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani in Tehran in Iran.

Ebad calls on aid organs to support health sector



KABUL (TOLOnews): Qalandar Ebad, the Acting Minister of Public Health, has departed for an official four-day visit to Qatar. Sharafat Zaman Amarkhil, the ministry's spokesperson, stated that the purpose of Mr. Ebad's visit is to participate in the Technical Advisory Group meeting, which includes representatives from the World Health Organization and UNICEF. On the first day of this meeting, Qalandar Ebad mentioned that over 70,000 frontline workers, including women, are part of the polio eradication program in Afghanistan. According to Amarkhil, the Acting Minister of Public Health

Afghanistan and Pakistan, so that in the future, a permanent technical advisory group can work on solutions and prevention methods for this disease." Meanwhile, several doctors say that holding such meetings with polio eradication programs and the participation of the Acting Minister of Public Health from the Islamic Emirate can be beneficial. Said Abdullah Ahmadi, a doctor, said: "Such trips are extremely effective and useful for eradicating polio from Afghanistan. The Acting Minister of Public Health needs to present all the polio eradication programs from Afghanistan precisely and logically to the world." Another doctor, Baz Mohammad Shirzad, said: "The goal of participating in international programs should be to secure consistent and sustained financial support for continuing the polio eradication program in Afghanistan." This comes as Japan also donated 6.9 million dollars to UNICEF in Afghanistan last week for children's vaccination, particularly for polio.

Kabir signs 'condolence book' at Iranian embassy



KABUL (Ariana News): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the political deputy prime minister, visited the Iranian embassy in Kabul to pay his respects over the passing of President Ebrahim Raisi. Kabir signed the condolence book at the embassy after expressing his condolences on the death of Raisi and other officials who were killed in a helicopter crash on Sunday. During his visit, Kabir said: "The Islamic Emirate and the people of Afghanistan consider themselves partners with the Islamic Republic of Iran and its people in this great sadness." He added: "Ebrahim Raisi had established good relations [with Afghanistan] and it is hoped that the friendly relations between Afghanistan and Iran will be further strengthened from now on."

Italians to build houses for Bamiyan cave dwellers

BAMIYAN (Ariana News): Bamiyan officials said this week that an Italian organization, Vento, in collaboration with the University of Florence in Italy, will build 100 houses for local cave dwellers. The cost of the project will total \$300,000 and work on the houses will start soon, officials said. For hundreds of years people have lived in the caves, situated around the giant Buddha niches carved out of sandstone cliffs. Currently some estimates say there are about 700 families who call caves their home. But for years, the situation has been a concern for authorities, especially as the cliffs form part of the Bamiyan UNESCO World Heritage Site. Officials and experts have said that the longer the caves are occupied, the more damage is done to the site, as families install front doors and windows, build makeshift extensions, and rig up satellite dishes and solar panels. In a meeting this week with the Bamiyan governor Abdullah Sarhadi, visiting Italian officials from Vento and the university said the houses will be modern and that upgrades will also be done to Zargaran town, in the center of Bamiyan. The officials said this includes improvements to roads, to alleys and to control of water. Sarhadi welcomed the initiative and said he supports initiatives on the development and implementation of infrastructure projects in the province. This project will meanwhile be implemented under the full supervision of the Department of Urban Development and Housing in Bamiyan Province.

University exam date announced

KABUL (Khaama Press): The National Examination Committee of Afghanistan announced the schedule for the nationwide Konkur exam during a press conference in Kabul on Thursday. According to the committee's plan, the Konkur nationwide exam for the solar year 1403 will be held in five stages, with the first stage scheduled for June 7th. In the first stage of this exam, applicants from 16 provinces will take the exam on June 7th, while the second stage, covering Kabul and its districts, is planned for June 22 and 23. In the third stage, candidates from 10 provinces will take the exam, scheduled for June 27 and 28. In the fourth stage, applicants from 7 provinces will take the exam, scheduled for July 3, 4 and 5th. Additionally, a supplementary exam for students who have studied abroad or failed to participate in previous stages will be conducted in the fifth stage. The press conference of the National Examination Committee is taking place in Kabul. As of now, no information has been provided regarding the participation of girls in the exam. Since the Taliban assumed power, they have enforced a ban preventing girls from attending school beyond the sixth grade. Consequently, girls and women are prohibited from participating in university exams. This marks the third consecutive year that they have been deprived of the opportunity to take part in university and Konkur exams, despite promises from Taliban officials to lift ban. The Taliban's promise to permit girls to attend university exams has remained unfulfilled for the third consecutive year despite assurances from Taliban officials, girls and women continue to be excluded from participating in the exams, perpetuating their denial of educational opportunities.

Darul Aman Palace: A journey through its history and restoration

KABUL (TOLOnews): Darul Aman Palace, with over a century of historical significance, is located eight kilometers from Kabul city. This palace, featuring a three-story building, contains 150 small and large rooms designed in the European architectural style. This historical monument of the country was constructed during the reign of King Amanullah Khan, to the southwest of Chahar Asyab in Kabul, a place previously known as Afshar Tepe. The palace, strategically located at an elevation of 30 meters and covering an area of 1,400 square meters, was built by order of Amir Amanullah Khan. The construction work was started by 22 German architects under the supervision of German engineer Walter Harten and was completed in 1927 (1306 solar year). Said Shah Mahmood, a cultural expert, said: "The building was designed by Germans and Turks, but it was completed with the artistry of Afghan architects and carpenters." In the construction of this palace, materials such as mountain stone, marble, cement, plaster, and baked bricks were used, and its roof is adorned with wood and carpets. Ketab Khan Fayzi, head of the Kushani International Research Center, said: "This palace has three stories and approximately 150 rooms, covering an area of 1,400 square meters." Despite enduring difficult

periods, the palace, with its green surroundings, has now become one of the most pristine historical and tourist attractions in the capital. Visitors to the palace have various stories about this historical place. Navid Amanyar, a visitor, said: "We came today to visit Darul Aman Palace. The palace is among the ancient monuments." Another visitor, Abdul Qahar, said: "Visitors need a guide here to help them explore the place." Khubaib Ghofran, spokesman for the Ministry of Information and Culture, emphasizes the preservation of historical palaces in the country and says they are working to provide more facilities for visitors. Ghofran said: "The Ministry of Information and Culture is committed to maintaining and restoring all historical monuments, palaces, and sites and always strives to protect these monuments and palaces." Darul Aman Palace suffered significant damage during the civil war and eventually turned into ruins, remaining unused for the past two decades. The palace, which had been destroyed six times, was finally restored in 1395 (solar calendar) with a budget of sixteen million US dollars during the previous government's tenure. week to discuss investment opportunities. According to the ministry, the visiting Russians expressed interest in investing in Afghanistan oil and gas mines.

In response, Delawar welcomed their interest and stated that the ministry would cooperate with them and provide necessary facilities for their endeavors.

Due to the damage to part of the Herat-Ghor highway and the abundant water of the Harirood River, reaching the Minaret of Jam is said to be difficult. Some residents of Ghor and cultural figures urged the interim government and relevant international organizations to prevent the destruction of the Minaret of Jam. Zabihullah Wafa, a cultural activist in Ghor, said, "The ancient Minaret of Jam, which is one of the most valuable historical sites in Afghanistan, is in a very bad condition and is on the verge of collapse." Abdul Zaher Zahid, a resident of Ghor, said: "We hope that the central government and cultural institutions will help and cooperate in preventing the collapse of the Minaret of Jam." Najibullah Nazari, another resident of Ghor, said: "If the central government and responsible

Concerns rise over potential collapse of Minaret of Jam in Ghor

GHOR (TOLOnews): Following flooding in Ghor province, the Minaret of Jam is reportedly in danger. According to local officials of this province, the waters of the Harirood River have penetrated into the minaret, and if immediate action is not taken to drain the water and reinforce the structure, there is a possibility of the collapse of this 800-year-old structure. Abdul Hai Zaeem, the head of information and culture in Ghor, said: "Floods have struck the Minaret of Jam, and water has entered the minaret through the brick crevices. Currently, the cracks in the Minaret of Jam have increased compared to before, and this situation is very concerning." According to local officials in Ghor, so far, no action has been taken by the interim government and UNESCO to save the Minaret of Jam from collapsing.

Due to the damage to part of the Herat-Ghor highway and the abundant water of the Harirood River, reaching the Minaret of Jam is said to be difficult. Some residents of Ghor and cultural figures urged the interim government and relevant international organizations to prevent the destruction of the Minaret of Jam. Zabihullah Wafa, a cultural activist in Ghor, said, "The ancient Minaret of Jam, which is one of the most valuable historical sites in Afghanistan, is in a very bad condition and is on the verge of collapse." Abdul Zaher Zahid, a resident of Ghor, said: "We hope that the central government and cultural institutions will help and cooperate in preventing the collapse of the Minaret of Jam." Najibullah Nazari, another resident of Ghor, said: "If the central government and responsible



organizations do not pay attention, we will lose the Minaret of Jam." The Minaret of Jam is said to be the oldest and tallest brick minaret in the world. This historical relic was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2002. Some cultural figures warn that the collapse of the Minaret of Jam signifies the collapse of a rich and historical civilization. Asadullah Yousefi, a cultural expert, said: "The collapse of the Minaret of Jam is tantamount to the collapse of a culture and civilization. It carries thousands of years of architecture, culture, customs, and literature." The Minaret of Jam in Ghor, with a height of 65 meters, has a historical background of over 800 years. This brick minaret was built during the reign of Sultan Ghiyassuddin Ghor. The Minaret of Jam is located seventy kilometers from the city of Firuzkuh in Shahrak district.





NEW DELHI: A man taking a picture with Jagdish Rai Bhatia at an election campaign organised by BJP members.

## Sindh CM receives 205 Pakistani who returned from Bishkek

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah received 205 stranded Pakistani students in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan at Jinnah Terminal on Thursday morning and announced that he was arranging to bring another batch of 180 students of them six were injured within a few days.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah received 205 stranded Pakistani students from Bishkek-Kyrgyzstan on their arrival at Jinnah Terminal. Talking to media he said, "This was a matter of concern not just for families but for the entire Pakistan too. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other ministries established a crisis management cell immediately. "Today, 205 students have arrived, 99 of them are from Karachi," he said.

Out of 206 students, 150 are male and 55 females. Of 206 students who arrived on Thursday 99 are from Karachi, 22 from Hyderabad, 15 from Nausheroferoze, 13 each from Khairpur and Sukkur, 12 from Shaheed Benazirabad, five each from Jacobabad, Badin and Dadu, three from Sanghar (Tando Adam), and one each from Kandhkot, Tharparkar. The CM said that 180 students were still stranded in Kyrgyzstan, of which 6 were injured. "The Sindh government will bear the expenses of the charter

flight to bring the remaining students back," he vowed.

Shah said that the federal government's concerned ministries and even Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif were figuring out a way for students to continue their academic journey. He added that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto used his personal contacts in Kyrgyzstan to ensure students' safety. He directed him to facilitate the students. At Jinnah Terminal the chief minister interacted with the parents who reached there to receive their children. He assured them that his government was making all-out efforts to continue the education of the students.

**25-member committee to evaluate medical education standards notified after Bishkek violence:** A 25-member high-powered committee was formally notified on Thursday to assess the standards of medical education and private colleges, admission processes, and reasons for students going abroad for medical education.

The notification was issued under the direction of Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar will lead the committee. The committee is tasked with compiling a report within 10 days based on five terms of reference (TORs).

The committee will investigate the

quality of medical education, admission procedures, standards of private medical colleges, and reasons behind students seeking medical education abroad. Furthermore, the committee will review the current regulatory framework and propose recommendations to improve coordination between the public and private sectors in the medical field.

In the 25-member high-powered committee, federal ministers, members of the National Assembly and heads of medical universities and institutions are included. Key members of the committee are Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Law Minister Senator Azam Nazir Tarar, Health Coordinator Malik Mukhtar Bhatti, National Assembly Member Nafisa Shah, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Jahanzeb Khan, Federal Health Secretary, Special Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), and Chairman of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC).

The committee will also put forward recommendations for enhancing the quality of medical education in the country. It is worthy to mention that Wednesday, the PM took notice of the Bishkek incident with Pakistani medical students and announced forming the committee to sort out the issue.

## Crime rate drops 50% in Karachi, says Memon

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon disclosed a significant reduction in Karachi's crime rate, stating it has dropped by more than 50 per cent in just one month.

Speaking at the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), the senior provincial minister addressed the long-standing challenges faced by Sindh. He emphasized that Sindh has been politically and economically targeted for years, affecting the province and the country at large.

Memon highlighted that under the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) government, Sindh has seen considerable industrial growth. However, adverse conditions had previously forced some industrialists to relocate to other provinces or countries. He expressed optimism about the Sindh Government's Dhabiji Economic Zone, which is set to become a pivotal part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Reflecting on the past, Memon noted the severe law and order issues 15 years ago, where people traveled in convoys for safety. Despite a recent uptick in crime, he reassured that the situation has dramatically improved in the last month. Minister Memon also touched on infrastructure developments, praising Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif's focus on the Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway and emphasizing the PPP's commitment to the K4 water project. He stated that billions are being invested in Karachi, highlighting the city's continued allure for employment opportunities, drawing thousands from across Pakistan.

With a focus on water and infrastructure solutions, Memon reaffirmed the Sindh government's dedication to addressing these critical issues, ensuring Karachi remains a vibrant economic hub.

## PHC disposed off Minister plea

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court disposed of Provincial Minister for Communications Shakil Khan writ plea after removal of his name from the Provisional National Identification List (PNIL), on Thursday.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Waqar Ahmed, heard the case while counsel for petitioner Samiullah Advocate argued that Shakil Khan is a provincial minister and his name was included in the PNIL list by the federal government, which has barred him from travelling abroad.

Assistant Attorney General Dawlat Khan along with Additional Director Legal Federal Investigation Agency Abdul Rehman Afridi appeared before the court. Additional Director Legal FIA informed the court that Shakil Khan's name has already been removed from the PNIL list, and he is now free to travel anywhere. PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Waqar Ahmad dispose of writ plea after the FIA's assurance that petitioner's name is removed from PNIL.

Meanwhile, Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar granted bail to alleged terrorist Nasiruddin charged in terror offenses, including involvement in the Nasser Bagh Road bomb blast and hiding explosives in the Rehman Baba graveyard. The counsel Muhammad Adil advocate argued that the petitioner was arrested by the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) two months ago and his arrest was shown in May. The counsel further stated that the petitioner had been cleared by the Bajaur police and there was no evidence to support the allegations. ATC Peshawar granted bail to alleged culprit against on Rs 1 lakh and two personal sureties after hearing the arguments.

## CM directs progress on New Peshawar Valley project

### PDA decides construction of 8 underpasses, flyovers on Ring Road

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Board of Directors (BoD) of Peshawar Development Authority (PDA) has decided construction of underpasses/flyovers on Ring Road and other important roads and arteries aimed at addressing vehicular traffic issues in the provincial capital.

It was decided that initially, 8 underpasses/flyovers including 3 on Ring Road and 5 on other points with congested and heavy flow of traffic, would be constructed. The 11th Board meeting of Peshawar Development Authority was held here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Thursday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair.

Provincial Minister for Local Government Arshad Ayub Khan, Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali, administrative secretaries of the concerned departments and other board members attended the meeting.

A 33-point agenda was deliberated upon and a

number of important decisions were taken on this occasion. The board approved the proposed plan for widening and rehabilitation of Ring Road and solarization of tube wells being operated under administrative control of Peshawar Development Authority.

The solarization of tube wells is expected to save Rs. 810 million annually in terms of electricity bills, it was told in the meeting. The forum also approved an action plan for establishing an education complex at town and PDA's sub office at the site of Regi Lalma Model Town.

It also accorded conditional approval to different rules and regulations under PDA act 2017, deciding that a committee to be headed by minister for Local Government, will further look into proposed rules and regulations and finalize them within the next 14 days.

Similarly, the board conditionally approved the proposed action plan for constructing high-rise buildings at different PDA's sites under Public Private Partnership, in addition to

according approval to provide lands, required for establishing a Forensic Science Laboratory at Hayatabad and a Paraplegic Centre at Regi Model Town.

The chief minister on this occasion directed to take steps for installation of solar lights at central media at GT road from Peshawar motorway to Hayatabad, further directing for steps on priority basis for the renovation and beautification of grey structure of Bus Rapid Transit. He also directed for solarization of the entire infrastructure of PDA, adding that special arrangements should be made for the maintenance and repair of roads in the jurisdiction of Peshawar Development Authority.

The chief minister further directed to clearly determine the jurisdictions of PDA and other departments responsible for providing urban facilities in the provincial capital. Moreover, he directed the authorities concerned to come up with a viable plan within a month, in order to ensure visible progress on the New Peshawar Valley project.

## Confronting terrorism: Strategies for Pakistan

E.P. Report



LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled "Confronting Terrorism: Strategies for Pakistan in 2024" on Thursday, 23 May 2024. The event focused on examining the multifaceted challenges posed by terrorism to Pakistan's national security and exploring effective strategies to combat this menace.

In his introductory remarks Air Commodore Khalid Iqbal (Retd), Director at CASS Lahore, identified three streams of terrorism confronting Pakistan: anti-China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) disruptive assaults, sporadic activities of separatist terrorists, and ethno-sectarian clashes.

The keynote speaker, Dr Syed Kaleem Imam, former Federal Secretary and former Inspector General of Police, spoke about mapping Pakistan's terrorism landscape and its impact on national security and development. He examined the origin, motivation, and impact of terrorism in the country, highlighting how it stems from both internal and external factors, including political, ideological, and religious motivations.

Dr Muhammad Feyyaz, an academic on counterter-

rorism, spoke about the need for countering terrorism through combative measures. He stated that terrorism is an enduring phenomenon, which requires a nuanced understanding through the identification of three interconnected factors: a rigid strategic mindset, a mismatch between the discourse surrounding terrorism and counterterrorism, and a lack of adequate attention to social sciences in analysing political violence.

Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain, a former envoy to Afghanistan, underscored the need for bilateral and regional diplomatic engagement with neighbouring countries to mitigate terrorist threats. He proposed a three-pronged strategy: direct action against terrorists, addressing root causes, and diplomatic engagement.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS Lahore, stated that

terrorism continues to impede Pakistan's progress despite decades of efforts to counter it.

He noted that the recent surge in terrorist attacks has affected both civilians and security personnel, besides fuelling sectarian strife. He said that external threats from hostile neighbouring states complicate the situation. The President stressed the need for a comprehensive strategy focused on national unity and proactive engagement with allies, alongside diplomatic efforts to prevent regional territories from becoming sanctuaries for terrorists.

The seminar highlighted the need for national harmony, unwavering resolve and ironclad political will for the across-the-board implementation of the rule of law to choke the terrorists financially and logistically. It was urged that flawless border management be ensured and informal monetary transactions be stopped.

## UAE to invest \$10b

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He appreciated the UAE president's vision of taking lead in IT, artificial intelligence and constructing information infrastructure on modern lines to build the national economy which should not be dependent on oil and gas, and making the country a hub of imports and exports. Lauding the Pakistani IT professionals playing their role in digitizing the UAE economy, he said, "That is what we need to replicate in Pakistan... Pakistan offers great potential in terms of its population with 60% comprising youth aged 15-30 years."

Highlighting his government's focus on the promotion of IT and AI in various sectors of the economy like agriculture, mines and minerals, skills and empowering the youth, he said the roundtable conference was the reflection of what could be achieved in the sector. "We want to transform our economy. I have an iron resolve to completely transform the economy of Pakistan in collaboration with the UAE, be it a joint venture, collaboration or knowledge-sharing partnership."

Lauding the contribution and efforts of around 1.5 million Pakistani diaspora in the UAE, the prime minister urged them to learn the expertise and experiences of the Emirates to replicate them for Pakistan's progress and prosperity. He recalled strong institutional

and people-to-people linkages between the two countries. He said that both countries shared the collective ambition to embrace innovation and progress.

"Together we have to work and march forward with joint efforts we will be great Ummah. Both will prosper together provided we march in unison, join hands and shun all our concerns and fears," he remarked. The prime minister also held an interactive discussion with the participants and responded to various comments and suggestions. He shared the commitment of his government for improving investment ecosystem in digital economy of the country and invited investors to visit Pakistan.

The event concluded with the distribution of mementos amongst the UAE-based clients of Pakistani IT companies in recognition of their contribution and strengthening of business-to-business cooperation. The event was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Information Attaulah Tarar, Minister of State for IT and Telecom Shaza Fatima Khawaja and SAPM Syed Tariq Fatemi.

Moreover, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the government's busi-

ness friendly policies and its support to the foreign investors were yielding positive results in promoting the private sector's development and attracting foreign investment. He said the government was taking steps on priority to increase foreign direct investment in Pakistan. The prime minister was talking to Director General of Abu Dhabi Fund for Development Mohammed Saif Al Suwaidi, who called on him here.

In the meeting, the two leaders discussed ways to promote cooperation between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The prime minister, who was on a daylong visit to the UAE, highlighted the reforms and actions taken by the government to ensure economic stability in Pakistan.

He said the two countries enjoyed brotherly relations that spanned over decades, and thanked the UAE leadership, particularly Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, for their support during challenging times. He expressed the confidence that the bilateral trade relations would further strengthen with increase in cooperation between the companies of the two countries. During the meeting, the prime minister also extended invitation to the delegation of Abu Dhabi Fund for Development to visit Pakistan.

## JI rejects Punjab Defamation Bill 2024

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LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami has vehemently rejected the Punjab Defamation Bill 2024, denouncing it as a draconian piece of legislation. In a display of solidarity with journalists, the JI Emir Hafiz Naem ur Rehman has pledged unwavering support to the media community in their protest against the grave encroachment on freedom of speech.

Expressing his stance during a media briefing along with the delegation of Joint Action Committee (JAC) at Mansoorah on Thursday, Hafiz Naem minced no words in his condemnation of the bill. "Forned on the basis of a rigged election, the current government lacks any semblance of legitimacy. Yet, it shamelessly proceeds to endorse laws that blatantly aim to stifle the freedom of speech," he said.

Earlier, the JAC delegation, which comprises representatives from the Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA), All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMEND), and Lahore Press Club (LPC), met the JI Emir and sought the backing of JI against the bill.

Rehman emphasized that the Punjab government must engage in dialogue with journalists and promptly revoke the recently passed legislation. He asserted that resorting to coercion to suppress media freedom was unacceptable. Expressing gratitude for the solidarity extended by JI, the JAC affirmed its determination to oppose the bill vigorously, even resorting to legal recourse should the government persist in upholding the black law.

Meanwhile, during a separate presser held at Mansoorah on Thursday morning, the JI Emir addressed several pressing issues. He dismissed the necessity of holding fresh elections in light of the existence of legal document in shape of Form 45.

## Israel launches Gaza strikes, says ready for truce

GAZA (AFP): Israel launched devastating air strikes on Gaza early Thursday while also saying it is ready to resume stalled talks on a truce and hostage release deal with Hamas to pause the war raging since October 7. The Gaza Strip's civil defense agency said two pre-dawn air strikes had killed 26 people, including 15 children, in Gaza City alone.

Agency spokesman Mahmud Bassal said one strike hit a family house, killing 16 people, in the Al-Daraj area, and another killed 10 people inside a mosque compound. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military. Fierce street battles also raged in Gaza's Jabalia and Rafah where the armed wings of Hamas and its ally Islamic Jihad said they had fired mortar barrages at Israeli troops.

International pressure for a ceasefire has mounted on Israel and its Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as three European countries said Wednesday they would recognize a Palestinian state. The week started with the International Criminal Court's prosecutor seeking arrest warrants on war crimes charges against Netanyahu and his defense minister as well as three Hamas leaders.

Israel has angrily rejected those moves, voicing "disgust" over the ICC request and labelling any recognition of Palestinian statehood a "reward for terrorism." But domestic pressure has also risen as supporters of hostages trapped in Gaza again rallied outside Netanyahu's office, passionately demanding a deal to bring them home. A newly released video showed five female Israeli soldiers, tied up and some with bloodied faces, in the hands of Palestinian militants during the attack more than seven months ago.

The three-minute clip, taken from a militant's body camera footage, was released by the Hostage and Missing Families Forum on Wednesday after the Israeli army lifted censorship on it. "The footage reveals the violent, humiliating and traumatizing treatment the girls endured on the day of their abduction, their eyes filled

### Top UN court to rule today

THE HAGUE (AFP): The UN's top court said it will rule Friday on a request by South Africa to order Israel to implement a ceasefire in Gaza. South Africa has petitioned the International Court of Justice for emergency measures to order Israel to "cease its military operations in the Gaza Strip" including in Rafah city, where it is pressing an offensive.

The rulings of the ICJ, which rules on disputes between states, are binding but it has no power to enforce them — it has ordered Russia to halt its invasion of Ukraine to no avail, for example. But a ruling against Israel would increase the international legal pressure after the International Criminal Court's top prosecutor said Monday he was seeking arrest warrants for top Israeli and Hamas leaders.

In hearings last week, South Africa charged that what it described as Israel's "genocide" in Gaza had hit a "new and horrific stage" with its assault on Rafah, the last part of Gaza to face a ground invasion. The Rafah campaign is "the last step in the destruction of Gaza and its Palestinian people," argued Vaughan Lowe, a lawyer for South Africa. "It was Rafah that brought South Africa to the court. But it is all Palestinians as a national, ethnic and racial group who need the protection from genocide that the court can order," he added.

Lawyers for Israel hit out at South Africa's case as being "totally divorced" from reality that made a "mockery" of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention it is accused of breaching. "Calling something a genocide again and again does not make it genocide. Repeating a lie does not make it true," top lawyer for Israel Gilad Noam said. "There is a tragic war going on but there is no genocide," he added.

with raw terror," the forum said. Netanyahu vowed to continue fighting Hamas to "ensure what we have seen tonight never happens again."

But his office also said that the war cabinet had asked the Israeli negotiating team "to continue negotiations for the return of the hostages." The previous round of truce talks, involving US, Egyptian and Qatari mediators, ended shortly after Israel launched its attack on Gaza's far-southern city of Rafah early this month. Israel went ahead with the assault on the last city in Gaza to be entered by its ground troops in defiance of global opposition, including from top ally the United States.

Washington voiced concerns that about 1.4 million Palestinians who had been trapped in the city would be caught in the line of fire. Israel has since ordered mass evacuations from the city, and the UN says more than 800,000 people have fled. US President Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said the Rafah operation "has been more targeted and limited" than feared and

"has not involved major military operations into the heart of dense urban areas."

But he stopped short of saying that Israel had addressed US concerns, adding that Washington was closely watching ongoing Israeli actions. Israel's national security adviser Tzachi Hanegbi has meanwhile given a bleak assessment of the war to a meeting of parliament's foreign affairs and defense committee, according to a report by Israel's Channel 13. He reportedly said that Israel has "not achieved any of the strategic aims of the war — not conditions for a hostage deal; we haven't toppled Hamas; and we haven't allowed residents of the (Gaza) periphery to safely return home."

The bloodiest ever Gaza war broke out after Hamas's unprecedented attack on October 7 resulted in the deaths of more than 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures. Militants also took 252 hostages, 124 of whom remain in Gaza, including 37 the army says are dead.