

**Protesters shut Motorway**  
**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: People of Peshawar came out on the streets against the heavy load shedding of electricity and blocked the motorway for traffic on Tuesday. Due to the sit-in of the protesters in a big number, the Motorway M1 from Peshawar Toll Plaza to Charsadda Interchange was closed to all traffic. The people of Akbarpur and Badhai areas are included in the protest against load shedding.



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First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

**Girl's school set ablaze**  
**F.P. Report**

MIRANSHAH: Another girl's school was set ablaze by unknown miscreants in North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police said. Unidentified culprits set a girl's school located in Razmak area of North Waziristan on fire on Monday-Tuesday midnight. As a result of fire, computers, furniture and other material of the educational institution was gutted completely.

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 126

Regd. No. 241

ZIQAAD 20 1445 -- WEDNESDAY, MAY 29 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

# Nawaz's services made him party chief again

## PM for minimum load-shedding for public relief in sizzling summer

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE / ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said that Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has once again been elected unopposed as the President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz because of his great love and services to the people of Pakistan.

Addressing the PML-N General Council Meeting at a local hotel, he said that in the 2018 elections, Nawaz Sharif was defeated through various intrigues, adding that Nawaz Sharif's fault was that he transformed the country into a nuclear power and also put it on the path to speedy development. He said that unfortunately, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was implicated in the false Panama cases, asserting that his crime was that he served Pakistan and made Pakistan a nuclear power, while Pakistan had been progressing fast in industrial, agricultural and all other sectors.

Under a sheer conspiracy, he said, attempts were made to defame Nawaz Sharif in the comity of nations by ruining his national services and he was forced to quit Pakistan but today, the faces of all those conspirators are tainted, while Nawaz Sharif has once again succeeded to foil all those unlawful tactics and intrigues.

With dedication and hard work, the PML-N governments in federal and Punjab under the dynamic leadership of Muhammad Nawaz are surpassing every milestone and taking Pakistan towards speedy development, he said and acknowledged the cooperation of the allied parties including Pakistan People's Party, PML-Q and MQM in the government. He added that all the allied parties are sincerely working day and night for the economic and prosperity of the country. He vowed to take Pakistan to that level of progress and prosperity as it had been in 2017 under the leadership of then Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said, "I extend my thanks to, especially our party's seasoned and elder politician leader Raja

Zafarul Haq, and all those PML-N fellows who stood firm with the party through thick and thin, the party leaders and workers from Balochistan, Sindh, KPK, Punjab, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir on their active participation in the general council of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz. I am also thankful to all the honorable members of the assemblies for being here."

Shehbaz Sharif also congratulated Rana Sanaulah and his team for the successful conduct of the party election. He said that today, he was relieved of his duties as the party president because Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was elected as the PML-N President uncontested. He said that under the guidance of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is serving the people in the province, and in the same way, a coalition government under the patronage of Nawaz Sharif in the federal government is working day and night to restore the country's economy. "We always need guidance from Nawaz Sharif and it is my firm believe that if we all work together day and night, then Pakistan will definitely come out of these difficulties and become the same Pakistan that Nawaz Sharif had left in 2017," he added.

"I want to say in very clear words that when PTI founder could not defeat Muhammad Nawaz Sharif along with his accomplices, he changed the ballot box in the dark of night using the last resort," he said and mentioned that the PTI founder had spewed venom against army martyrs and Ghazis and their families who rendered supreme sacrifices for the nation and the country, asserting that the nation will never forgive him and all those his associates who did the same. The PTI founder had stolen 190 million pounds and also sold out the precious watch in the market but now his tainted face was exposed to the nation, he said.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the authorities concerned to minimise the ongo-

ing load-shedding in different areas through better load management, considering the public relief in sizzling weather.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting on load management and power theft, reiterated that the government would deal strictly with the power thieves and the ongoing mission against them would be taken to the logical end. Vowing to hold a monthly review of the power theft situation, he asked the provincial governments, law enforcement agencies and other departments to extend their support in the anti-power theft drive in the national interest and for the country's progress.

The prime minister told the participants of the meeting that the government in no way would tolerate the over-billing. He directed to accelerate the privatisation process of the power distribution companies by engaging the experts and formulate a strategy to solarise the tube wells in Balochistan.

During the briefing on load management and power theft issue, it was told that under a joint strategy formulated following a conversation between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister and federal minister for power, it had been agreed to reduce load shedding and line losses and ensure recovery of dues from defaulters in the province.

It was told that areas with more power theft and line losses and low recovery ratio were being subjected to load shedding and that the upgradation of the south-north power transmission line would help improve the system. The meeting participants were told that task forces were being formed at provincial and divisional levels to eliminate the power theft which would undergo a weekly performance review.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Dr Musaddik Malik and Awaish Ahmed Leghari, Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik, Coordinator to PM Rana

(Continued on Back Page)

## Rejected \$5b offer of abandoning N-tests: Nawaz

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) newly elected President Nawaz Sharif said that the next two years might be challenging for the government and the people.

Addressing the party members after being elected as president, Nawaz Sharif but if the government works hard and is persistent, the last three years of the current tenure would be prosperous. He was of the view that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz are working hard for well-being of the people.

Speaking on Youm-e-Takbeer, the PML-N president said that Bill Clinton, the US President at the time, made him a covert offer prior to Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests. "Bill Clinton had offered Pakistan \$5 billion to abandon the nuclear tests but we refused it," he added. Nawaz Sharif emphasized that Pakistan is a nation that values its independence and will not compromise on its principles. "We are not a nation that sells out."

The PML-N president said that he was ousted from the Prime Minister's Office in 2017 through a "conspiracy". Nawaz Sharif said a "conspiracy" against his government was hatched in London, adding that his political opponents, who had returned from London, staged a sit-in. Nawaz Sharif said that during the sit-in, a message was sent to him in which he was asked to resign or be ready for dire consequences. "I told them to do whatever they want, but Nawaz Sharif will never resign," the PML-N president said. Referring to the May 9 riots, he said that he was the one who stand with May 28th (Pakistan's nuclear tests day), not with May 9th.



OTTAWA: Students of University of Toronto holding a protest rally against Israeli's attacks on Rafah.

## Load shedding issue to be resolved soon: KP CM

**F.P. Report**

SWABI: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Tuesday, paid a visit to district Swabi, where he inaugurated Lot-1 of the Pehur High Level Canal Extension Project, which has been completed at a cost of Rs. 1000 million.

It is worth mentioning here that the whole project would be completed in three different lots and four packages at a total estimated cost of Rs. 15.6 billion, benefitting its gross command area of 30,000 acres, extendable to additional command area of 8,000 acres in future.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the project, the Chief Minister said that Pehur High Level Canal Extension Project would play an important role in the development and prosperity of the region. He said that agriculture and irrigation sectors are among the top most priorities of his government; pragmatic steps would be taken under a well devised and integrated strategy to address the

longstanding issue of food security on a sustainable basis.

He added that innovative research techniques and modern farming would be promoted so as to increase per acre yield of agriculture commodities of the province. He maintained that providing employment opportunities to the youth of this province is also a priority of incumbent provincial government; talented and skilled youth would be provided with soft loans in order to enable them to start their own business.

The provincial government has allocated sufficient funds for this purpose in the budget of the new fiscal year, he added. "We believe in the uniform development of the province; development activities would be carried out keeping in view the needs and requirements of the people in each district across the province", he remarked and urged the general public to keep vigilant eye on development activities being carried out in their areas, identify the malpractices and wrong

doings, the government will take strict action against the responsible ones.

He also emphasized the government officials to serve people in an efficient manner adding that all the departments are responsible for addressing the public issues on their door steps. He said that the issue of power outage in the province has been discussed in detail with the relevant federal ministers, and the problem of unannounced load-shedding would be resolved soon.

The chief minister on this occasion, announced dualization of Swabi-Topi road and establishment of a Degree College in a rented building at Gadoon. He also announced to provide funds required for completion of Women and Children Hospital Swabi this year. MNAs Asad Qaiser, Shahram Tarakai, Provincial Minister Aqibullah and MPA Rangeez Khan also addressed the ceremony, whereas Provincial Minister Faisal Tarakai and others were present on this occasion.



LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulating Nawaz Sharif on being elected unopposed as president of PML-N.

## NAB team raids Bahria Town's office

RAWALPINDI: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) raided Bahria Town's office in Rawalpindi on Monday "in connection with Al-Qadir Trust University case", sources told media.

The sources said that the anti-corruption watchdog's team conducted the raid to "search for records of Al-Qadir Trust University" at Bahria Town's Rawalpindi office. It also emerged that the Punjab police and elite force's teams were also present in the raid.

It is noteworthy to mention here that Al-Qadir Trust University links to a high-profile case leading to the incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's £190 million National Crime Agency (NCA) settlement reference.

The PTI chairman is facing corruption charges of billions of rupees in a case also involving the property tycoon. Khan — along with his wife Bushra Bibi and other PTI leaders — are facing a NAB inquiry related to a settlement between the PTI government and the property tycoon, which reportedly caused a loss of £190 million to the national exchequer.

As per the charges, Khan and other accused allegedly adjusted Rs50 billion — £190 million at the time — sent by Britain's NCA to the Pakistani government as part of the agreement with the property tycoon. They are also accused of getting undue benefit in the form of over 458 kanals of land at Mouza Bakrala, Sohawa, to establish Al Qadir University.

During the PTI government, the NCA seized assets worth 190 million pounds from the property tycoon in Britain. The agency said the assets would be passed to the government of Pakistan and the settlement with the Pakistani property tycoon was "a civil matter, and does not represent a finding of guilt".

Subsequently, then-prime minister Khan got approval for the settlement with the UK crime agency from his cabinet on December 3, 2019, without disclosing the details of the confidential agreement. It was decided that the money would be submitted to the Supreme Court on behalf of the tycoon.

Subsequently, the Al-Qadir Trust was established in Islamabad a few weeks after the PTI-led government approved the agreement with the property tycoon. Zulfi Bukhari, Babar Awan, Bushra Bibi, and her close friend Farah Khan were appointed as members of the trust. Two to three months after the cabinet's approval, the property tycoon transferred 458 kanals of land to Bukhari, a close aide of the PTI chief, which he later transferred to the trust. Later, Bukhari and Awan opted out as the trustees. That trust is now registered in the name of Khan, Bushra Bibi and Farah. NAB officials were earlier probing the alleged misuse of powers in the process of recovery of "dirty money" received from the UK crime agency. — Agencies

## Spain, Ireland & Norway recognise Palestinian state

### PM welcomes announcement

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday welcomed the announcement by Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez to formally recognise Palestine as a state. The prime minister, in a statement, said that the recognition of Palestine as a state by Spain was a positive development in the international scenario which also manifested the rejection of Israeli barbarism against the unarmed Palestinians by the Spanish people and their Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez. He strongly condemned the recent unprovoked Israeli bombing of Rafah which martyred another 45 Palestinian people, and reiterated his call for an immediate end to the genocide of Palestinian population being carried out by Israel. He reiterated Pakistan's resolve to continue extending moral, political and diplomatic support to the Palestinian people till the establishment of an independent Palestine state with Quds Al Sharif as its capital.

a special programme for Canadians' relatives living in the war-torn enclave, a preparatory move in case they are able to leave in the future.

That figure is an increase from the 1,000 temporary resident visas allotted under a special programme for Gaza announced in December, the immigration ministry said in a statement, adding that many people had expressed interest. "While movement out of Gaza is not currently possible, the situation may change at any time. With this cap increase, we will be ready to help more people as the situation evolves," Immigration Minister Marc Miller said.

The prime minister of the Palestinian Authority expressed hope that Spain, Ireland and Norway's recognition of a Palestinian state would encourage other European countries to do the same. Mohammad Mustafa, in Brussels to attend a meeting with international donors, said he was grateful that the three had effectively joined 143 other countries that backed a Palestinian bid to become

a full United Nations members in a resolution earlier in May.

"We obviously want to have every country in Europe do the same," he told a news conference in Brussels with Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares. "So this is again hopefully a source of encouragement for these countries to take the necessary courageous step."

The Middle East conflict has exposed diverging views in the European Union. Some EU diplomats have said it is not the right time to recognise Palestinian statehood. Mustafa said recognition now was vital to keep the peace process alive. Spain's Albares said other European countries were thinking about it, including Slovenia that had started the process. Spain, Ireland and Norway said they will formally recognise a Palestinian state on Tuesday to help secure a halt to Israel's Gaza offensive after the Hamas attack on October 7 and revive peace talks that stalled a decade ago.

## Israeli tanks hit evacuation area in Rafah, 21 dead

CAIRO (Reuters): Israeli strikes on a tent camp in an evacuation area west of Rafah killed at least 21 on Tuesday, Gaza health authorities said, and tanks advanced to the center of the southern Gaza city for the first time after a night of heavy bombardment.

Two days after an Israeli airstrike on another camp stirred global condemnation, Gaza emergency services said four tank shells hit a cluster of tents in Al-Mawasi, a coastal area that Israel had advised civilians in Rafah to move to for safety. At least 12 of the dead were women, according to medical officials in the Hamas-run Palestinian enclave. An Israeli military spokesperson said: "As of this time, we are not aware of this incident."

In central Rafah, tanks and armored vehicles mounted with machine guns were spotted near Al-Awda mosque, witnesses told Reuters. The Israeli military said its forces continued to operate in the Rafah area,

without commenting on reported advances into the city center. International unease over Israel's three-week-old Rafah offensive has turned to outrage after an attack on Sunday set off a blaze in a tent camp in a western district of the city, killing at least 45 people. Israel said it had targeted Hamas commanders and had not intended to cause civilian casualties.

Global leaders voiced horror at the fire in a designated "humanitarian zone" of Rafah where families uprooted by fighting elsewhere had sought shelter, and urged the implementation of a World Court order last week for a halt to Israel's assault. Tuesday's attack occurred in an area designated by Israel as an expanded humanitarian zone, to which it had called on civilians in Rafah to evacuate for their own safety when it launched its incursion in early May.

In a diplomatic move purportedly aimed at reining in the violence, Spain, Ireland

and Norway were to officially recognize a Palestinian state on Tuesday. The three countries have said they hope their decision will accelerate efforts toward securing a ceasefire in Israel's war against Hamas militants, now in its eighth month, that has reduced much of the densely populated territory to rubble.

Residents said Rafah's Tel Al-Sultan neighborhood, the scene of Sunday's nighttime strike in which tents and shelters were set ablaze as families settled down to sleep, was still being bombarded. "Tank shells are falling everywhere in Tel Al-Sultan. Many families have fled their houses in western Rafah under fire throughout the night," one resident told Reuters via a chat app.

Around one million people — many repeatedly displaced by shifting waves of the war — have fled the Israeli offensive in Rafah since early May, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) reported on Tuesday.





# MPAs call on CM, discuss development needs

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) from different districts, in order to discuss development needs and public issues of their respective constituencies.

The CM apprised the visiting public representatives about various government initiatives meant to ensure welfare and ease of common man. She said that food prices would come down further, because they are creating a separate system for price control and other related issues. She added whenever the PML-N comes to power, rates of food items fall down. She noted on the contrary, some people in the past used to say that they did not come to power for potatoes and onions.

The visiting MPAs paid tribute to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for reducing the prices of

bread and other food items. They remarked that reduction in the prices of bread and other items in the last three months is like a record.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif also apprised that a big Kisan Card project is coming for the farmers of Punjab, saying that now farmers will be given subsidy directly. She highlighted that it has been proposed to the Federal government to reduce import duty on agricultural machinery and tractors etc.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif also briefed them that they will bring hybrid buses to the city, besides giving motor bikes to the youth. She added a loan proposal is also under consideration for building a house on a 2-4 marla plot. Moreover, they will make houses for the homeless people. Currently, they are reviewing plots in the villages for the purpose.

The CM said that other countries including China are contacting

Nawaz Sharif for IT City. She directed the visiting members of the Provincial Assembly to maintain close contact with the common man.

Earlier, she also listened to their suggestions and recommendations for resolving the public issues.

The visiting MPAs acknowledged that CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif is doing a lot for the poor. Her continuous contact with parliamentarians is a welcome tradition. They said that Chief Minister is doing the best work for the welfare of people by taking innovative steps.

The visiting MPAs included Hina Parvez Butt, Marghub Ahmed, Kashif Padhar, Muhammad Hasan Riaz, Naeem Safdar Ansari, Ghazali Salim Butt, Zahid Akram, Tariq Subhani, Muhammad Salman Naeem, Qasim Nadeem, former members of Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Shehbaz and Bilal Zulfikar Ali Khokhar.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Rubina Khalid calls on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi.

## Tessori honors Pakistan US Alumni Network members

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori honored the members of the Pakistan US Alumni Network Karachi in a prestigious ceremony at the Governor House. The event aimed to acknowledge the significant contribution of PUAN members to society through various activities and initiatives, according to a statement issued today.

The ceremony also featured the unveiling of the Trophy for the First Ever Interprovincial Women's Softball Championship in Pakistan. The championship, scheduled to begin in Karachi on May 30th, is being hosted by the Sindh Softball Association and sponsored by PNSC, KPT, Dr. Essa Laboratory, and Diagnostic Centres, with collaborative support from

the Pakistan US Alumni Network Karachi.

Tessori spoke highly of PUAN's activities, commending the thousands of Pakistanis who have returned from the United States and are working to uplift communities through the network. He also praised the president of PUAN, Dr. Farhan Essa Abdullah, for supporting various projects benefiting communities, including the promotion of peace, education, environmental sustainability, minority rights, and more.

Dr Farhan Essa, the president of PUAN, noted the significance of holding the event in the historic Governor House of Sindh for the first time in the history of PUAN Pakistan. He appreciated the governor for opening the doors of the Governor's House to the

public and expressed hope that PUAN's activities would bring positive impacts to society.

The event was attended by Faareha Fatima, the Alumni officer of the U.S. Consulate General Karachi, former law minister Barrister Shahida Jameel, high officials of Pakistan Shipping Corporation, Karachi Port Trust and other dignitaries. Tasawar ul Karim Baig hosted the event.

The following individuals were among the recipients of the awards: Amber N Sajid, Sadia Rana, Mukesh, Mehreen Masood, Ghazala Fasih, Rahmeen Urooj Zaidi, Amir Shahab, Sameer Rah, Rozina Amirzada, Shumail Ali, Alice, Dr. Shumaila Burney, Huma Akramullah, and Tasawar ul Karim Baig.

## Marri pays tribute to founders of nuclear program

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party's central spokesperson, Shazia Marri, Tuesday, paid glowing tribute to founders of Pakistan's nuclear program that made country's defense impregnable.

Shazia Marri, in her message on Youm-e-Takbeer, saluted Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and said that May 28 will always remind us of their services for national defense.

She said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was founder of Pakistan's nuclear program while Shaheed Benazir Bhutto laid foundation of country's missile program that become a strong weapon of national defense.

Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto Shaheed did not accept any international pressure against the programs for strengthening the defense of the homeland, Shazia Marri said adding that the nation will never forget courage and valour of the leadership of Pakistan.

## Man kills littel son in Lahore

LAHORE (PPI): An irate man killed his three-month-old baby son over an argument with his wife in Johar Town area of Lahore on Tuesday. According to police, the father placed his foot on his little son and pressed baby Zeeshan's chest with his weight.

On the complaint of the deceased child's mother, Maria, the police registered a case against accused Mazhar and his two sisters under the provisions of murder. Mazhar had a dispute with his wife a few days ago, the police said.

After an argument, Maria wanted to take the infant child with her, but Mazhar and his sisters stopped her. According to text of the FIR, Maria reached Mazhar's house with her father three days later to meet her child.

Meanwhile, Mazhar was standing by putting pressure on the baby's chest, which worsened Zeeshan's condition, text of the FIR says. Zeeshan was taken to a hospital for medical aid where doctors confirmed his death. The police arrested the accused and started an investigation.

## PPP delegations meet governor, congratulate on assuming charge

LAHORE (APP): Various delegations of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Central Punjab met Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at the Governor House Lahore, on Tuesday.

The office bearers of PPP Sahiwal, Kasur and Peoples Youth Organization were present in the meeting, said a handout issued here.

The delegation congratulated Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on assuming the office of Governor Punjab. The Governor met all the people one by one and listened to their problems. Secretary Information Shahzad Saeed Cheema and Secretary Records and Events Ahsan Rizvi were also present during the meeting.

Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider said that political stability in the country was need of the hour. He

added that everyone had to play a positive role for the betterment of the country. He said, "Vision of our leadership is prosperity of the people and a stable Pakistan." He said that fulfillment of his constitutional obligations and betterment of Punjab province was among his top priorities.

The Governor further said that he rose to this position by dint of hard work and struggle. He added that he was well aware of the problems of working class. He said that the doors of Governor House were always open for the workers and the people of Punjab.

Meanwhile, the Punjab Governor in his statement regarding Youm-e-Takbeer stated that May 28 was a big day in the history of Pakistan. He said that Pakistan's nuclear explosions not only made the defense of the country impregnable, but it also

created the balance of power in the region.

The Governor said that the former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, civil and military leadership took the difficult decision of nuclear explosions in response to India's nuclear explosions. He said, "On May 28, the entire nation of Pakistan pays tributes to nuclear scientists, civil and military leadership for making the defense of country impregnable."

He said Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto laid the foundation of Pakistan becoming a nuclear power. He said, "On this day we also acknowledge the services of all the engineers, nuclear scientists, civil and military leadership including Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the journey of Pakistan becoming a nuclear power."

## Minister, UAE CG discuss measures for tourism promotion

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister of Tourism and Culture, Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah on Tuesday, visited the Consulate General of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Karachi.

He discussed with UAE Consul General Bakhit Atiq Al Rumithi matters relating to the promotion of bilateral tourism and cultural activities and projects for the promotion of tourism under public-private partnership, said a statement issued here.

The minister stressed the need to further strengthen cultural relations and enhance joint cultural activ-

ities and said that Pakistan is keen to strengthen cultural and people-to-people relations with the Emirates and organizing events in this regard will produce positive results.

He said that there are vast opportunities and a favorable environment for investment in Sindh while both the brotherly countries could reap benefits by further increasing the exports of handicrafts. Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah said that the founder of the Pakistan Peoples Party Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto played a key role in the establishment and unity of the

United Arab Emirates.

UAE CG Bakhit Atiq Al Rumithi said that there were remarkable bilateral relations between UAE and Pakistan at the state and public level as well as in social, historical and cultural sectors. Underscoring the need for coordinated measures for the promotion of tourism and culture to strengthen the relations between the two countries, he said that joint effort will be made for investment under public-private partnerships in the sectors.

Muhammad Isa Al Tahiri, CEO of U Bank was also present on this occasion.

## Health ministers meet JICA Pakistan delegation

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir met the JICA Pakistan delegation at PMU on Tuesday.

Health Secretary Punjab Ali Jan Khan, Additional Technical Secretary Dr. Hafiz Shahid Latif, and Children's Hospital Multan administration were also present on this occasion.

Provincial Health Ministers Khawaja Salman Rafique and Khawaja Imran Nazir discussed mat-

ters with the JICA Pakistan delegation about the four-storey complex at Children's Hospital Multan. The JICA Pakistan delegation appreciated the improvement plans of the Health Department.

Khawaja Salman Rafique said that they welcome the JICA Pakistan delegation and appreciate the offer of cooperation for the four-storey complex at Children's Hospital Multan. Minister Khawaja Imran Nazir said, "We would start building the

complex at Children's Hospital Multan next year. It would enhance the capacity and efficiency of Children's Hospital Multan."

Punjab Health Secretary Ali Jan Khan said that an agreement will be reached with JICA Pakistan, and another meeting is planned in this regard for next week. Diagnostic, radiology, and other treatment facilities will be available for patients in the complex at Children's Hospital Multan.

## CM Sindh felicitates nation

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Tuesday, felicitated the nation on 'Youm-e-Takbeer' and said that it is a manifestation of collective efforts of all aspects of national strength.

The Sindh CM, in his message on 'Youm-e-Takbeer', also paid tribute to the leadership, people and armed forces of Pakistan who played significant role in making the mother-land a nuclear power. Murad Shah said that Former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was the founder of Pakistan's nuclear program who laid the foundation of a program aimed at making Pakistan a nuclear power to maintain peace and deterrence in the region.

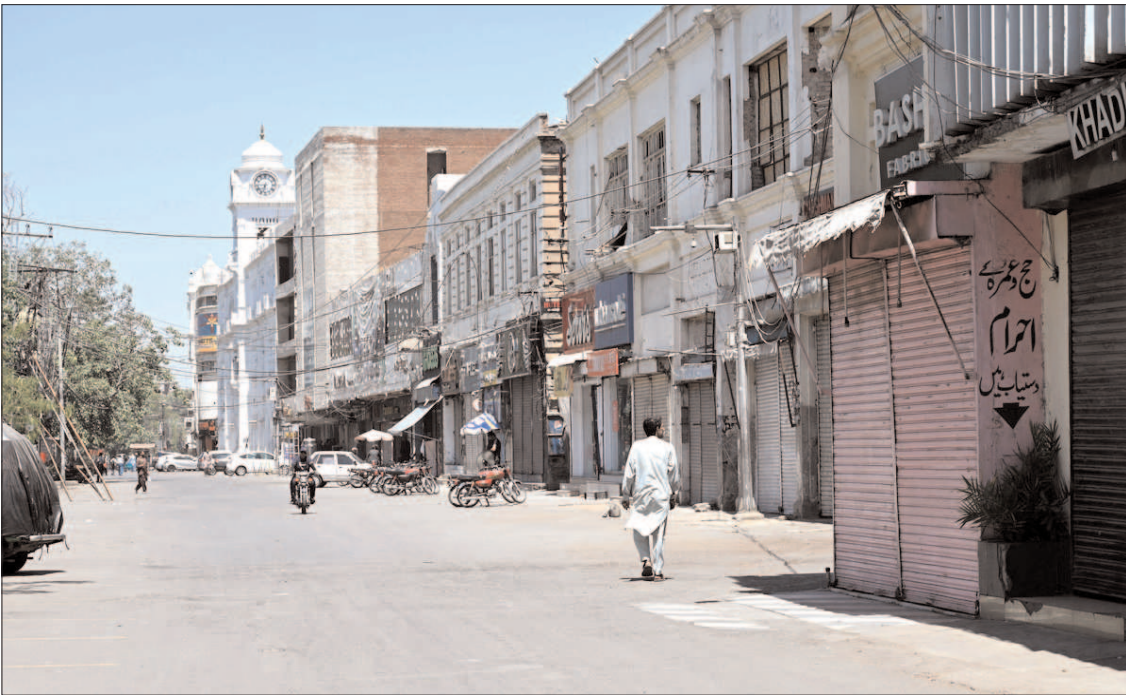
Paying tribute to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for his foresight and determination to make Pakistan a nuclear power, saying that former PM Shaheed Benazir Bhutto brought innovation in Pakistan's nuclear program and also launched the missile program in difficult circumstances.

## Food minister announces price reduction of bakery items

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin has said the government is on a mission of providing quality and affordable food items to the people of Punjab.

After the clear reduction in the prices of flour, roti and naan, on the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister, the minister on Tuesday announced a significant reduction in bakery products. According to the details, after meetings and negotiations with the representatives of the bakery association and various brands, a reduction of Rs. 30 has been made on the large bread, while the large bread available at less than Rs. 200 is being reduced by Rs. 20.

The Food minister said that a discount of Rs. 10 has been given on small bread and Rs. 5 on all kinds of buns. Bilal Yasin said that a decrease of Rs 10 for 200 grams of rusk is announced while the prices of all types of bakery products were reduced significantly. He said that the price reduction of bakery products will be implemented immediately and the price reduction will be applied to all brands and local bakery products across the province.



LAHORE: Shops on Mall Road closed on the occasion of observing Yom e Takbeer. —APP Photo



# Chairman WAPDA reviews progress on Tarbela 5th Extension

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Water & Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd) reviewed progress on Tarbela 5th Extension during his visit to the project, being constructed at Tunnel No. 5 of Tarbela Dam in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Member Water, Member Power, Advisor Projects, Advisor Tarbela Dam, GM (Coordination & Monitoring) Water, GM Tarbela Dam, GM (Power) Tarbela, Project Directors Tarbela 4th and 5th Extension and Chief Engineer (Operation &

Maintenance) Tarbela 4th Extension were also present on the occasion.

The Chairman inspected construction activities on various sites, which also include the raised intake, the power house and the tunnel. Representatives of the Consultants and the Contractors briefed the Chairman about site-wise progress achieved so far.

Subsequent to the site visit, the Chairman also presided over a meeting at the Project office. A detailed presentation was given about the key components of the Project.

He was briefed that construction activities are being carried out simultaneously in all five areas i.e.

intake, penstock and outlet, power house, tail race culvert and canal and switch yard. Implementation plan, comprising important benchmarks and their timelines, was also discussed in detail during the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, the Chairman said the pace of work needs to be expedited on the Project in order to start electricity generation in 2025-26. He directed the Contractor to deploy additional resources to meet the timelines stipulated in the implementation plan. Adhering to the specified standards is a must to ensure quality of work on the Project, the Chairman said.

Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project is a

component of green, clean and least-cost energy generation plan of WAPDA. World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank are providing financial assistance for construction of the Project to the tune of US\$ 390 million and US\$ 300 million respectively. Generation capacity of the Project stands at 1530 MW with three generating units of 510 MW each.

The Project will provide 1,347 billion units hydroelectricity to the National Grid annually. Once the 5th Extension is completed, installed capacity at Tarbela Dam will increase from 4888 MW to 6418 MW.

## Pakistan defense made impregnable on May 28, 1998: Kundi

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi here Tuesday said that May 28 (Youm-e-Takbeer) was in fact a day of survival, integrity and security and now no one could dare to cast an ugly eye on Pakistan.

In message on Youm e

Takbeer here, the Governor said that former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had made a commitment of making Pakistan an atomic power after Indian nuclear explosions and 26 years ago on this day Pakistan had achieved the status of first nuclear country of the Muslims world.

He paid homage to civil

and military leadership, scientists and engineers for making Pakistan an atomic power.

He said Pakistan had been protected from all external threats and safeguarded its autonomy, sovereignty and independence after successful nuclear tests at Chaghi Baluchistan 26 years ago.

The Governor said the

country's defense was in strong hands and the entire nation stands with our brave armed forces for further strengthening of the country's security.

The Governor said Pakistan was our identity and pride. He said that we need to work hard to further raise its stature of being an atomic country in the comity of nations.

## KMU celebrates Youm-e-Takbeer

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU) observed Youm-e-Takbeer on May 28th, commemorating Pakistan's historic nuclear tests conducted on the same date in 1998. Led by VC KMU Meritorious Professor Dr. Zia Ul Haq, Dean BMS Prof Dr. Rubina Nazli, Professor Dr. Inayat Shah, Director IBMS KMU, Mr. Nasir Salim Arb Director Sports & Youth Affairs, and Tahir Ayub Director Administration, the event drew enthusiastic participation from faculty, administrative staff, and students across the main campus and constituent Institutes.

VC KMU Meritorious Professor Dr. Zia Ul Haq, speaking on this momentous occasion, exuded a profound sense of unity and honor, resonating with our collective values and traditions.

Together, we commemorate this day, acknowledging its historical importance, and nurturing a spirit of reverence, resilience, and safeguarding within our nation.

The occasion provided a

platform for profound reflections on international relations, peace, and Pakistan's strategic significance in the global arena. Dr. Inayat Shah eloquently articulated the country's commitment to peace and pursuit of harmony amidst its natural beauty characterized by four distinct seasons.

A variety of engaging activities, including walks, debate speeches, and seminars, were meticulously organized across all campuses. These initiatives aimed to honor the historical significance of Youm-e-

Takbeer while fostering a deeper understanding of its implications for national security and resilience.

The celebrations resonated with spirited exchanges and impassioned discussions, underscoring KMU's unwavering commitment to instill national pride and civic responsibility among its student community.

Speakers at the seminars highlighted the strategic importance of nuclear capabilities, emphasizing the critical role of science and technology in safe-

guarding Pakistan's sovereignty.

As echoes of Youm-e-Takbeer reverberated throughout the university, KMU reaffirmed its dedication to nurturing future generations imbued with unity, patriotism, and resilience in the face of challenges. Through such initiatives, the university remains steadfast in ensuring that the legacy of this historic day continues to inspire and shape Pakistan's journey towards a brighter and more secure future.



PESHAWAR: Workers of PML-N participating in a rally in front of Peshawar Press Club to celebrate Youm-e-Takbeer.

## Dastak app of KP govt gets international recognition: Saif

### F.P. Repor

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has announced that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Delivery App (Dastak), designed in collaboration with the KP IT Board, has achieved remarkable success in international public service delivery. The international acceptance of the Public Service Delivery App marks a significant achievement, with Dastak App being included in the top ten apps in international competitions. This inclusion in the global arena is a matter of pride, with inter-

national organizations such as UNESCO, UNDP, UNCITRAL, and Estonia's e-Governance Academy awarding recognition to the app.

Dr. Saif stated in a released statement that the Dastak App from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa secured a place in the top 10 apps at the Global WSIS Digital Service Design Prize 2024, making it the only app from Pakistan to compete on a national scale. The Advisor mentioned that Pakistan competed against India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Peru, Bangladesh, and Germany in 50 contests. He expressed satisfaction in the international acclaim for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's public service deliv-

ery, hailing it as the second major success at the international level after the Pakistan Citizen's Portal.

Highlighting the immense potential in the IT sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Saif reiterated the commitment of the provincial government to incorporate all services into automation. He emphasized the abundant opportunities in the IT sector within Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stating that the government is taking practical steps to enhance these capabilities. Dr. Saif affirmed that the government is actively working towards enhancing these capabilities to improve service delivery and ensure efficient governance.

## Hajj pilgrims facing difficulties due to negligence of Ministry of Religious Affairs

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Ministry of Religious Affairs failed to ensure provision of proper food which had compelled pilgrims for forced hunger and caused food poisoning among them. The Hajj pilgrims expressed these thoughts while talking to The Frontier Post by telephone and claimed that food parcels are given to the pilgrims as a show, while after taking a couple of mouthfuls, the food is immediately taken back. A type of sub-standard colored halwa and stale bread is providing, the consumption of which has wors-

ened the health of many Hajj pilgrims and many Hajj pilgrims are facing severe difficulties in performing Hajj rituals. The administration promised to provide washing machines and other accessories to the Hajj pilgrims on their own floor to wash their clothes, whereas every Hajj pilgrim has to climb up to the roof to perform this process, which is very inconvenient for the elderly. It is a difficult process. The Hajj pilgrims said that due to lack of proper arrangements, every Hajj pilgrim is living this holy journey with anxiety and mental depression and the



taste and spirit of worship is affected, the responsibility of which is imposed on hundreds of administrations of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The

Hajj pilgrims argued competent authorities to act against culprits after identification and ensure exemplary punishment for them as lesson for future.

## Barki wants equitable distribution of agri schemes to all districts

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Agriculture Minister, Major (Retd) Sajjad Barki, has emphasized to the department officials the importance of conducting government affairs and responsibilities with

honesty and efficiency, ensuring transparency in government projects with timely completion and equitable distribution of schemes across all districts. He was addressing a ceremony held in honor of retired Director General An Farm Water Management

Nasib Rahman Khattak. The ceremony was attended by a large number of department officials. He stated that every possible step will be taken to utilize public funds for the welfare of the people and on public projects.

Highlighting the significance of water conservation,

Minister Barki stated that 60% of water is being wasted while 40% is utilized for irrigating lands. In efforts to curtail water wastage, 87,000 water courses have been constructed, with plans for additional courses underway to ensure efficient water conservation.

## Youm-e-Takbeer: A historic day of making Pakistan's defense impregnable

PESHAWAR (APP): After the failure of 1857 War, the Muslims who ruled subcontinent for nearly 800 years, were pushed to the wall by the colonial masters as they considered them rivals and started tilted towards hindus in a bid to prolonged their an illegitimate rule.

Breaking all records of inequality, favoritism and conspiracies, the nexus of british rulers and hindus had deprived Muslims of all rights and liberties, forcing the latter to start a new struggle to regain their past glory.

To foil the deeprooted conspercies and nexus of colonial masters and hindus, great educationist Sir Syed Ahmed Khan came forward for the support of Muslims and laid foundation of Muhammadan Education Conference (MEC) that greatly helped an awakening of Muslims to achieve independence at united India.

The mission of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was carried forward by great religious scholars Shah Wali Ullah, Mujaddad Alif Sani, Syed Ahmad Shaheed, great Muslim poet philosopher Dr Muhammad Iqbal and others Muslims leaders and was completed by Father of the Nation Quaid-e- Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on August 14, 1947.

Brig (Retd) Mehmood Shah, former Secretary Law and Order erstwhile Fata (now merged districts) told APP that after the creation of Pakistan, India had continued hatching conspir-

acies and waged four wars against it.

Depriving people of Kashmir of their in birth right of freedom or making an accession either with Pakistan or India as per the Indo-Pak partition Plan, he said that India had illegally landed its occupational troops in the Muslims majority Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) on October 26, 1947 and broke all records of human rights violations there.

He said the people of Jammu and Kashmir stood up against the illegal occupation of their motherland and succeeded to liberate Azad Kashmir from Indian yoke after giving matchless sacrifices. To take revenge of their crushing defeat in Kashmir and fulfill hegemonic designs, he said Indian occupational forces had launched predawn attack on Lahore and Sialkot sectors on September 6, 1965 without warning or declaration of war. "Pakistan military backed by PAF and Pak Navy and strong determination of the nation had repulsed the cowardly attacks and foiled the nefarious designs of the aggressor that was three times bigger than Pakistani security forces."

Major. Aziz. Bhatti Shaheed (NH) had successfully defended the strategic BRB canal near Lahore for five days where he was martyred after being hit by an enemy tank shell on September 10, 1965.

"Pakistani forces had

occupied over 16,00 kilometers Indian territory during 65 war and was in strong position to capture Delhi if the imposed was continued for few more days," said Brig (Retd) Mehmood Shah.

He said our forces had reached upto Sutlaj river bridge India and was nearer to Delhi as PAF and Pakistan Artillery had broken back of the enemy and moral of enemy was shattered. Brig Mehmood said that India continued conspiracies against Pakistan and attacked Pakistan's western and eastern sides in 1971 while Indians forces attacks on civilian population inside Azad Kashmir during Kargil war in 1999 and after it the India's aggressive designs was not hidden from anyone eye.

He said Pakistan was left with no option but to successfully detonated its nuclear devices at Chaghi district in Balochistan 26 years ago on May 28, 1998 in response to India's nuclear tests of 1998 to ensure its defense and restored the balance of nuclear power in the region by maintaining deterrence equilibrium.

Manzoorul Haq, former Ambassador of Pakistan said that 28th May was a historic day in the history of Pakistan when former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had rejected all international pressures and successfully made six nuclear tests that made Pakistan seventh nuclear power of the world and first of the

Muslims Ummah.

"In my view, Pakistan was compelled to test its nuclear weapons in response to a series of nuclear tests by India on May 11-13 of the same year in 1998," he said.

"The Indian leaders had bite the dust after Pakistan's successful tests," he said, adding Indian politicians, civil society and intelligentsia whom were of the view that now they had a monopoly over the nuclear technology and capability in the region, were proved wrong after Pakistan tests.

He said it was the fact that development of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities was an expression of its security concerns to counter India's conventional arms superiority.

Dr Ejaz Khan, former Chairman, International Relations Department University of Peshawar told APP that India's nuclear test in 1974 was significant factors due to which Pakistan felt threatened and believed that it was only with the help of developing the nuclear capability can it ensure its security and survival.

He said that nuclear program started by former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and later developed by the respective governments in Pakistan. He said the Nawaz Sharif Government knew that Pakistan's failure to respond would have made it vulnerable to its aggressive neighbour and had per-

sonally attended nuclear tests detonation at Chaghi Balochistan on May 28, 1998.

He said that an uncalled for nuclear tests and sanctions were imposed by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Pakistan. He praised former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for his bold decision regarding nuclear tests that mad Pakistan defense impregnable.

He said the explosion of nuclear weapons by Pakistan had created balance of nuclear power in the region.

To celebrate May 28 in memory of the historic nuclear tests, Pakistan celebrates this day as Youm-e-Takbeer (The day of Greatness) every year to pay rich tributes to all those whom made Pakistan an atomic power.

Like other provinces, Youm-e-Takbeer is also being celebrated with great national enthusiasm in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including merged tribal areas. From Chitral to DI Khan and Kohistan to Waziristan, the residents of all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, officials of the government departments, NGOs, civil society organizations, intelligentsia, labourers and students participated in big rallies, seminars, declamation contests and walks to celebrate Youm-e-Takbeer with immense zeal and enthusiasm.

The day dawned with special prayers in mosques

for progress and prosperity of Pakistan, independence of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and external peace of all the martyrs of Pakistan.

The Federal and KP Governments had declared May 28, 2024 as public holiday and national flag is hoisting on top of buildings in connection of the day.

Rich tributes were paid to the political leadership including former Prime Ministers Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, scientists and officials of all the relevant organizations for making Pakistan an atomic power by the speakers in the mass rallies and debate competition. Ikhtair Wali Khan, PMLN spokesman and former member provincial assembly while addressing a rally at Nowshera said that Pakistan defense was made invincible on May 28, 1998. He said it was a day to make a pledge to work tirelessly for progress and prosperity of Pakistan and stand shoulder to shoulder with our brave security forces to destroy nefarious designs of the inimical forces.

On May 28 message, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor Faisal Karim Kundi while congratulating the nation on Youm-e-Takbeer said that it is the day to renew our pledges to make the country's defense impregnable.

"May 28 Takbeer Day is actually the Day of survival, day of loyalty and

day of renewal pledge to make the country's defense impregnable."

He recalled that after the Indian nuclear tests, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, decided to make Pakistan a nuclear power not only in South Asia but also in the Islamic world.

The decision of Shaheed Bhutto gave Pakistan a prominent place in the comity of nations which can never be forgotten in history.

On this day, May 28, 1998, he said the then prime minister, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, materialized the dream of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and made Pakistan a nuclear power, and in response to India's nuclear explosions, the successful nuclear tests were carried out on the day in Balochistan.

"It was the day when Pakistan showed its strength to the whole world and attained the honor of being the only nuclear power in the Islamic world." He said there are certain moments in the life of nations when a decision changes their destiny and May 28 was the day for Pakistan.

He said that the whole world cannot deny the fact that India has been involved in the nefarious ambitions of weakening Pakistan internally and externally from the very beginning.

He said India's nuclear explosion was actually to send a threatening message to Pakistan, and recounted the historic words of former Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto that, "They will eat grass but they will make atomic bombs."

The determination of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's brave, bold and resourceful political leadership came to fruition on May 28, 1998, when Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, despite the international pressure, made Pakistan a nuclear power and gave a befitting reply to India and today no enemy can dare to look at our country with an evil eye.

"Today, I would like to say to the people of the country, especially the youth, that they should always stand with the state and the state defense institutions for the defense and stability of their country."

The Governor said the youth are our future and the future of the country is connected with a strong defense, thank God that today the defense of Pakistan is in strong hands. "Today we pay tribute to our security forces and express resolve to keep the state identity high in the world in cooperation with the government, and the state institutions for the strengthening of national defense, the supremacy of democracy and the development and prosperity of the country."





## In brief

### Youm-e-Takbeer: Rally arranged F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: A rally held to observe Youm-e-Takbeer jointly arranged by Anjuman Tajran and civil society in which large number of Anjuman Tajran, civil society and citizens from every walk of life participated. The rally started from Press Club Toba Tek Singh and ended at Shehbaz Chowk. The participants held the national flag and raised slogans of Pakistan Zindabad. The participants said that Youm-e-Takbeer reminds us of unity to make the defense of the country impregnable. Today, the entire nation decided for the integrity of Pakistan that there will be no compromise by accepting any external pressure on national defense. In response to nuclear explosions by India on May 28, 1998, Pakistan conducted five successful nuclear explosions in Chagai district of Balochistan province. Even today, Youm-e-Takbeer reminds us to unite under the green crescent flag.

### Residents seeking relief F.P. Report

SHAHDADKOT: Due to the increasing temperature in Qamber Shahdadt district since last week, the life of the residents of various towns and villages including Qamber, Shahdadt, Qabu Saeed Khan & other villages in the district has become difficult, despite the temperature is 51 degrees Celsius recorded last day. The high officials of WAPDA and the owners of the ice factory did not have mercy on the people, on one hand, the manual loading of electricity, and on the other hand, the ice mafia sold the ice black and made the residents suffer double punishment, while the management suffered heatstroke from the people. The calls made to establish did not have any effect, in this regard, the residents of different cities and villages, PPP(SB) leader Comrade Abdul Hafeez Pathan, Senior journalist Ghulam Abbas Mugheri and other residents of Soumra Mohalla of Wagan city, Khalid Hussain Chandio, a resident of Ghogharo village and others said that from heat stroke. Cold water stalls have been set up in various other cities of Sindh for protection, but unfortunately the town administration here has not taken any measures to prevent heatstroke. In order to prevent heat stroke at the main intersection of the city, a cold-water stall should be installed and legal action should be taken against the ice mafia here, and relief should be provided to the people by taking notice of the manual loading of electricity.

### Nation greeted F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Pakistan Muslim League (N) Member National Assembly and Senior vice President Punjab Sheikh Aftab Ahmed has said that Youm-e-Takbeer serves as a testament to our nation's resilience, unwavering determination, and commitment to maintaining regional peace and stability. He congratulated the nation on the 26th anniversary of Yaum-e-Takbeer. As per reported by our district representative faisal munir that Sheikh Aftab Ahmed pay tribute to the senior leadership of Pakistan Muslim League, especially former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, senior military leadership and scientists of Pakistan. Sheikh Aftab has said that on this historic day in 1998, he said PM Nawaz Sharif demonstrated bold leadership by rejecting nerve wracking pressures and inducements to make Pakistan a nuclear armed nation.

# Solarization project at hospital inaugurated

## F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Minister Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah on Tuesday inaugurated a 250 KW solarization project at the Women and Children Hospital in Charsadda, completed at a cost of Rs68 million with the support of UNICEF.

This project will ensure an uninterrupted power supply to the maternity and neonatal care wards, as well as the oxygen production plant. The inauguration ceremony was attended by several notable figures, including MPA PK-64 Iftikhar Ullah, Director General Health Dr. Muhammad Saleem, Additional Director

General Dr Shahid Younis, District Health Officer Charsadda, Chief of UNICEF Peshawar Mr. Radoslaw Rzehak, UNICEF KP Health Team Lead, Dr. Inamullah.

Speaking to the media after the ceremony, Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah highlighted the significance of this project, emphasizing that it is not only crucial for the healthcare sector but also a vital step towards acquiring green energy in the context of climate change. He stated that the solarization of hospitals will help address the energy crisis and meet the challenges posed by climate change.

Minister Shah also criticized the federal government's unstable power supply, stating that it is an injustice to the people and the system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He added that improving healthcare facilities in Charsadda will help reduce the burden on hospitals in Peshawar. Director General Health Services, UNICEF Field office and UNICEF Health Team Lead also spoke on the occasion adding that this initiative is a significant step towards providing sustainable green energy and quality healthcare services to the communities, children and their mothers.



CHARSADDA: Minister Health Syed Qasim Ali Shah on Tuesday inaugurating 250 KW solarization project at Women and Children Hospital.

## Police busts two robbers' gang F.P. Report

PABBI: Police arrested a gang of robbers and recovered stolen items worth lakhs of rupees. The gang was involved in several robberies, including the theft of a motorway toll collection unit.

The alleged culprits were identified as Nihal, Salman, Khurshid alias Phacho and Jalal son of Akbar, were arrested and confessed to their crimes. The police recovered cash, 12 mobile phones, weapons used in the robberies and Motorcycles used in the crimes on the pointed out by the culprits.

Police had started investigation from the culprits and assured the public that they will continue to work hard to protect them and their property.

## Car parking inaugurated in Mardan F.P. Report

M A R D A N : Commissioner Mardan Shaukat Ali Yousafzai inaugurated City Car Parking on a large tract of land at the junction of Mall Road and Bank Road.

Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayaz Khan Sherpao, Regional Municipal Officer and Additional Assistant Commissioner Junaid Khalid were also present on the occasion.

It should be remembered that this government land worth billions of rupees in the center of the city was lying vacant for a long time in the form of a big pit and was being watched by the land mafia and occupation groups. With the personal attention of Commissioner Mardan Shaukat Ali Yousafzai, its filling was completed and it was made safe and efficient.

Commissioner said that the establishment of car parking will eliminate the traffic problems caused by the parking of vehicles on Bank Road and citizens will be able to park their vehicles in the parking lot and shop with satisfaction. He instructed the concerned authorities that city car parking has now been added along with company garden parking on Bank Road.

Now the administration and the traffic police should discourage parking of vehicles on the road so that the rush on the bank road will end and traffic problems will not arise. He appreciated the efforts of district administration, WSCC and TMA in establishing city car parking. Commissioner Mardan Shaukat Ali Yousafzai also planted a plant in the parking area.

# Youm-e-Takbeer: celebrating N-sustainability

## Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad

**Y O U M - E - T A K - B E E R , celebrated on May 28, marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's history as the day the country became the first nuclear Muslim state and the seventh nuclear power globally.**

This achievement is a testament to the nation's scientific prowess and technological advancements. Nuclear power is a game-changer for any nation, offering a wide range of benefits beyond just defense. It can generate electricity, power industries, and support daily life, making it an essential component of a country's sustainable development.

Unfortunately, Pakistan has not fully utilized its nuclear power potential, particularly in the energy sector. Despite having the capability to generate significant electricity through nuclear power, the country still faces a substantial

shortfall in meeting its energy demands. This is a missed opportunity, as nuclear power can play a vital role in bridging this gap and driving economic growth.

The nuclear tests conducted on May 28, 1998, under the codename Chagai-I and Chagai-II, were a culmination of the country's nuclear program initiated in 1998. The program was led by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and the Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), with the support of the Corps of Engineers. Abdul Qadeer Khan, a renowned Pakistani nuclear physicist and metallurgical engineer, is credited as the "father of Pakistan's atomic weapons program."

Nuclear energy has the potential to revolutionize Pakistan's industries and economy. By harnessing its atomic strength, the country can generate electricity, drive industrial

growth, and create prosperity for its citizens. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) offers a unique opportunity to establish heavy industries in Pakistan, realizing the dreams of the nation's founding fathers, including Quaid-e-Azam, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, and Mian Nawaz Sharif.

Declaring May 28 as a public holiday and celebrating it as Youm-e-Takbeer is a fitting tribute to the nation's scientific achievements and a reminder of its potential for sustainable development. By recognizing this day as a symbol of national pride and progress, Pakistan can recommit itself to harnessing its nuclear power for the betterment of its people and the country's future.

*The writer is a PhD from the university of Essex, UK and serving the university of Malakand as Associate Professor of Mathematics.*

# Woman gang-raped by brother-in-law, friend

## F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: A woman was drugged before being gang-raped by her brother-in-law and his friend in Hafizabad, police said on Tuesday.

According to the FIR registered on the complaint of the victim's father, his daughter used to live at her home alone. "Taking advantage of that, her husband's brother his accomplice gang-raped her. They also hurled threats at my daughter," read the FIR. However, after learning about the FIR, the suspects fled.

Police said they were looking for them and they would soon be behind bars. Overseas Pakistani killed in Hafizabad for property A man, who had come from Spain to Hafizabad, lost his life when four persons subjected him and his brother to torture over 'a piece of land'. Police said they had launched a manhunt after registering a case against the assailants. As per the

FIR registered on the complaint of the deceased's brother Shamraiz, four men armed with sticks tortured Amjad and his brother due to which the former died, while his brother suffered injuries.

The FIR further said that Mansab, Amjad's elder brother, had bought an acre of land from Malik Mudassar which enraged Mansab's rivals, who, following an exchange of fire with Amjad and his brother, clubbed them to death. The deceased was due to return to Spain on the same day he was killed.

**Blood screening camp kicks off at Hafizabad jail:** Health Department Punjab launched five-day screening camp in district jail Hafizabad to diagnose hepatitis A, B, C, Aids, blood pressure, sugar and T.B among more than 800 prisoners, on Monday.

Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad, Senior Civil Judge Hafizabad Khalid Saleem and Jail Superintendent Furrakh

Rasheed inaugurated the camp. CEO Health Dr. Umer Sharif Rathore, DDHO Dr. Zaheer Ahmad, Incharge Aids Control Programme Rai Shehroz Ahmad also present on this occasion.

Addressing the ceremony, DC Sundas Irshad said that conducting of tests and providing free of cost medicines to prisoners in the jails of the province was a revolutionary and people friendly steps of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

She said that screening and medical tests of prisoners were being conducted so that timely treatment could be given to prisoners in case of anyone found suffering from disease. Later, DC along with Senior Civil Judge visited barracks of prisoners, jail hospital and other parts of the jail. Jail Superintendent Furrakh Rasheed gave briefing to visiting officers regarding provision of different facilities to prisoners in the jail.

# KKKU commemorates Youm-e-Takbeer

## F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) Karak stands united in reaffirmation of the nation's commitment to its defense on Youm-e-Takbeer, a day having immense significance in Pakistan's history. Today, we honor the valor of our nation's leaders who

demonstrated unwavering resolve on 28th May 1998, by making Pakistan a nuclear state.

In his message marking this historic day, Vice Chancellor KKKU Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naseer u Din emphasized the importance of national defense and security. He said, "Pakistan's defense became invincible on 28th May

1998, a testament to our resilience and determination. No force can cast an evil eye on our motherland."

Acknowledging the collective efforts of all institutions responsible for safeguarding the nation, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naseer u Din expressed appreciation for their unwavering commitment and sacrifices.



MINGORA: People and district administration officials holding a rally in connection with Youn-e-Takbeer.

# Violent content on social media: Threat, fight and solution

## Zia Ullah

**S O C I A L media has become a part and parcel in our daily life. It supports the people all across the globe communicating, socializing, sharing knowledge and creative interests, learning different experiences and so on. Most importantly, it connects to with a large number of people from all community and age group.**

Social media have some pros and cons, but in Pakistan and

especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, most of the people are misusing. Social media platforms can be misused to promote extremism, hate speech, and harmful content. Some people are promoting gun culture, extremism, and even threatening their enemies who have enmity. Viewers of the violent content are affected and they adopt the violent behavior, in near future they wish to do so. This learning behavior can leads to an extremist society. People from the world are using social media

platforms in a good way, which help them to be independent financially by earning from these platforms.

Law enforcement agencies and governments have a crucial role in addressing this issue. These agencies should identify and report harmful content to social media platforms, which can then take appropriate action. It is the need of the hour to enforce existing laws and regulations to prosecute individuals promoting extremism and hate speech. To challenge the extrem-

ist ideologies and contents on social is to Promote counter-narratives and alternative viewpoints.

The role of public awareness is also important in counter narrative to educate the public about the dangers of online extremism and the importance of responsible social media use. Beside this it is necessary to work with platforms to remove harmful content, suspend accounts, and share intelligence. The office bearers should ensure the implementation of regula-

tions or laws specifically addressing online extremism and hate speech.

A dedicated unit of Cyber crime wing should monitor and investigate online crimes, including hate speech and violent content. In addition, software and human analysts can detect and report the harmful content. By taking a comprehensive approach, law enforcement agencies and governments can help prevent social media from being used to promote extremism and create a safer online

environment.

In combating violent content on social media, police can play a crucial role but, they need training and capacity building programs to enhance their skills in combating online violent content. Beside, police can engage with local communities to build trust and encourage reporting of violent content. By taking a multi-faceted approach, the Pakistani police can effectively combat violent content on social media and contribute to a safer online environment.





# Force Russia to make peace, Zelensky urges West

KYIV (BBC): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has urged Western leaders to pressure Russia into peace using "all means" necessary. Speaking in Spain, Mr Zelensky said there needed to be "tangible coercion of Russia" , which was seeking to "destroy Ukraine and move on".

Mr Zelensky has long said he will not negotiate with Russia directly until Moscow's forces leave all Ukrainian territory, including Crimea. His call, however, comes as Russia makes gains against Ukraine, with Kyiv suffering from a shortage of Western-supplied weapons. Russia, President Zelensky said, was dropping some 3,200 guided aerial bombs on Ukraine each month.

"How do you fight that?" he asked reporters in Madrid where he met Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez. The Ukrainian leader rejected the idea of inviting Russia to a planned peace summit in Switzerland next month. The summit is expected to include representatives of more than 90 countries.

Delegates will try to chart a course for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine based on 10 demands set forth by Kyiv calling for the return of all invaded territory, reparation payments for war-related damages and the creation of a special tribunal to prosecute Russian war crimes, a plan that Moscow has flatly rejected. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov says Russian President Vladimir Putin is ready for talks but only "to achieve the objectives now being achieved via the special military operation", as Russia describes the Ukraine war.

In Madrid, Mr Zelensky urged Western leaders to lift bans on donated weapons being used to strike internationally recognised Russian territory. Most Western countries, including the US, have insisted Kyiv focuses its attacks on Russian forces occupying Ukrainian territory.

"We need to work together and put pressure not only on Russia, but also on our partners to give us the opportunity to defend ourselves against Russia," the Ukrainian leader said. One of the conditions for receiving billions of pounds worth of aid from Western allies, is for

Kyiv to outline its own vision for how this war should end.

It's why President Zelensky previously published a "10-point peace plan" which includes the complete withdrawal of Russian forces and guarantees against future Russian aggression. It is what Kyiv has always called for, but the tone has changed. The summit in Switzerland is generating urgency for President Zelensky. He wants to galvanise international momentum behind his terms.

Until now it has mostly been Ukraine calling for a complete Russian retreat, and the West has tried to support it in that endeavour. The summit could be his only chance to make it a non-negotiable for his allies, too, and keep the negotiating table at bay. The more nations turn up, the more political pressure could be felt by the Kremlin.

Or at least that is the hope. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said any kind of peace deal would have to "reflect the reality on the battlefield". That reality involves his troops continuing to wage a major cross-border offensive into Ukraine's north-eastern Kharkiv region. More villages are being captured as a result. As has been the case for the past 18 months, his soldiers are not just capturing territory, they are keeping hold of it. Russia, or Vladimir Putin, isn't having to compromise on anything, yet.

But what Kyiv argues is that any compromise or grey area plays into Moscow's hands. It points to previous failed cease-fires during Russia's decade of aggression, as well as the argument that Mr Putin will want to take the whole of Ukraine eventually, as the world's gaze turns elsewhere. Ukrainian commanders are claiming to be in control of the situation, and President Zelensky resuming international travel possibly reflects that. What will have also fuelled his trip to Madrid, is his constant need to combat war fatigue and secure continued military and humanitarian aid. An announced \$1bn (£783m) package from Spain shows Mr Zelensky's diplomacy can still bear fruit. President Putin launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

# Nations commit around \$8.1 billion for Syrians

BEIRUT (AP): International donors meeting in Brussels said they will commit 7.5 billion euros (\$8.1 billion) in both grants and loans to support Syrians battered by war, poverty, and hunger for the rest of this year and beyond.

The pledges surpassed the modest \$4.07 billion that the United Nations had appealed for, but was also a significant drop from amounts pledged last year and previously — an indication of persisting donor fatigue as the world's attention is focused on conflicts elsewhere, including the wars in Ukraine and Sudan, and most recently Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza. At last year's conference, donors pledged \$10.3 billion, just months after a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Turkey and much of northern Syria, killing over 59,000 people, including 6,000 in Syria.

This year's amount is meant both for Syrians inside the war-torn country and for some 5.7 million Syrian refugees in neighboring Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, which struggle with economic crises of their own and have been frustrated by the ever-shrinking aid. This year's pledged total includes 5 billion euros in grants — about 3.8 billion euros for 2024 and 1.2 billion euros

for the next year and beyond — and 2.5 billion euros in loans.

UN agencies and international aid organizations in recent years have struggled with shrinking budgets, and humanitarian officials have decried the budget cuts that have forced the downsizing of aid programs despite skyrocketing poverty. Syria's civil war, which erupted in 2011, has killed nearly half a million people and displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million. For several years now, the conflict has remained largely frozen, along with efforts to find a viable political solution to end it. Meanwhile, millions of Syrians have been pulled into poverty, and struggle with accessing food and health care as the economy deteriorates.

The conference brought back the urgency of trying to revitalize a gridlocked UN-led roadmap to end the conflict even as the mood in host countries turns increasingly hostile towards Syrian refugees. Officials in tiny Lebanon, which hosts almost 780,000 registered Syrian refugees and hundreds of thousands of others who are undocumented, have been demanding that refugees return to alleged "safe zones" in Syria, even before a political solution is in place to end the war.

Aid organizations and

most Western countries believe such places don't exist and that conditions in Syria are not yet conducive to safe returns. In Brussels, eight EU member states who have called for the reassessment of conditions in Syria to allow refugee returns, reiterated those calls at the conference. Cyprus, which says it has been struggling to cope with surging Syrian migration, was among them, and Hungary echoed similar sentiments.

Aid groups have insisted that more sustainable solutions, notably through boosting early recovery efforts to fix infrastructure and help create jobs in Syria is a crucial condition for people to go back. "The more that people that will be lacking essential services, safety, and basic commodities, the more difficult it will be to pave the way towards stability, reconciliation and returns," Stephan Sakalian, the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Syria, told The Associated Press.

"If we want to be able to ensure sustainable refugee returns, we have give to the people the possibility to come back voluntarily, safely, and in a sustainable environment," he added. "Otherwise we risk seeing the reverse trend of people wanting to continue leaving Syria."

# Deforestation in Brazil's Cerrado higher than in Amazon

CERRADO (AFP): Deforestation in Brazil's Cerrado region, a vast tropical savanna renowned for its rich biodiversity, increased sharply in 2023 and overtook that of the Amazon, according to a report published Tuesday.

In the Cerrado, which extends through central Brazil and into neighboring Paraguay and Bolivia, more than 1.11 million hectares (2.74 million acres) were destroyed in 2023, an increase of 68 percent compared to the previous year, said the report by research group MapBiomas. These losses represent almost two thirds of the deforestation suffered by all of Brazil and about 2.4 times the destruction recorded in the Amazon, the report said.

Last year 454,300 hectares were deforested in the Amazon, 62.2 percent less than in 2022. This is the first time that deforestation in the Cerrado has been

higher than that in the Amazon since MapBiomas began compiling data in 2019 from various satellite mapping systems.

Less famous than the Amazon rainforest to the north, the Cerrado is one of Earth's three great savannas, along with Africa's and Australia's, and covers a region the size of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain combined. "The face of deforestation is changing in Brazil, concentrating in biomes dominated by savannas and grasslands, and decreasing in jungle areas," said MapBiomas coordinator Tasso Azevedo. But in all cases, "almost all deforestation in the country (97 percent) is driven by agricultural expansion," stressed MapBiomas, a collective of NGOs and Brazilian universities.

More than 93 percent of the destruction "presented at least one indication of illegality" or irregularity,

according to data from the Amazon Environmental Research Institute. More generally, deforestation in Brazil decreased in 2023 for the first time in four years, a drop of 11.6 percent compared to the previous year. The report is bitter-sweet news for left-wing President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who presents himself as a champion of the fight against climate change and has pledged to eradicate illegal deforestation in Brazil by 2030, which had dramatically worsened under his far-right predecessor Jair Bolsonaro.

The loss of native vegetation in the immense South American country has increasingly evident consequences, such as the historic floods which hit the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul earlier this month, killing at least 170 people and forcing around 600,000 people to leave their homes.

## Egyptian soldier killed in Israel border incident

CAIRO (BBC): An Egyptian soldier has been killed in an incident involving Egyptian and Israeli troops in the border area near Rafah. The Egyptian and Israeli militaries are investigating what happened. Israeli media say there was an exchange of fire, but there are few other details and no reports of Israeli casualties.

Tensions between Egypt and Israel have heightened since Israeli forces took control of the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing point three weeks ago as part of their offensive against Hamas. Egypt is a strong supporter of the Palestinians and has condemned Israel's military campaign in Gaza and the killing of thousands of civilians by Israel in the war. Egypt was the first Arab country to sign a peace deal with Israel 45 years ago and, although it has held, relations between the two sides have often been frosty. Deadly incidents between Egyptian and Israeli troops are rare, however.

Hours before the shooting, Egypt's foreign ministry condemned an Israeli strike on Rafah which killed at least 45 people, according to Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry. It accused Israel of the "targeting of defenceless civilians". The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said the attack had killed two senior Hamas officials and that it was reviewing reports that civilians were harmed as a result of the strike and fire it ignited.

Like Israel, Egypt has maintained a blockade on its border with Gaza since Hamas came to power in 2006. Hamas is an offshoot of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood organisation, which is banned as a terrorist group in Egypt. Egypt has, however, kept channels open with Hamas and has been acting as a mediator in on-off indirect talks between Israel and the group to try to reach a ceasefire deal and release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas in Gaza.

## Thai courts hand jail terms to MP

BANGKOK (Reuters): Courts in Thailand handed jail terms to an activist musician who set fire to a portrait of the king and to an opposition lawmaker for insulting the monarchy, their lawyers said.

Another monarchy-reform activist - who had gone on a partial hunger strike after being accused of harassing a royal motorcade and charged with sedition - was granted bail from pre-trial detention at a separate hearing, a legal aid group said. The musician and the lawmaker had fallen foul of Thailand's lese-majeste law - one of the toughest of its kind in the world - which shields the powerful monarchy from criticism and carries a penalty of up to 15 years in jail for each offence.

Chonthicha Jangrew, 31, a parliamentarian with the Move Forward Party, received a two-year term for a speech made in 2021 at an anti-government protest. She had denied the charge and was given bail pending an appeal, her lawyer Marisa Pidsaya told Reuters. Another court sentenced musician Chaiamorn Kaewwiboonpan, 35, to four years in prison for burning a portrait of King Maha Vajiralongkorn.

Chaiamorn, who was found guilty of arson, lese-majeste and computer crimes, had also denied the charge and said he set the portrait alight to vent frustration over the detention of fellow activists on royal insult charges. The legal aid group Thai Lawyers for Human Rights said Chaiamorn was also granted bail and intended to appeal.

The courts have yet to issue statements on the sentences. The palace typically does not comment on the law. More than 272 people have been charged under the lese-majeste law since 2020, and 17 are being held in pre-trial detention, according to legal aid group Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, which compiles data and has defended many of those prosecuted.

# SA's president faces his party's worst election ever

CAPE TOWN (AP): South African President Cyril Ramaphosa faces the prospect of his ruling party's worst election result ever. Yet he's still likely to be reelected as leader of Africa's most advanced country after Wednesday's national vote.

While several polls have support for his African National Congress at below 50% ahead of the election, putting it in danger of losing its majority for the first time in South Africa's 30 years of democracy, the ANC is still widely expected to win the most Parliament seats. The growing opposition to the ANC is split among several parties. That will likely mean Ramaphosa stays for a second and final five-year term, though it might not be straightforward. Parliament decides who the president is and the ANC may not have a majority of lawmakers. Also, a sharp drop in votes for the ANC would put Ramaphosa under pressure within party ranks. The ANC has a history of withdrawing support for its party leader in times of trouble, resulting in them stepping down as president.

Ramaphosa was seen as a protégé of Nelson Mandela, who led the ANC to victory in the momentous 1994 election that ended the apartheid system of white minority rule and established South Africa as a democracy. Ramaphosa lost the internal ANC battle to succeed Mandela as president when the aging anti-apartheid icon stepped down after one term in 1999 — even though Mandela was thought to favor Ramaphosa. Instead, Ramaphosa left politics to become one of South Africa's richest businessmen.

Ramaphosa returned to politics by being elected deputy president of the ANC in 2012. He was appointed deputy president of the country in 2014 under former President Jacob Zuma. Using the same internal party machinery that saw him overlooked before, he won the leadership of the ANC in 2017. Zuma stepped down as president of South Africa two months later under a cloud of cor-



ruption allegations and Ramaphosa took over. He was elected for his first proper term in 2019. He promised to end the corruption that had plagued the ANC during the Zuma administration and boost a struggling economy and failing government services, although that has not been easy. South Africa still has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, and nationwide electricity blackouts in 2022 and 2023 due to mismanagement at the state-owned utility badly damaged Ramaphosa's reputation.

Lawmakers in Parliament decide on South Africa's president, and this election could bring something new to that process. South Africans vote in national elections for parties and those parties send lawmakers to the 400-member Parliament according to their share of the vote. The lawmakers then elect the president.

Every South African president since 1994 has been from the ANC because of its parliamentary majority, but if it drops below 50% in this election, it would need another party or parties to vote with it to get the

required numbers in Parliament to reelect Ramaphosa. There are three possible scenarios for Ramaphosa: If the ANC keeps its majority against expectations, he will likely be reelected without trouble by his party's lawmakers. The ANC won 57.5% of the vote in the last national election in 2019, leading to Ramaphosa's first term.

If the ANC drops just below 50%, it may seek a coalition with several smaller parties to get the needed votes in Parliament for Ramaphosa to continue as president. If the ANC's share is well below 50% and closer to 40%, it's more complicated. The ANC may have to approach one of the bigger opposition parties for a coalition and that would involve much more wrangling. A significant drop in support would also affect Ramaphosa's authority within the ANC. It's notable that no South African president since 1994 has served their full two terms in office. Mandela stepped down to hand over the reins, and Thabo Mbeki and Zuma both resigned before their final term ended due to a loss of support within the ANC.

# Poland rolls out plans for fortifications along its border

WARSAW (AP): Defense officials in NATO member Poland presented a plan to strengthen anti-drone surveillance and on-ground military defense through a system of fortifications and barriers along about 700 kilometers (430 miles) of its eastern border with Russia and Russian ally Belarus.

The shield will include "all kinds of fortifications, barriers, monitoring of the air space on every level and upgrading the existing systems," and will be integrated with the defense system across the country, Kosiniak-Kamysz said. He stressed it was the biggest program to strengthen NATO's eastern flank since 1945, when World War II ended.

Chief of Staff Gen. Wieslaw Kukula said it will include a network of state-of-the-art anti-drone monitoring and defense towers, anti-tank barriers and ditches, bunkers and shelters, as well as space for potential mine fields. He stressed their primary role is to deter any potential aggressor. The officials said the system will be part of a regional defense infrastructure built jointly with the Baltic states — Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia — that are also on NATO's eastern flank. The funding will come from the government, as Poland

Poland, hamper the mobility of our adversary's troops while making such mobility easier for our own troops and to protect civilians," Defense Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz said at a news conference, adding that local communities understand the need for such steps.

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spends over 4% of its GDP on defense, but help will also be sought from the EU because the system will also strengthen the eastern border of the 27-member bloc, they said.

Some observers noted that the much-publicized presentation came two weeks ahead of elections to the European Parliament, where Poland, a nation of some 38 million, holds 52 seats, and could be partly seen as a campaign element for the government that took office in December. The opposition also supports strengthening Poland's defense.

Poland's previous right-wing government built a \$400 million wall on the border with Belarus to halt a massive inflow of migrants that began to be pushed from that direction in 2021. The current pro-EU government says that needs to be strengthened, but will be a separate project from Shield-East. The three Baltic states were once part of the Soviet Union, while Poland was a satellite state before the 1990s. Moscow still regards the area as within its sphere of interest. To its east, Poland borders Russia's exclave of Kaliningrad, as well as NATO ally Lithuania, Moscow's ally Belarus, and Ukraine.

# Operations to destroy illegal roads in Colombia's Amazon hit standstill

BOGOTA (Reuters): Government measures to destroy illegal roads in and around Colombia's Amazon rainforest are stalled, eight sources told Reuters, with one operation suspended altogether over concerns it could set back peace talks between rebels and President Gustavo Petro's administration.

The construction of roads through rainforests in Colombia by rural communities, cattle ranchers and illegal armed groups is a major contributor to deforestation, environmental experts and scientists say. That is especially critical in the Amazon, which absorbs huge amounts of carbon that contributes to climate change and is already a focus of concern. There are at least 12 illegal roads in and around Chiribiquete national park - a UNESCO world heritage site in Colombia's Amazon. But there are no known operations underway to destroy them, environmental procurator Gustavo Guerrero told Reuters, despite Petro's promises to protect the environment.

Reuters spoke to the sources on condition of anonymity, who detailed how one government operation to demolish a road cutting into Chiribiquete was halted and several other planned operations not begun. The stalled and suspended plans have not been previously reported. Petro has made the environment a focus of his speeches both at home and abroad, and his government celebrated a 29% reduction in deforestation during 2022.

The delays could prompt disciplinary action against officials for failing to protect the environment, the procurator's office, an independent public watchdog, said. Neither Petro, his office nor any national official has

impeded the destruction of the Yari Yaguara road, the office said in a statement, referring to one of the roads flagged by the sources.

The Yari Yaguara road has not been discussed at peace talks with the Estado Mayor Central (EMC) rebels, the statement said, adding the process to destroy it was advancing in line with legal requirements. In comments to Reuters, Environment Minister Susana Muhamad emphasized that operations to destroy roads are part of a comprehensive strategy that includes peace efforts, human rights and the fight against deforestation.

"The operations and their planning continue in the fight against deforestation and environmental crimes," Muhamad said in a text message. The defense ministry said in a statement late that all of its operational, intelligence and investigative capacities were available for the destruction of the Yari Yaguara road, but that the operation had to take place with inter-institutional coordination.

Security forces will follow any accords reached between the government and the EMC, the ministry said, adding it could not provide a possible date for destruction of the road. Six people familiar with the matter said the operation to destroy a road bisecting Chiribiquete was ready last December. The operation did not proceed after the military expressed concerns over potential clashes with locals and broader government concerns about setting back already fraught peace talks with the EMC, who operate in the area, sources said.

The EMC rebels have consolidated control in parts of the country, leading to what some call a pseudo-state

where Colombia's government has little influence. A ceasefire has already been canceled in some provinces. Two sources said an operation to destroy the road was also planned for January, while another said plans were once in place to deal with all illegal roads.

"It's like a sickness that keeps spreading," said one of the sources, referring to the lack of action on illegal roads and the environmental damage they cause by increasing access to once unreachable forest. The procurator's office last year demanded that the environment ministry destroy another illegal road close to Chiribiquete, without results.

"We're not aware of any operation to close or disable any illegal roads in the Amazon," Guerrero said in an interview. "There is an evident failure in the execution of preventive and precautionary measures for those roads." The police plan to destroy the road highlighted by the procurator's office but have not taken action, one of the sources said.

Guerrero said his office has begun a disciplinary investigation into the government's general lack of progress. The procurator's office has the power to sanction officials up to government ministers and remove them from their posts. The government expects to report another drop in deforestation for 2023, but minister Muhamad in April warned destruction was increasing in 2024 amid a prolonged drought. Even if Petro's government has good reason for calling off operations, the lack of action on illegal roads contradicts his promises to address deforestation, one of the sources said. "In the end, they aren't taking action. Something must be done."



The Frontier Post

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Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.  
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# Honoring the Valor

In the face of relentless adversity, the Pakistan military has shown an unyielding commitment to combating terrorism, often at great personal cost. The recent operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are a stark reminder of the grave challenges faced by security forces and the immense sacrifices they continue to make to secure the nation's peace and stability.

Over the past few days, twenty-three terrorists were neutralized in three separate operations across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. These operations were not without significant sacrifice. On Sunday, during an intelligence-based operation in Hassan Khel, Peshawar District, six terrorists were eliminated, and several hide-outs were dismantled. However, the operation saw the ultimate sacrifice of Captain Hussain Jehangir and Havildar Shafiq Ullah, who embraced martyrdom on May 26 while bravely fighting the terrorists.

The following day, in Tank District, another successful operation led to the deaths of ten terrorists. The third engagement in the general area of Bagh, Khyber District, resulted in seven terrorists being killed and two injured. Yet, the cost of these victories was high. Five brave soldiers, Naik Muhammad Ashfaq Butt, Lance Naik Syed Danish Afkar, Sepoy Taimoor Malik, Sepoy Nadir Sageer, and Sepoy Muhammad Yasin, embraced martyrdom during intense exchanges of fire with the terrorists.

These operations not only highlight the persistent threat posed by terrorists but also underscore the resilience and bravery of Pakistan's security forces. The recovery of a large quantity of weapons, ammunition, and explosives from the terrorists indicates the scale of the threat that was averted through these operations. The security forces' determination to eradicate terrorism is evident, and the sacrifices of these brave soldiers only strengthen this resolve.

The nation recently witnessed the Namaz-e-Janaza of the fallen soldiers in Peshawar Garrison, attended by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir and numerous military and civil officials. The COAS's visit to CMH Peshawar to check on the injured troops and his appreciation of their high morale reaffirmed the nation's commitment to fighting terrorism with vigor and spirit. These brave men will be laid to rest with full military honors in their respective native towns, a testament to their valor and dedication.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi also expressed his condolences, highlighting the nation's gratitude for the sacrifices made by the security forces. His heartfelt sympathy towards the families of the martyrs and his salute to their bravery echo the sentiments of a grateful nation that recognizes the cost of its security.

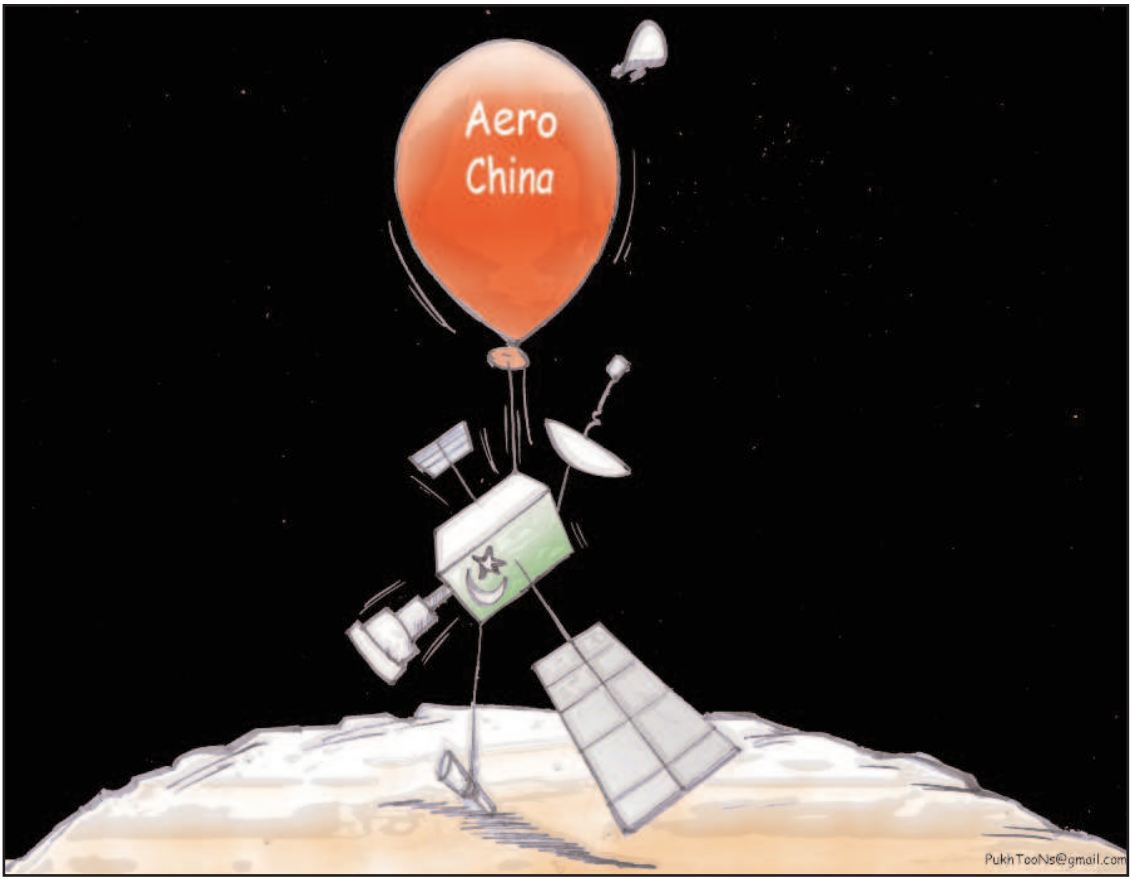
In these times of political uncertainty, terrorists often seek to exploit vulnerabilities, aiming to destabilize the nation further. The steadfastness and professionalism of the Pakistan military have been pivotal in thwarting these threats. Despite the challenges, the military remains focused on its mission to protect the nation, proving time and again that the resolve to fight terrorism is unwavering.

The sacrifices of soldiers like Captain Hussain Jehangir, Havildar Shafiq Ullah, and the others are not just military losses; they are national sacrifices. They serve as a stark reminder of the price of peace and security. Their bravery and sacrifice are a call to the nation to remain united and resolute against the menace of terrorism.

As Pakistan navigates through its political landscape, it is imperative to recognize and honor the sacrifices of those who stand on the frontlines. The military's continued success in counter-terrorism operations is a beacon of hope and a testament to their unyielding commitment to safeguarding the nation. In remembering and honoring their sacrifices, Pakistan reaffirms its resolve to fight against terrorism and work towards a future of peace and stability.

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## International indictment of Israel is also a rebuke for the US

**H**ORRIFYING images of decapitated babies, charred bodies, and burnt tents in an Israeli-designated "safe area" where thousands of distressed Palestinians in Gaza were forced to flee a few weeks ago have drawn condemnation from all parts of the globe. The raid by Israeli fighter jets on a Rafah refugee camp on Sunday killed more than 30, all civilians, and injured many others. This was one more war crime committed by Israel since it unleashed its military on the enclave to kill as many of the population as possible — extermination, in the words of the International Criminal Court prosecutor — and level the 365 sq. km strip, home to more than 2 million people.

The list of crimes and atrocities committed by Israel in the past eight months is long and shocking. But while Israel is now being condemned by most European countries, days after the International Court of Justice ordered it to halt its Rafah offensive and avoid harming civilians, and following the ICC's intent to issue arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Defense Minister, Yoav Gallant, on charges of war crimes and others, one government in particular has chosen to either ignore the carnage, or disguise its position on the genocidal war through empty rhetoric, denial, and obfuscation. That is the Biden administration, which has the power to stop the slaughter.

The ICJ and the ICC have come under shameful attack and intimidation by neocons and pro-Israel US lawmakers. Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Mike Johnson, said he wants to pass legislation to sanction ICC officials. He had slammed the court's request for arrest war-

rants, writing in a statement that its "baseless and illegitimate decision should face global condemnation." He added: "International bureaucrats cannot be allowed to use 'lawfare' to usurp the authority of democratic nations that maintain the rule of law."

President Joe Biden described the ICC's move as "outrageous." At the same time, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing that he would like to work with Congress to take action against the ICC following its move on arrest warrants.

In a show of disdain for the ICC, Johnson confirmed he was moving ahead with an invitation to Netanyahu to address Congress. US lawmakers have warned that if the UN recognizes Palestine as a state, Washington will defund the international body.

The hysteria regarding the highest world court, the ICJ, as well as the ICC, even considering a genocide case and other serious charges against Israel and its leaders has been evident for months. Last week, hawkish Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, a fervent supporter of Israel, condemned the ICC and said it can "go to hell" for moving against Netanyahu. Another pro-Israel senator, Republican Tom Cotton, was one of several lawmakers who signed a letter warning ICC prosecutor Karim Khan days before he made his historic decision. The letter said that if you target Israel, we will target you.

Only Israeli politicians, including the opposition, have taken similar hostile positions against the symbols of international law, especially the UN, ICJ, and ICC.

When the truth about Israel's war on Gaza began reaching the rest of the world, most Western governments started reversing their initial position of supporting Israel's

right to defend itself at any cost. France, Belgium, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, and others now condemn the atrocities and demand an immediate ceasefire. The UK Conservative government has refused to stop arms sales to Israel and grudgingly demanded a ceasefire despite a significant shift in public opinion against Israel. Canada, too, has suspended arms sales to Israel, while Germany now says that it will arrest Netanyahu if a warrant is issued.

US lawmakers have also attacked Spain, Ireland, and Norway for announcing their intention to recognize the state of Palestine. There is a marked departure in policy position between the US and its Western allies over Israel's war on Gaza, the need for accountability, and delivering delayed justice for the Palestinians.

If and when the ICC issues arrest warrants against Netanyahu and Gallant, the rift across the North Atlantic will become deeper and almost impossible to bridge, especially if Donald Trump wins a second term in November. What is at stake now is the survival of a rules-based international order that Israel is violating and attacking. The Biden administration cannot afford to sit on the fence while Netanyahu and his extremist partners continue with their genocidal war in Gaza and the West Bank. Biden's red line on Rafah has been crossed many times over the past three weeks in defiance of the US president.

In reality, the indictments issued by the ICJ and the ICC are also indirect rebukes for the US, which has enabled and justified this criminal onslaught and the slaughter in Gaza. By challenging the international order, the one that the US prides itself on sponsoring for the past three decades, Washington and the hys-

terical war-mongering lawmakers are pushing a radical, domineering, and eventually isolationist agenda that is a harbinger of a new global order, or chaos.

By tying itself to the criminal, genocidal, apartheid regime that is Israel today, the US risks losing its standing on the world stage. Gaza has exposed many faults in the current order, one that is blind to the most horrific tragedies of our time. Israel has already blemished itself in a way that cannot be erased. It has to look itself in the mirror and decide how far it can survive, having taken a route pushed by extremists and bigots.

However, for the US, the challenge is much more significant. It now faces an unprecedented internal struggle as the chasm between the political elite and its citizens widens. The war on Gaza has fractured America's image of itself, a false one to begin with: that of a city on a hill, a righteous and benevolent one. Now, it is an accessory to genocide, and its weapons and political backing are responsible for the Rafah massacre and the score of others that Israel has committed in the past few months.

America's lack of strong leadership has been visible for years. Its political system is corrupt and dysfunctional, flawed by black money, political action committees, and super-PACs.

However, correcting such flaws is the business of the American people. Meanwhile, the world needs to move on, hoping that America's decline can be overridden through collective adjustment by responsible states.

Biden should look beyond his reelection bid and do the right thing, no matter what, for the sake of American global leadership, and reining in a rogue Israel that is committing murder and putting the entire rules-based order on a tipping point.

## Will Saudi-Iranian relations be affected by Raisi's demise?

Hassan Al-Mustafa

**O**N May 19, the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement expressing deep concern over media reports regarding the helicopter crash involving Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his accompanying delegation.

The statement emphasized that "the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia stands with the sisterly Islamic Republic of Iran during these difficult times," and expressed its "readiness to provide any assistance needed by the Iranian authorities."

Upon confirmation of the tragic demise of Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sent cables of condolence to Acting President Mohammed Mokhber.

Simultaneously, Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister Waleed bin Abdulkarim Al-Khuraiji visited the Iranian Embassy in Riyadh to offer condolences for the death of President Raisi.

The Saudi government took further steps by dispatching a delegation to Tehran, including Prince Mansour bin Miteb bin Abdulaziz, adviser to King Salman and minister of state, and Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan. They were joined by Saudi Ambassador to Tehran Abdullah Al-Anazi. The delegation met with Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani and paid their respects to the victims of the helicopter crash.

Further emphasizing its diplomatic outreach, the crown prince personally called Mokhber on May 24. He expressed his condolences and highlighted "the progress made in bilateral relations between the two countries," stressing the "importance of continuing to enhance cooperation in various areas."

While some might view these actions as merely ceremonial, they convey a clear political message. Saudi Arabia's gestures reflect a desire to develop positive relations with Iran and a commitment to the political and security stability of the Islamic Republic.

Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic ties with Iran in January 2016 after Iranian extremists attacked Saudi diplomatic missions in Tehran and Mashhad.

This led to a period of heightened tensions, negatively impacting regional peace, especially with Iran's external proxies in Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon targeting Saudi security and causing damage to economic, civilian and military installations. Riyadh responded firmly yet cautiously, aiming to avoid escalation while protecting its national interests.

Over the years, Iran found itself increasingly isolated regionally, with strained relations in the Gulf and a deteriorating economic situation. Realizing that hostility

toward Saudi Arabia was detrimental, Tehran pursued a new approach based on reconciliation and overcoming past animosities.

Saudi Arabia's strategy of dialogue and de-escalation culminated in a landmark agreement in March 2023, brokered by China, to restore diplomatic relations. The joint statement read: "The three countries announce that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran have reached an agreement to resume diplomatic relations and reopen their embassies and missions within two months."

Iran appointed Mohammed Reza Nouri Shahroudi as its ambassador to Riyadh, while Al-Anazi became Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Tehran.

In recent months, both ambassadors have engaged in various visits and activities in their respective capitals, practicing cautious yet active public diplomacy, signaling a mutual desire to strengthen ties without overstepping established boundaries.

Although progress might seem slow to some, this is a natural pace after years of distrust and Iran's support for armed proxies that attacked Saudi Arabia and incited against it, both militarily and in the media.

Observers note that the "agreement" is built on a solid security foundation with security negotiations forming the basis. Saudi Arabia sought assurances from Iran on several key points: noninterference in internal affairs, respect for sovereignty, cessation of support for and training of armed opposition groups, and not using pro-Iranian armed militias to attack the Kingdom from Iraq and Yemen.

Additionally, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was to cease supporting cells that conduct sabotage operations within Saudi Arabia.

No far, in the security arena, Iran appears to be complying and a key element is solidifying the previously known "N a y e f - R o u h a n i Agreement," named after then-Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz and former Iranian National Security Council Secretary Hassan Rouhani.

This security agreement is a cornerstone of bilateral relations, which are unlikely to face negative changes following the deaths of President Raisi and Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian.

The principal outlines of Iran's foreign policy are set by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who also oversees their implementation. In the current context, Khamenei is unlikely to allow hard-liners to disrupt relations with Riyadh, as Tehran seeks to end its regional and international isolation, improve its image and alleviate economic difficulties.

## What the Libertarians are warning us all about Trump

Dean Obeidallah

**D**ONALD Trump is accustomed to adoring fans packing his rallies. These MAGA faithful — including some supporters who travel hundreds of miles to attend repeated rallies — are only too eager to laugh at his jokes and applaud his bombastic rhetoric. That's why Trump being loudly and repeatedly jeered and heckled throughout his speech at the Libertarian Party's national convention in Washington, DC on Saturday had to be jarring for him.

And while Trump did attract some cheers when he nakedly pandered to the crowd, such when he promised to appoint a Libertarian to his cabinet if he wins, the headlines across the nation told the story of Trump getting repeatedly heckled unlike anything we've seen before in this campaign.

Trump had lobbied for an invitation to the event, hoping to convince some of the attendees to support his

presidential bid in November's election. The New York Times reported that the former president "appeared irked by the chaotic atmosphere," which led him to seemingly rush through his speech.

In fact, things got so rough for Trump that when he received a chorus of boos after urging the attendees to make him their 2024 presidential nominee that — like a comedian bombing who lashes out at the audience — he mocked the Libertarian Party, saying that they could either choose to nominate him or "keep getting your 3% every four years."

It might have been even worse for Trump if the Secret Service hadn't reportedly confiscated the rubber chickens that squawked loudly when squeezed, that had been distributed to attendees by a PAC supporting Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. (Of course, this raises the question of why the taxpayer funded Secret Service was being used to silence people who

wanted to show their disapproval for Trump's political speech.)

To put it bluntly, the booing of Trump is what patriotism sounds like. Those people were loudly warning Americans about who Trump is and the danger he poses to our republic. There were various reasons cited by those attending the Libertarian Party convention for why they adamantly opposed Trump, such as his running up huge federal deficits when he was in the White House. But what jumped out to me was that so many people cited Trump's threat to our very way of life.

One delegate to the convention told the Times ahead of the address that Trump tries "to make himself sound Libertarian ... but he's the ultimate authoritarian." Some attendees yelled during the speech that, "Donald Trump is a threat to democracy!" While another person held up a sign that read,

"No wannabe dictators!" before being dragged away by security.

Days before the speech, Peter Goettler, president and chief executive of the libertarian think tank Cato Institute, penned an op-ed for The Washington Post explaining why so many libertarians oppose Trump. Libertarians' core beliefs, he noted, include "individual freedom, equality under the law, pluralism, tolerance, free speech, freedom of religion, government by consent of the governed, the rule of law" and "limited constitutional government."

Trump, Goettler continued, does not subscribe to those views. He went on to list a litany of issues Trump has embraced that are anathema to Libertarians, including "increasing the national debt by \$8.4 trillion" during his presidency. He also cited the threat Trump poses to our freedoms, noting that if he wins the White House he plans

to "crack down on political enemies" — suggesting he plans to expand government power to silence critics and opponents.

Goettler then powerfully explained that while both Democratic and Republican presidents were not "above using extralegal means to accomplish policy objectives," Trump was far more dangerous with "the supreme example being the Capitol riot of Jan. 6, 2021, a tragic event that celebrated a total disregard for the peaceful transfer of power and constitutional order." He added, "Libertarians know that the Constitution and the rule of law are essential elements in keeping government power constrained."

You don't need to be a member of the Libertarian Party to understand that if Trump had been successful in his efforts to remain in power despite losing the 2020 election, our democratic republic as we know it would have ended. Elections would no longer matter if Trump or any can-

didate — without credible evidence and after losing all judicial appeals — could declare that he or she could remain in office simply by alleging there was widespread fraud. That is why he has been charged with numerous felonies in both the federal courts and in Fulton County, Georgia.

In December, former GOP Rep. Liz Cheney — a fierce Trump critic — made a comment that has stuck with me. Speaking of the threat posed by a second Trump term, she warned, "One of the things that we see happening today is a sort of a sleepwalking into dictatorship in the United States."

I hope people across the country read about what took place Saturday night at the Libertarian convention. Maybe, just maybe, the loud jeers and boos by those patriotic Americans directed against Trump will wake up their fellow citizens to the threat he poses if he's elected again to lead our country.

— CNN



# Cape Town’s poor ‘neglected’ in South Africa’s only opposition-run province

Crystal Orderson

**I**N the leafy, picturesque southern suburbs of Cape Town, Dee Lackay, 38, is making a new start after leaving Johannesburg for what he feels is a safer and better city.

The ambitious personal trainer used to run a specialised exercise studio in South Africa’s economic capital until the high crime rate and lack of service delivery became too much for him and his wife to handle.

“One thing about Jo’burg was that it was getting too dangerous, especially around the suburbs – so where else were you going to move?” Lackay told Al Jazeera, recounting the carjackings he witnessed and saying even the wealthier parts of town were not immune.

Adding to it, the city’s crumbling infrastructure – constant power cuts, water shortages and unmaintained roads – and his lack of faith in the government to fix it left him looking to leave.

“Potholes got worse and the [governing African National Congress] ANC was not fixing them ... there were always water issues, you cannot live like that,” he said.

Last year, the couple joined a wave of middle and upper-class people “semigrating”, or internally migrating, to better-run municipalities in the country. According to the latest census data, Gauteng and the Western Cape – the provinces housing Johannesburg and Cape Town, respectively – are the top migration hotspots. But experts say Gauteng is an immigration hub, while the Cape attracts more “semigrants”.

The Lackays too opted to move to the Western Cape, the only province not run by the ANC but by the official opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA).

Now they are surrounded by the beauty of the Constantiaberg mountains, spacious homes, clean streets, regular services and private security controls. Lackay says he feels safer in the formerly whites-only suburb where he now lives.

But the Cape Town Lackay found is not one that is accessible to all – especially those living in neglected townships and low-income neighbourhoods far from the suburbs and touristy city centre with its pristine beaches and million-dollar properties.

“A little Europe outside Europe”

Almost 20km (12 miles) from the city centre, Gugulethu, a majority Black township, is home to about 100,000 people and is a world apart from the wide airy roads and spacious homes of the southern suburbs.

Among small brick houses and shacks made of corrugated iron hang election campaign posters for this week’s vote, including the DA’s blue and red signs, reading: “The city that works for you” and “Rescue South Africa”.

The DA, which has governed the Western Cape since 2009, calls Cape Town the “best-run city in South Africa”, setting it apart from the rest of the ANC-run country that it often lambasts as “broken, collapsing, corrupt, chaotic” – a message it has reinforced ahead of Wednesday’s vote.

Activist Elethu Nkala, 24, who moved to Gugulethu from Cape Town’s other main township Khayelitsha with his family when he was younger, said when he sees the DA posters about a city that works, he wonders who they are talking to.

“[The city is] a little Europe outside Europe; it makes sense that they say it to their small minority that supports what is thriving within Cape Town,” Nkala said, talking about wealthier areas beyond the townships where the DA seems more serious about service delivery.

Gugulethu, together with other largely non-white working-class areas like Nyanga, Mitchells Plain and Manenberg, is part of

the Cape Flats – a flat, sandy stretch of land on the outskirts of the city where people struggle with joblessness, overcrowding, lack of services and high levels of violent crime and drug abuse.

Social activists question who truly benefits from Cape Town, arguing that the reality is a tale of two cities, one for the affluent and another for the poor.

“Come out of the airport and see the informal settlements and you know there is still a lot to be done,” Nkala told Al Jazeera.

“The best-run city in the world? Yes, maybe the CBD [Central Business District] and parts of it, but there is a reality that is not being told; there are still people fighting for flushing toilets. We can’t say we are the best-run city when there are basic things like a toilet still needed by communities.”

Nkala said the community feels abandoned by the city leaders and that there is an ongoing struggle for services and attention.

“Things are not working in townships”

In May, former DA leader Mmusi Maimane, who is now with the opposition party Build One SA, visited the area and told residents his old party had been

Almost 20km (12 miles) from the city centre, Gugulethu, a majority Black township, is home to about 100,000 people and is a world apart from the wide airy roads and spacious homes of the southern suburbs. Among small brick houses and shacks made of corrugated iron hang election campaign posters for this week’s vote, including the DA’s blue and red signs, reading: “The city that works for you” and “Rescue South Africa”. The DA, which has governed the Western Cape since 2009, calls Cape Town the “best-run city in South Africa”, setting it apart from the rest of the ANC-run country that it often lambasts as “broken, collapsing, corrupt, chaotic” – a message it has reinforced ahead of Wednesday’s vote. Activist Elethu Nkala, 24, who moved to Gugulethu from Cape Town’s other main township Khayelitsha with his family when he was younger, said when he sees the DA posters about a city that works, he wonders who they are talking to. “[The city is] a little Europe outside Europe; it makes sense that they say it to their small minority that supports what is thriving within Cape Town,” Nkala said.

neglecting them.

“Today, as I arrived here in Gugulethu, I asked myself what the living conditions here tell us about the government in this province. What does the failure of service delivery, of sewerage running in the streets, of potholes and pit latrines, and of refuse pile-up tell us about this government?”

“They have been in provincial government in the Western Cape for 15 years! Yet they want you to believe it’s only been 15 minutes,” Maimane said. Political analyst Levy Ndou said the DA has worked only for some people in the Western Cape and Cape Town. He emphasised the disparity between the city centre and townships, pointing out that the success seen in one area does not necessarily reflect the reality of all.

Resources need to be more evenly distributed to address these inequities, he said.

“It’s one area, in my view, that remains a challenge for the DA. If you go to Cape Town and visit the city centre, you will always be very excited and see what is happening in the city; things appear

to be working.

“Unfortunately, most of us do not get to go to the townships, and it’s a problem – a comparison between township life and city life is not comparable. Things are not working in townships like Gugulethu and Mitchells Plain,” Ndou told Al Jazeera.

Under apartheid – the racist, segregationist system of governance that ran South Africa from 1948 to 1994 – all cities and towns were divided into racially separate and unequal areas, with “white” neighbourhoods allocated the best locations, facilities and services.

Meanwhile, people of colour – including Black, Indian, and “Coloured” communities – were relegated to different townships and ghettos on the periphery.

Although racial segregation is no longer technically enforced, the lingering economic inequities – which have kept most Black people poor – mean that apartheid’s spatial dynamics persist. In Cape Town, the vast inequality has been reinforced so strongly that some researchers even consider it “the most segregated city in this already unequal and segregated country”.

DA vs ANC

As more people “semigrate” to Cape Town, the city’s estate agents say it is because it offers a more relaxed lifestyle with beautiful scenery and outdoor activities, making it an attractive option for those looking to escape Johannesburg. However, Cape Town is plagued by its own share of crime and violence. The five most dangerous areas in Africa are cities in South Africa, according to 2023 statistics from the data platform Statista. Johannesburg has the third highest crime rate, while Cape Town sits at number five. With close to 3.3 million voters in the Western Cape, it is the only province that has not been governed by the ANC since 2009. In the last election in 2019, the ANC received only 28 percent of the vote there, while the DA won the province with more than 55 percent. The province and the city have also been two of the main areas where the DA has focused its election campaign. Political parties rolled out the big guns for their specific election campaigns in the city – ANC deployed President Cyril

Ramaphosa and John Steenhuisen campaigned for the DA.

Recent polls suggest the DA’s vote share could reduce. Polling by the Benthurst Foundation said the party is set to continue to run the province, but with a reduced majority of 53 percent, down from 56 percent in October. The ANC stands at 35 percent, compared with just 22 percent in October.

“There are eight ANC-run provinces in this country. But there is one – and only one – province, where we can actually celebrate Workers’ Day today. That province is the DA-run Western Cape,” Steenhuisen told DA supporters in Mitchells Plain in May.

“I’d like to make a pledge, if you re-elect the DA to govern this province with an outright majority on May 29, we will not rest until every single person in the Western Cape who wants to work, can find a job!”

During Ramaphosa’s campaign in Cape Town, he took a swipe at the DA and criticised the party for neglecting township service delivery and prioritising suburban areas.

The president, who has a home in Cape Town, spent almost a week in the city on the campaign trail. He told voters the ANC was “confident” of victory.

The ANC also stuck to its campaign script, focusing on poorer and Black working-class areas where they have support. In these ANC strongholds, the party heard a litany of complaints from residents about the neglect by the DA.

“The ANC is going to win this election outright and with a very clear and decisive majority, we are doing well in our campaign in the province,” Ramaphosa told supporters.

‘Neglected’ communities

For years, the ANC has been on the back foot in the province and fighting several internal battles, which have played a role in the decrease in support.

The DA, on the other hand, deployed its resources to keep the city and the province.

Addressing a campaign rally on May 25, Steenhuisen reiterated that the province is the best-run in the country and took a swipe at other cities not run by the DA.

“I want to cut out the politics today and just talk straight to you. No matter what your political affiliation may be, every South African knows it as a fact that the Western Cape works better than any other province in this country. “Here’s the straight truth. The Western Cape works.”

But analyst Levy said the DA should be honest and admit that it does not work for everyone.

“The DA argues they do deliver in the townships, but that is what I expect them to say – after all they run Cape Town and the Western Cape. The unfortunate part is that they can say they deliver and that they do not neglect the townships, but the people who live there do say they are not happy with the lack of services,” he said.

Levy added that the DA should “respond to these challenges”.

“They must do a reflection, and if they don’t in the near future, they will be ignored by people who feel the neglect.”

Meanwhile, even for those not on the margins who have moved to Cape Town for a better life, there are concerns that the DA-run city is not an equal place for all. In the lush southern suburbs, Lackay, who is from the multiracial “Coloured” community, has some criticism of his new home. He said racism is a reality for any non-white person living in an expensive suburb in Cape Town.

“The main things here you do pick up are segregation, racism and class issues. As a male of colour doing well here, no matter where you go in a white area, you get treated badly,” he said.

— Aljazeera

## When the guns fall silent in Gaza, trauma will still haunt the innocent

Yossi Mekelberg

**W**HEN the guns eventually fall silent in Gaza and the full devastation of the war becomes apparent, there will also be an urgent need to address the less visible, albeit no less harmful, impact on the mental health of hundreds of thousands of innocent people on both sides of the border. Special attention will have to be paid to so many children who have suffered an unimaginable trauma, and who, without adequate care, will carry this with them for the rest of their lives, with an adverse effect on themselves and their societies.

Both Israeli and Palestinian societies have been and are being traumatized, and as a result many children and adolescents are enduring a post-traumatic stress disorder that manifests itself in different ways and should leave no one in any doubt about its long-term ramifications, including how they will view the idea of peace, reconciliation and coexistence between the two peoples. One of the many tragedies of war, and a heart-wrenching one, is that those who are the most vulnerable in society are those who face the gravest consequences of such hostilities, both physically and psychologically. According to the human rights organization Save the Children, 68 million children, more than one in six worldwide, live in areas affected by armed conflict, and the numbers are on the rise. Moreover, children are far more likely to die from conflict than are armed actors.

Thanks to visual media, we can witness in real time the horrors that take place during conflicts and inflict unbearable suffering on civilians, especially children. In the Gaza Strip, almost half of the population is under 18 and bears the brunt of the war’s horrors. Every day for nearly eight months we have watched the cruel and brutal violence that was committed by Hamas on Oct. 7, and since then by the Israeli military in response to it. Even without a single shot fired or bomb dropped, it is enough for a child to constantly hear the roar of assault aircraft or of advancing tanks, or see fully armed soldiers on their streets; to be terrified, even traumatized, particularly when they are exposed to this day and night for months on end. But in the case of the war in Gaza in all its intensity, it is not about seeing or hearing the war machines, but being on the receiving end of their full firepower, and being caught up in the crossfire between two sworn enemies.

Children are paying with their lives daily, and many have physical and mental injuries that they will bear for the rest of their lives. At the beginning of this month, the UN estimated that 7,797 children have been killed in Gaza since the beginning of the war, and their numbers are rising every day. However, beyond the terrible tragedy of individual lives being cut short, it is also their families, and their young siblings and friends, who are left scared and scarred, fearing that they might be the next to die and feeling guilty for surviving. Research conducted by the UK government has established that exposure to

trauma in childhood can affect behavior later in life, and that in cases of prolonged trauma, “children can suffer ‘toxic stress,’ which can become biologically embedded.” Further findings show that the prevalence of mental health problems in conflict zones is extremely high, with 47 percent of children showing symptoms of PTSD and 43 percent of depression. Frightening as these figures are, they should come as no surprise, as those children experience, as we are witnessing in Gaza, the loss of loved ones, war-related injuries, and other types of

regardless of their race, religion or abilities. The convention has been signed by 196 countries, including Israel, and by that these countries have committed themselves to defending the children’s lives, survival and development, and to protect them from violence, abuse and neglect. Right now, no child in Gaza could possibly believe that their rights, as enshrined in these conventions, are being even remotely respected.

It can be argued that the moral argument should suffice to mobilize the international community to protect children from being victimized in wars, but sadly this is not the case in most con-

Thanks to visual media, we can witness in real time the horrors that take place during conflicts and inflict unbearable suffering on civilians, especially children. In the Gaza Strip, almost half of the population is under 18 and bears the brunt of the war’s horrors. Every day for nearly eight months we have watched the cruel and brutal violence that was committed by Hamas on Oct. 7, and since then by the Israeli military in response to it. Even without a single shot fired or bomb dropped, it is enough for a child to constantly hear the roar of assault aircraft or of advancing tanks, or see fully armed soldiers on their streets; to be terrified, even traumatized, particularly when they are exposed to this day and night for months on end. But in the case of the war in Gaza in all its intensity, it is not about seeing or hearing the war machines, but being on the receiving end of their full firepower, and being caught up in the crossfire between two sworn enemies.

violent scenes and events.

Even before the current war, data show that 71 percent of Gaza’s people suffered from depression, and 80 percent reported being in a perpetual state of fear, worry, sadness and grief, while three-quarters of its children were bedwetting in fear, and a growing number were exhibiting reactive mutism. We can only imagine what the figures must be right now, after months on end of daily bombardments and being constantly displaced, without access to medical treatment and not knowing when and from where they will get their next meal or have access to clean water or sanitary facilities. On the one hand the mental state of many children is deteriorating and with it the need for treatment is on the rise.

But on the other hand the mental health system in Gaza has collapsed, with psychiatric facilities damaged or depleted, severe shortages of medication, and due to Internet disruptions even access to teletherapy is not possible.

The moral obligation to protect children needs little elaboration. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is a legally binding, international agreement setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child,

flicts. However, there are also political reasons for shielding children from the horror of wars, as one of the consequences of it is radicalization. Young people, even children, in their anguish and anger, become fertile ground for radicalization and being brainwashed to participate in political violence. Recent research published in The Lancet, one of the most respected peer-reviewed medical journals, argues that “ensuing psychological distress can increase children and young people’s susceptibility to radicalization, as extremist groups often exploit feelings of hopelessness.” One can hardly imagine a situation that has generated more hopelessness than that of Gaza, even before the war began, never mind since. Neglecting the suffering of children in war seriously blunders our humanity. Whatever the justification for war, the protection of children should remain sacrosanct. In the aftermath of the current war in Gaza, one of the most urgent and important tasks will be to ensure that children receive mental support and the necessary tools to overcome the horrendous ordeal they are enduring. We owe that to them for the sake of the health of their societies and for the cause of peace when it eventually arrives.

—China Daily

## China catalyst in improving

PilSoo Choi

**I**N the realm of global development aid and financing, the emergence of the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative has brought about significant changes, reshaping traditional practices and principles. The Belt and Road Initiative’s expansive scale and rapid implementation have not only stimulated China’s sustained economic growth in developing countries, particularly through infrastructure development, but also prompted a re-evaluation of strategies by Western economies toward a more pragmatic direction.

The assimilation of Chinese and Western practices in development financing signifies a pivotal shift that is poised to cause substantial changes among developing countries and a myriad of stakeholders, encompassing sovereign entities and commercial players alike.

As we delve into the nuances of this evolving landscape, we can see that key organizations such as the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have played a crucial role in shaping the norms and recommendations governing the terms and conditions for aid.

The DAC’s emphasis on “untiedness” as articulated in the “Revised DAC Recommendation on Terms and Conditions of Aid (1978)” and the “2001 DAC Recommendation on Untying ODA to the Least Developed Countries” underscores the importance of separating aid provisions from execution, particularly by the business units of donor countries. This departure from previous practices where aid was associated with exports and specific conditions has been instrumental in fostering a more transparent and efficient aid

framework.

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# Asian markets swing, dollar drops ahead of US inflation data

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets fluctuated Tuesday as investors took a breather after the previous day's rally and as they gear up for the release of key US inflation data later in the week.

With Wall Street and London closed for public holidays, there were few catalysts to drive business, though comments from top European Central Bank officials reinforced optimism that borrowing costs in the eurozone will come down at its June meeting.

Figures last Friday showing US consumer confidence picking up and inflation expectations coming down provided traders enough confidence to propel hopes for at least one interest rate cut before January.

That has put a little

downward pressure on the dollar against its major peers, with the yen also supported by growing speculation the Bank of Japan will hike borrowing costs again within the next few months.

The main focus on trading floors, however, is Friday's release of the US personal consumption expenditures (PCE) index - the Federal Reserve's preferred gauge of inflation, which is forecast to have seen a slight slowdown in April from the previous month.

The reading comes after a number of monetary policymakers warned in recent weeks that they were cautious about cutting rates too soon and wanted to see more data proving price pressures are easing.

The next couple of days

will see fresh comments from more central bank officials that investors hope will shine a light on their thinking.

While the Fed continues to debate when to move on rates, the ECB appears set to make a cut with chief economist Philip Lane telling the Financial Times that "barring major surprises" the next direction will be downward.

That comes after eurozone inflation data for May, which is due Friday.

Tokyo, Shanghai, Sydney, Seoul, Wellington, Manila and Bangkok fell, though Singapore, Taipei, Mumbai and Jakarta edged up. Hong Kong was flat.

London fell as investors returned from a long week-end break, while Paris also dropped but Frankfurt rose.

On currency markets the

dollar fell as dealers eyed a Fed reduction, even as the ECB and Bank of England consider moving before.

"The dollar is weaker across the board with the risk-positive backdrop seemingly overriding the greenbacks safe-haven appeal," said National Australia Bank's Rodrigo Catril.

Oil prices rose further ahead of a June 2 meeting of OPEC and other major producers that is tipped to see them maintain output cuts, while the start of the so-called US driving season is expected to see a lift in demand.

"A confluence of factors suggest some upside sensitivity in oil -- from freight geopolitics to inventory drawdown to OPEC's assumed preference to maintain curbs," said Mizuho Bank's Vishnu Varathan.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning & Development Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhry and CEO Nestlé Pakistan Jason Avanceña inaugurating safe drinking water facility.

## UAE's \$10b investment lauded

ISLAMABAD (APP): The President, Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) Khawaja Mehboob ur Rehman lauded the announcement from United Arab Emirates of a \$10 billion investment for Pakistan in the promising economic sectors.

PBF President while talking to APP on Tuesday said that we commended the UAE's development journey and emphasized Pakistan's commitment to strengthening its friendship with the UAE and expanding cooperation, especially in the economic, commercial, and investment sectors.

"He said this huge investment is an irrefutable proof of foreign investors' confidence in government's efforts to revamp the economy".

UAE is home to 1.8 million Pakistanis who are contributing towards development, prosperity and economic growth of the two brotherly countries.

In this regard PBF President suggested that there is a further need to increase cooperation between the two countries in the fields of aviation and tourism to increase people to people contact.

The PBF also stated that in 2022, the UAE exported \$5.8 billion worth of goods to Pakistan. The main products exported from the UAE to Pakistan were Crude Petroleum (\$2.29 billion), Refined Petroleum (\$1.3 billion), and Propylene Polymers (\$212 million).

Similarly Pakistan exported in 2022 \$2.58 billion worth of goods to the UAE.

The top Pakistani exports were Refined Petroleum (\$1.07 billion), Rice (\$235 million), and Bovine Meat (\$165 million). Pakistan's exports to the UAE have grown at an annualized rate of 4.5 percent over the last 19 years, increasing from \$1.12 billion in 2003 to \$2.58 billion in 2022.

## Iftikhar felicitates nation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Iftikhar Ali Malik, former President of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday extended his heartfelt felicitations to the nation and former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Youm-e-Takbeer.

Malik praised former PM Nawaz Sharif's decisive leadership and vision that led to the historic event, which marked Pakistan as the first Muslim-majority country to acquire nuclear capability, a news release said.

He highlighted that this strategic milestone significantly bolstered the nation's defense, rendering it invincible against any external aggression and security threats.

He commended Nawaz Sharif's courage in the face of immense international pressure and sanctions, underscoring the importance of strong leadership in safeguarding national interests.

Malik emphasized that the successful launch not only fortified Pakistan's defense but also instilled a sense of pride and confidence among its citizens.

He reiterated the need for continued vigilance and strategic foresight to maintain and enhance the country's security capabilities, ensuring lasting peace and stability in the region.

# Minister inaugurates Nestlé's clean and safe drinking water facility

## F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Federal Minister for Planning & Development, Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhry inaugurated Nestlé Pakistan's clean and safe drinking water facility in Narowal that aims to cater to more than 10,000 people in the district.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Iqbal said "Access to clean and safe drinking water is an absolute necessity for all of us, and I am touched that Nestlé has focused its community efforts for the people of Narowal. It is a remarkable contribution, and I am hopeful that people will truly benefit from this."

During the inauguration, Jason Avanceña, Chief Executive Officer, Nestlé Pakistan said, "We are committed to Creating Shared Value (CSV) throughout our value chain for communities and the inauguration of this eighth clean safe drinking water facility is a testament to our commitment to making a positive impact for families, communities and the planet."

Nestlé Pakistan has already developed and is currently managing seven clean and safe drinking water facilities around its manufacturing sites in Sheikhpura, Kabiwala, Khanewal and Islamabad. With the inauguration of

this facility in Narowal, approximately 80,000 people will have access to clean and safe drinking water daily through these facilities.

The Narowal facility will use ultrafiltration water treatment technology with capacity to supply up to 3,000 liters per hour of clean and safe drinking water. It will utilize a multi-stage filtration process, with monitoring systems that guarantee consistent quality and a UV disinfection unit providing an extra layer of protection. The plant is also equipped with energy-efficient pumps and utilizes sustainable practices to minimize its environmental footprint.

# Pakistan reviving Belt, Road Initiative projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal said here on Tuesday that the incumbent government was hopeful to inject some fresh momentum into projects that fall under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as it tries to boost the country's troubled economy.

The government is looking forward to joint ventures for renewable energy projects, agriculture collaboration and possibly enticing some Chinese companies to relocate to Pakistan, Ahsan Iqbal, who also co-heads the committee responsible for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor said in an interview with Bloomberg.

"Yeah, I'm very hopeful because I was there in China recently and I had meetings with their senior leadership...So I see great interest on the Chinese side to revive the momentum for CPEC and also to take it into the second phase," he said

Pakistan was seen as a flagship destination for BRI projects, with CPEC — which includes a port in the southern town of Gwadar

and new power plants — the crown jewel. The progress on new projects stalled in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and amid Pakistan's ongoing economic difficulties that have required the International Monetary Fund's intervention.

According to Bloomberg report, projects worth about \$25 billion came online in the first phase, including power plants that ended the nation's chronic power deficit. A Pakistani committee approved a long-delayed railway upgrade project last week.

The project will be done in two phases "so there is not a big burden on Pakistan," said Iqbal. The railway, in its first phase will run from Karachi, the southern coast city, to Multan, a little over halfway to the capital, Islamabad.

The government has also finished some key BRI projects that were pending for years: a water-supply project in Gwadar, dredging work at the port and an electricity transmission line from Iran.

"So all these things really help China see that the new government is again

serious and it restored their confidence that now Pakistan is, you know, serious about CPEC initiatives," said Iqbal.

To mark the tenth anniversary of CPEC last year, China's Vice Premier He Lifeng unveiled five new corridors including one focused on growth to boost economic activity in Pakistan.

One change in the second phase would likely involve Islamabad taking a step back while urging the private sector to forge partnerships with Chinese firms.

The other big focus, albeit a long-shot prospect, is to try and attract Chinese firms thinking of relocating from China amid rising labor costs and heightening geopolitical tensions.

"That would be a success because at the moment more than 80 million jobs are being relocated from China to other countries because of the high level cost in China," said Iqbal. "They have gone to Vietnam and you know, Laos and Cambodia. There is now overcrowding there. So they are certainly looking for new places," he added.

# Youm-e-Takbeer day of national pride: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Tuesday said that Youm-e-Takbeer is a day of national pride, courage and determination.

In a press statement, he said that May 28, 1998, is celebrated as the day when Pakistan became the first nuclear power of the Islamic world.

It's a day to renew our commitment to defending our country and our freedom, he said adding that the government has declared May 28th as a national holiday to commemorate this achievement.

The day marks the failure of external and internal enemies' evil plans against Pakistan, he said adding that the nuclear tests ensured the country's regional integrity, independence and sovereignty.

He said that business community will continue to contribute in national building and economic development of the country.

He also expressed his firm commitment to support the efforts of the government and armed forces of the country for economic uplift and social prosperity.

He said that a strong and stable economy was prerequisites for further strengthening the defence capabilities.

Ahsan Zafar also lauded the efforts of all those who contributed in making Pakistan as an nuclear power of the world and term them heroes of the nation.

# Cattle markets to be made functional 10 days before Eid

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Commissioner Madam Silwat Saeed said that cattle markets and animal sales points would be made fully functional 10 days before Eid-ul-Azha amid tight security arrangements across the division. Chairing a meeting here on Tuesday, she reviewed security arrangements across the division and directed police heads of all four districts including Faisalabad, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh and Chiniot to evolve a comprehensive strategy for complete safety and security of the people on Eid-ul-Azha 2024. She also directed to provide foolproof security to Chinese and other foreigners working in various development projects and said that strict action should also be taken against kite-flying.

# President SCCI emphasizing potential for enhanced trade

SIALKOT (APP): The President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Abdul Ghafoor Malik addressed the Ethiopia-Pakistan Business Forum, emphasizing the potential for enhanced trade and investment between Pakistan and Ethiopia.

According to SCCI, the event was held in Addis Ababa attended by prominent figures including Minister for Trade and Regional Integration Gebremeskel Chala, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Birtukan Ayano, Ethiopian Investment Commissioner Hanna Arayaselassie,

President ECCSA Eng. Melaku Ezezew, Chairman Trade Development Authority of Pakistan Zubair Motivala, Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan Jemal Beker and Ambassador of Pakistan to Ethiopia Atif Sharif.

President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik highlighted Ethiopia's attractiveness as an investment destination due to its robust economic growth, strategic location and favorable investment climate.

President SCCI noted," Ethiopia, with its rich history and large population, offers vast opportunities for Pakistani businesses seek-

ing to explore new markets. Boasting one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa, Ethiopia has sustained an impressive average GDP growth rate of around 10% over the past decade."

Malik also stressed the importance of addressing trade barriers and building closer business-to-business linkages to capitalize on the untapped potential.

He acknowledged significant steps such as the 2023 trade agreement offering a 10-years tax break to Pakistani investors, the initiation of direct flights and the establishment of the Ethiopian Embassy in

Pakistan. President Malik further remarked on the industrial prowess and vibrant SME culture of Sialkot, Pakistan known for high-quality products like sports goods, surgical instruments, work-wear, gloves and leather products which hold considerable demand in Ethiopia and the African region.

The forum set the stage for fruitful B2B meetings, fostering a new era of collaboration and mutual growth. "I am confident that today's forum will lead to long-term partnerships that benefit both our countries," he concluded.

# Chairman ICE promotes 'Creative Economy' concept

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman International Creative Exchange (ICE) Atta-ul-Karim on Tuesday said that tourism and education are important sectors to promote 'Creative Economy in Pakistan' and to connect Pakistan with trillion dollar Indonesia economy.

International Creative Exchange (ICE) as his vision includes promoting the concept of 'Creative Economy, connecting Pakistan with modern and innovative economies including Indonesia, bringing investment in the tourism sector in Pakistan and developing it along modern lines, Chairman ICE, Atta-ul-Karim said.

He said this while addressing a press conference along with Charge d'Affairs Indonesia in Islamabad, Rahmat Hindiarta to announce the business and investment promotion in Pakistan and shared his vision with media in National Press Club (NPC) Islamabad.

Chairman ICE said that the only solution to the severe economic challenges that Pakistan is currently facing is the 'Creative Economy' and Indonesia has become the world's largest economy with this concept.

He said that Indonesia is currently the first trillion economy of the Islamic world, which is moving step by step with the rest of the world. This country has major tourist destinations including Bali.

He said that there is a lot

of tourism potential in the northern regions of Pakistan. And international investment is very important for its promotion.

Chairman ICE said that Pakistan can develop only through the promotion of trade and investment, loans do not create an economy and it is necessary to connect Pakistan to the international supply value chain, without which it is difficult for the country's economy to move forward.

He said that he intends to bring investment in the northern regions of Pakistan, including Hunza, Gilt-Baltistan, Skardu and Hazara, Galiyat and Kaghan regions of Pakistan.

Atta said that for the promotion of tourism and tourism industry in Pakistan, he intends to create an institution of modern education for tourism and hoteling in tourist destination.

He said that he has brought a comprehensive plan for the promotion of Creative Economy in Pakistan, in which tourism, education, filmmaking, literature and culture are very important, in which a lot of progress is expected in the near future.

He said that his organization International Creative Exchange (ICE) is

a non-political organization that wants to connect Indonesia and the rest of the world through industry, trade, economy and investment.

He said that ICE was founded in Indonesia and the organization will work for the promotion of economy and trade in Indonesia and the international world.

In this regard, Pakistan will be the first country that has been selected for the economic and commercial activities and cooperation of this organization because "I am the founder of the organization from Pakistan."

Chairman ICE said that he is making his sincere efforts to play his full role in the economic integration of both countries by working on tourism, cultural promotion and commodity export in Pakistan and Indonesia.

He said that ICE is keen on the economic development of Pakistan by working hard on such economic potential in both countries and the rest of the world.

Meanwhile addressing the press conference, with Charge d'Affairs Indonesia in Islamabad, Rahmat Hindiarta said the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad keeps the strong relations

between Indonesia and Pakistan always relevant as it was expected by both countries respective founding fathers, President Sukarno and Quid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Senior diplomat said that there are at least two priorities set up by the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad to convert the excellent relations between the two fraternal countries through economic diplomacy by up scaling the bilateral trade volume and people-to-people contact by intensifying exchange visits by i.a. religious figures, politicians, military officials and cadets, academics, students, as well as tourists of the world's two largest Muslim countries.

He said the Indonesian Embassy warmly welcomes the launching of ICE, since it is in line with the Embassy's two priorities of diplomacy in Pakistan.

The ICE is expected to be a reliable partner for the both Indonesian and Pakistani Governments to continuously strengthen bilateral relations by bridging the Indonesian-Pakistani business communities and facilitating collaboration among peoples, he said.

# Pakistan, Cambodia sign MoU on trade

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan and Cambodia on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of a joint trade committee.

The deal was inked in Phnom Penh between Cambodian Minister of Commerce Cham Nimul and Pakistani Ambassador to Cambodia Zabeeruddin Babar Thaheem, Xinhua reported while quoting a news release from Cambodia's Ministry of Commerce.

"This MoU will significantly contribute to the elevation of the two countries' relations, particularly on trade and economic cooper-

ation," Nimul said at the event.

"The joint trade committee established under this memorandum will serve as a mechanism that allows both sides to explore ways to create favourable conditions for businesses and investors and to diversify economies, expand production bases, and foster bilateral trade," she added.

Under the MoU, both countries will work together and actively engage the private sectors, including chambers of commerce and business associations, to promote trade and economic activities, the news release said.

## Court Notice

In the Court of Hafeez Ullah Judge-I, Topi, Mst. Tehmeena etc Vs. Ameer Usman, Suit No. 123/1, Institution date 19-9-2023, hearing date 03-06-2024, Notice to (2) Bakhtawara daughter of Mehmood Khan R/o Canada, (3) Najam-ul-Huda wife of Abdur Rauf Khan daughter of Mehmood Khan R/o Karachi, Maleer. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 03-06-2024 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.





## In brief

## Wapda, PAF, wins matches

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wapda, Pakistan Air Force, Rangers, Sindh Greens earned victories in the first round of All-Pakistan Muhammad Majid and Abdul Nasir Memorial Basketball Tournament at Siddique Memon Sports Complex, Karachi. The six-day tournament organized by Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) was inaugurated by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab Siddiqui while Associate Secretary of Pakistan Basketball Federation Muhammad Yaqoob Qadry and other personalities were also present on the occasion, said a press release. On the first day, Wapda after a one-sided competition defeated Sindh Whites by 74-36 points. In the second match, Pakistan Rangers defeated Balochistan by 74-40 points while Sindh Greens defeated Sindh Whites by 84-53 points. In the fourth match on the Pakistan Air Force defeated Islamabad by 75-43 points while Police defeated Sindh Yellow by 62-32 points. Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab Siddiqui appreciated the arrangements of the tournament and efforts made by the organizers to attract youth towards the game of basketball.

## Zidane to signal 24 Hours of Le Mans start

PARIS (AFP): French football legend Zinedine Zidane will be the official starter for June's edition of the 24 Hours of Le Mans, race organisers announced Tuesday. "Hailed as one of France's greatest sportsmen and one of the finest footballers in the history of the game, Zinedine Zidane has been named as the Official Starter of the 92nd 24 Hours of Le Mans," the Automobile Club de l'Ouest (ACO) said in a statement. The 1998 World Cup winner joins a prestigious list of guests that have given the starting signal at the endurance race, including Rafael Nadal in 2018, Steve McQueen in 1971 and LeBron James last year. "The 24 Hours of Le Mans is beyond compare. It is an iconic race for anyone who loves motorsport, for people all around the world," said Zidane. "It is a source of immense pride for France. My mind is full of images of the race, the legendary drivers, the amazing stories... although these are images from TV or movie scenes!" "To actually be there will be a first for me and needless to say, I'm extremely honoured," added the 51-year-old former Real Madrid player and coach. ACO president Pierre Fillon described Zidane as "an icon, a sportsman whose talent has inspired generations of fans", before adding: "We couldn't have hoped for a more prestigious Starter." The latest edition of the 24-hour race will start on June 15 in the north-western French town of Le Mans and bring together 62 cars.

**Netherlands shock Sri Lanka in T20 WC warm-up**  
LAUDERHILL (Web Desk): Netherlands handed a 20-run upset defeat to Sri Lanka in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 warm-up fixture at Central Broward Regional Park Stadium here on Tuesday. Put into bat first, the Netherlands registered a commendable total of 181/5 in the allotted 20 overs. Meanwhile, former champions Sri Lanka only managed 161 in response and thus succumbed to a shock loss heading into the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.



ISLAMABAD: Australian and Pakistani volleyball players compete during a volleyball match at Sarfraz Volleyball Series at sports complex. —APP Photo

## Pakistan to play with full passion against Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Assistant coach of Pakistan Football team Trishan Patel believes the national team would play with full passion and commitment against Saudi Arabia in the FIFA World Cup 2026 Round 2 Qualifier match here at the Jinnah Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex on June 6. Patel, who has been remotely assisting the national side in the previous World Cup Qualifiers, said, "Saudi Arabia is a fantastic team. However, we will approach every game with excitement, determination, and fight, never with fear. Although our last two qualifying matches were disappointing, I believe that in the final two games, we will display a more committed team with a greater tactical understanding."

Patel, who has also been assigned

the responsibility of Performance Analyst, further said, "I think first and foremost when you come up against a high-caliber opposition such as Saudi Arabia, you need to be clear with what you want in possession and out of possession. The boys on the camp have trained extremely hard and we are continuously working to evolve as a team and provide the right training so our trajectory is in an upward direction."

"We have many strengths but we want to make them into super strengths over time, we are here as a management team, nothing ever happens overnight but we know we have players in our squad who have talent, and they know they need to marry this talent with consistently training well by adopting a growth mindset and are willing to go through difficult moments and come out of the other

side much stronger. It has been fantastic to see such a close bond between local and diaspora players on the camp, after all, we are all on this exciting journey together as one; players, management team and supporters," he said.

He said, "We collaborate every single day with the sole purpose of improving Pakistan in terms of the standards we demand. There are so many football and life experiences we all have that can lead to great discussions and ultimately better decisions that will benefit the national team going forward. "I urge football fans across Pakistan, especially those in Islamabad to come out and support your team. A packed Jinnah Stadium filled with our enthusiastic supporters would make a tremendous difference," he said.

## Lexi Thompson to retire from golf at season end

SYDNEY (Agencies): Brazilian authorities on Tuesday reported an increase in cases of leptospirosis, a bacterial disease transmitted by rats, in the flooded south, parts of which have been under water for a month.

According to the latest figures from the Rio Grande do Sul State Health Secretariat, five people are confirmed to have died from the disease, while another nine deaths are being investigated. Authorities have recorded 124 cases, and are verifying 922 others.

The state of Rio Grande do Sul has been battered by rain for weeks, and flooded rivers have transformed the streets of towns and cities into putrid, murky rivers. The latest official fig-

ures, excluding leptospirosis deaths, show that 169 people have died and 53 are still missing.

Some 600,000 people have been displaced. Leptospirosis is spread via the urine of infected animals, such as rodents and livestock, which contaminates soil or water. The bacteria can survive for weeks, and outbreaks in humans often take place after heavy rain or flooding.

Symptoms can appear from two days to four weeks after exposure, and are similar to that of the flu or dengue, such as headaches, fever and chills. More serious cases can affect the liver or kidneys. Brazilian authorities have set up a laboratory to test for suspect-



ed cases, and have implemented a vast social media prevention campaign.

"Have you been digging in the mud or walking through flood water and have symptoms of leptospirosis? Go to a health post," said Arita Bergmann, health secretary of Rio Grande do Sul, in a video on Instagram. "Treatment cannot wait, do not stay at home waiting for it to pass, because it can develop into a serious illness," she added.

## Sabalenka advances at rain-swept French Open

PARIS (AFP): Aryna Sabalenka eased into the French Open second round at a rainswept Roland Garros on Tuesday as Novak Djokovic prepared to begin his title defence, confident his Grand Slam pedigree will help turn around his lacklustre season.

Australian Open champion Sabalenka, a semi-finalist in Paris in 2023, over-powered Russian teenager Erika Andreeva 6-1, 6-2 in just 68 minutes under the roof on Court Philippe Chatrier. World number two Sabalenka fired 27 winners past the 100th-ranked Andreeva and broke serve five times in a dominant display.

"I'm trying to do well on clay, it is tough conditions here but I enjoy playing here and I'm just trying to bring my best tennis

every time -- whatever the surface," said Sabalenka.

The Belarusian has made at least the last four at her past six Grand Slams and is expected to be Iga Swiatek's toughest rival in the Pole's bid for a fourth French Open title.

Heavy rain caused play on the outside, uncovered courts to be delayed by five hours and by 6 pm local time only nine of the scheduled 40 matches had been completed. World number one Djokovic, seeking a fourth Roland Garros title and record-extending 25th major, is enduring his worst run since 2018.

Djokovic, 37, has not won a title in 2024 and has yet to make a final with semi-final spots at the Australian Open and Monte Carlo Masters his

best performances. He also suffered the indignity of being accidentally hit on the head by a metal water bottle in Rome which caused nausea and dizziness.

In Geneva last week, where he was knocked out by Tomas Machac of the Czech Republic, Djokovic said he had been suffering from a stomach problem.

"They are rather bumps on the road," said Djokovic, who watched his long-time rival and 14-time champion Rafael Nadal bow out of the tournament against Alexander Zverev on Monday. When asked to elaborate further on his difficulties so far this season, Djokovic opted for discretion. "Various things have been happening in the last couple of months, but I don't

want to get into it. I don't want to open Pandora's Box."

On Tuesday, Djokovic will take on French wildcard Pierre-Hugues Herbert, the world number 142 who hasn't won a match on the main tour this year. Two-time runner-up Casper Ruud, who won clay-court titles in Barcelona and Geneva in the build-up to Roland Garros, cruised to a 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 victory over Brazilian qualifier Felipe Meligeni Alves. "It's great to be back here at Roland Garros," he said. "Hopefully I can make it another good year here."

Ruud was beaten in straight sets by Novak Djokovic in last year's final following a one-sided loss to Rafael Nadal in the 2022 showpiece.



CARDIF: Rain delayed the toss in the third T20I in Cardiff, England vs Pakistan 3rd T20.

## Pakistan outplay Australia in first volleyball match

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan downed Australia in the first match of the Sarsabz Volleyball Series 2024 here at the Liaquat Gymnasium of the Pakistan Sports Complex on Tuesday. Pakistan beat Australia by 3-0 with sets points are 25-22, 25-22, 25-20 in the first game of the three match series. This was the first time that Australian volleyball team was visiting Pakistan.

Pakistan's win was a testament of the hard work and preparation of the players, who demonstrated exceptional teamwork and strategy on the court. The victory has set a positive tone for the series and has energized the fans and supporters of volleyball in Pakistan.

Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob, Chairman of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation, expressed his

pride and satisfaction with the team's performance. "This victory is a great achievement for our team and a reflection of the dedication and effort put in by our players and coaching staff. It is also a momentous occasion for the PVF, as we continue to promote and develop volleyball in Pakistan."

The Sarsabz Volleyball Series 2024, featuring three matches between Pakistan and Australia, promises to deliver more exciting volleyball action. The second match of the series was scheduled for Wednesday (May 29) while third on May 30.

This series was not only an opportunity for the Pakistani team to showcase their talent but also a significant step in strengthening international sports relations and fostering a competitive spirit

among athletes.

Murad Jehan was leading the Green-shirts in the series along with Muhammad Kashheef Naveed appointed as Vice-Captain while Waleed Khan, Murad Khan, Aimal Khan, Usman Faryad Ali, Fakhar Ud Din, Afaq Khan, Abdul Zaheer, Musawer Khan, Muhammad Hamad, Haider Ali, Nasir Ali and Muhammad Yaseen will be part of fourteen members Pakistan squad.

Meanwhile, Nehemiah Mote was captaining the Australian Squad along with Luke Perry, Arshdeep Dosanjh, Jackson Holland, Trent O'dea, Matthew Aubrey, Max Senica, Beau Graham, Thomas Heptinstall, Sam Flowerday, Nicholas Butler, Ethan Garrett, William D'arcy Miles, Jacob Baird members of the playing squad.

## Dubai, Islamabad clubs conclude thrilling polo series

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Polo Series between junior teams of Dubai and Islamabad Polo Clubs came to a close on Tuesday, with the White team emerging victorious.

The two-match series saw talented young players from both teams showcasing their skills. The Islamabad club team featured Akbar Aurangzeb, Chingiz Leghari, Hashim Waheed, and Saem Abbas. The players from both clubs were divided into two teams, White and Blue,

with the White team ultimately winning by 4-2.

The event was attended by families from various countries, including the UAE, Germany, Canada, United Kingdom, and Syria.

Speaking on the occasion, Islamabad Polo Club Manager Col. Nadeem emphasized the significance of these competitions in fostering relations between Pakistan and the UAE. Players from both clubs commended the experience, describing it as the

best they had ever had.

A prize distribution ceremony was held at the conclusion of the series, with Deputy Head of Mission at the UAE Embassy in Pakistan, Muhammad Sultan Al Khitooob, presenting the trophy to the winning team and distributing prizes among the players.

This Polo Series has not only promoted sporting ties between both nations but also provided a platform for young players to showcase their talent and build lasting relationships.

## Tessori unveils trophy of Women's Softball C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori on Tuesday said providing equal opportunities to women players in sports, would not only empower them, but also pave new horizons for future generations.

He expressed these views while unveiling the trophy of the 1st PNSC Inter-Provincial Women's Softball Championship in a grand ceremony held at the Sindh Governor House, said a press release.

Hosting the Inter-Provincial Women Softball Championship was an honor for Sindh, as this championship would further promote equality and mutual respect between the provinces, he said.

Softball Federation of

Pakistan President, Asif Azeem, Senior Vice President Dr. Farhan Essa, Vice President Tehmina Asif, PNSC General Manager Admin Commodore Masood ul Hasan, Assistant Manager Admin Ayesha Leena were also present on the occasion.

Tessori said as Governor of Sindh, he was proud that Sindh is hosting the first women's softball championship at the inter-provincial level.

This event will promote equality, mutual respect and the national unity across the country. The passion for softball among women of Sindh will grow through this championship despite bringing new talent to fore, he said and assured Sindh Softball Association (SSA) of all-out

support for hosting the championship.

President Softball Federation of Pakistan Asif Azeem said that the patronage of softball by the Governor of Sindh was welcome note for this game.

The opening ceremony of the championship will be held at KPT Football Stadium, Karachi on May 30, while the final of the championship would be played on June 1, he said.

SSA President Dr. Farhan Essa said we were fortunate that the unveiling ceremony of the championship trophy was held at the Governor House. Organizing the championship will be very helpful in the promotion and development of softball in the country, he said.

## Bangladesh skipper calls for better wickets

DHAKA (AFP/APP): Bangladesh can only hope to improve their lacklustre T20 World Cup record once they get better pitches at home, new captain Najmul Hossain Shanto told AFP ahead of the showpiece tournament.

The South Asian nation is one of nine countries to have played all T20 World Cups since the tournament began in 2007 but is alone in never having made it to the knockout stage. Najmul, appointed all-format captain in February aged just 25 to replace newly minted politician Shakib Al Hasan, blamed their failures on home pitches ill-suited to the typical run feasts seen elsewhere in the 20-over format.

"First of all, we have to play on good wickets," he told AFP. "Some people can take it as an excuse, but it is really a fact that we play very few matches on a good wicket." Bangladeshi pitches are known for low-scoring matches and only one player in their World Cup squad, top-order batsman Towhid Hridoy, has a T20 international strike rate above 130.

"It is difficult to change things in six months. If we continue on a good wicket for one or two years, then these strike rates will improve," said Najmul. Ninth-ranked Bangladesh have nonetheless started

seeing some improvement in the short game with series wins at home against powerhouses Australia, England and New Zealand this decade. But there have been hiccups along the way such as the 2-1 defeat by the USA in a three-match warm-up series in Houston this week.

"We have won a few series and we have won against big teams," Najmul said before the USA series. "The confidence of the team is in a good position."

"The matches we have played recently, if we can be like that in the World Cup, if we can take the decisions properly, if we can execute our plans, then it is possible to do something good." This year's T20 World Cup -- which begins June 1 in the United States and West Indies -- is likely to be a curtain call for some of Bangladesh's most formidable players.

Najmul's predecessor Shakib, still the top-ranked T20 all-rounder, made a brief cameo for this month's home series against Zimbabwe but had not played a 20-over international for nearly a year beforehand. Shakib, 37, was elected to Bangladesh's parliament in January and looks set to hang up his cap shortly along with fellow all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad, 38. "Of course, I want them to play in the

World Cup, giving their best," Najmul said.

"It is their decision when they will end their careers. As a captain, I would like them to share their experience with every player."

Bangladeshi face an uphill battle in their group with formidable opponents in South Africa and Sri Lanka, along with Nepal, playing in only their second T20 World Cup, and the Netherlands. They begin in Dallas on June 7 against Sri Lanka, a side that Najmul's men have developed a simmering rivalry with since last year's ODI World Cup.

Their match in India generated considerable rancour when Sri Lanka's Angelo Mathews became the first-ever batsman to be timed out in international cricket. Sri Lanka reigned the row during a tour of Bangladesh in March in which they celebrated their T20 series win by pointing to imaginary watches on their wrists, prompting Najmul to accuse them of not having "moved on" from the Mathews incident.

"We have already moved on," he told AFP when asked about any lingering ill-will. "From the day the incident happened, we did not do anything that would make us think about it. I can't say much about them. But as a team, we are focusing on our own game."





## In brief

### NDMA warns of deceptive website FERU

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Tuesday warned the masses to be aware of a website titled "FEDERAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE UNIT-PAKISTAN" which was falsely representing the organisation. The website has been unlawfully advertising job vacancies and soliciting application processing fees, a news release said. "We strongly advise public to exercise due diligence and verify the legitimacy of any employment offers through NDMA'S official website and other contact channels. <http://www.ndma.gov.pk/> The official website of NDMA Pak is the sole source of authentic information regarding job opportunities and other related information," the NDMA said. The NDMA appreciated public cooperation in remaining vigilant against such practices.

### Eight illegal arm holders netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested eight illegal arm holders and recovered arms, ammunition from their possession during crackdown here on Tuesday. According to police spokesman, Race Course police held Waqas and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession and 01 pistol 30 bore was recovered from Sajawal. Similarly, Jatali police nabbed Asif and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his custody and 01 pistol 30 bore was recovered from Razaq. While, Dharmyal police recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from Fazal Wahab. Following operation, Chonra police arrested Irfan and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore from his possession and 01 pistol 30 bore was recovered from Abdul Samad while 04 round pistol 30 bore were recovered from Javed. Police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. Divisional SPs appreciated the performance of police teams and said that the crackdown against illegal arms holders will be continued without any discrimination.

### Two bike lifters arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): R.A.Bazar police have arrested two bike lifters and recovered four stolen motorcycles from their possession, said a police spokesman. He informed that police rounded up two bike lifters namely Javed Rehman and Hamad Rashid who were allegedly involved in several bike lifting cases. He said that a team under the supervision of SHO, R.A.Bazar Police Station managed to net two bike lifters and recovered four stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Potohar, Nasir Nawaz said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

### Police arrest four

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police on the directives of the Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi conducted raids in different areas and netted four accused for possessing weapons, ammunition, and other items. According to a police spokesman, Bani, Kahuta, and Jatali police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up four accused namely Faisal, Abdullah, Naem, and Abdul Raheem, and recovered three 30-bore pistols, ammunition, and a dagger. The SSP said that strict action in accordance with the law was being taken against the lawbreakers and operations.

# Tarar greets nation on 26th anniversary of Yaum-e-Takbeer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday congratulated the nation on the 26th anniversary of Yaum-e-Takbeer.

"Twenty-six years ago, Pakistan got the honour of becoming the first nuclear power in the Muslim world and the 7th nuclear power in the world," the minister said in a statement.

He said that Pakistan's defense became impregnable that day. Yaum-e-Takbeer was a golden and memorable day in history, on this day Pakistan announced that no one can

enslave it, he remarked.

On this day, the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif by rejecting pressure, proved to the world that Pakistanis cannot be coerced. "Every individual who created, nurtured and implemented the nuclear program is a hero of the nation whom we salute," Attaullah Tarar added.

The minister reiterated the commitment that there will be no compromise on Pakistan's independence, sovereignty and national interests. "On this day, we salute the late Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, the architect of the nuclear program, his team and all the scientists,"

he said.

On the occasion of May 28, the people involved in May 9 arson, have hatched a new conspiracy but they will never succeed.

He said by distorting the history of 1971, they have stooped so low that they were attacking the integrity of the country.

After loss of power, they had gone out of senses as they were trying to harm the country.

Tarar said they will never succeed in their conspiracies and Pakistan and those who made defense of the country impregnable on May 28, 1998, will emerge victorious.

## Minister admires EU on recognizing Palestine independent state

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said the recognition of the independent state of Palestine by European countries is a welcome step.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, he said that the Pakistani government endorsed this important development and paid our heartfelt congratulations to the Palestinian brothers on this progress.

Speaking in favour of the Palestinian State, the minister said that finally the whole world has practically realized the human atrocities of Israel in Palestine and it has been proved that the globe should come together for the freedom and inde-



pendence of Palestine.

He further said that Israel's brutality and oppression of innocent citizens have been revealed all over the world. He added that now Israel should leave its obstinacy as 146 countries including Spain, Norway and Ireland have recognized Palestine as an independent State.

Aleem Khan indicated

that this issue has been taken because the freedom and autonomy of Palestine are by the International Charter. He said the establishment of an independent Palestinian State is a source of pride for the Muslim Ummah and Inshallah the day is not far when Palestinians will be free and an independent State of Palestine will be established.

## PHA organizes rally to celebrate 'Youm-e-Takbeer'

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi here on Tuesday organized a rally in connection with 'Youm-e-Takbeer'.

The rally was led by Director General (DG) PHA, Ahmed Hasan Ranjha. PHA staff, students and citizens belonging to different walks of life participated in the rally which started from PHA Head Office and concluded at Liaquat Bagh, Murree Road.

The DG on the occasion said that Pakistan became a nuclear power on May 28, 1998, and Pakistan's prestige and integrity at the global level increased and

Pakistan's defense was made impregnable.

Ahmad Hasan Ranjha said that 'Youm-e-Takbeer' was celebrated today on the occasion of its 26th anniversary of Pakistan's nuclear tests with the determination to show unity and solidarity in every field of life to protect the territorial integrity, freedom and sovereignty of Pakistan.

It was May 28, 1998 that led to the acquisition of invincible defense capabilities for Pakistan and ensured regional stability through the balance of power, he added.

Ahmad Hasan Ranjha further said that for the people of Pakistan, 'Youm-e-

Takbeer' is also a day to renew the pledge that the security of the beloved country would never be compromised.

"We pledge on this day that the way Pakistan's defense was made impregnable on May 28, 1998, we will all work together day and night to ensure the economic security of the country," he added.

Special prayers were also offered for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan, security and stability of the country. The participants carrying national flags and banners also raised slogans 'Allahu Akbar and Pakistan Zindabad.'

## 13 drug peddlers held; cache of narcotics recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Following the special directives of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police has launched a special "Nasha Ab Nahi" movement to eradicate narcotics and keep youngsters safe from the curse of narcotics.

A public relations officer on Tuesday said that, during the last 24 hours, the Islamabad Police apprehended 13 drug peddlers from different areas of the city and recovered a huge cache of drugs from their possession.

Following these directions, the Aabpara police team arrested two accused namely Sana Ullah and Bakhtawar Khan, and recovered 1,045 grams of heroin

from their possession.

The Shalimar police team arrested an accused namely Javed Masih and recovered 20 liters of liquor from his possession.

Similarly, the Sangjani police team arrested an accused namely Afaq, and recovered 140 grams hashish from his possession. The Sabzi Mandi police team arrested an accused namely Shayan and recovered 511 gram heroin from his possession.

Likewise, the Phulgran police team arrested four accused namely Muhammad Ali, Abdul Qudos, Muhammad Yaseen, and Muhammad Usman, and recovered 1,779 gram heroin from their possession. The Nilore police team arrested

an accused namely Zeeshan Ali and recovered 1,080 gram heroin from his possession.

Furthermore, the Golra police team arrested three accused namely Abrar, Zameer, and Shakeel, and recovered 22 liters of liquor and 112 grams Ice from his possession.

Meanwhile, separate cases have been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.

SSP Operations Islamabad directed the police officers to further intensify the crackdown against the criminal elements. "The safety and security of the citizens is our foremost priority and no laxity will be tolerated in this regard", he maintained.

## IRSA releases 341,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 341,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 379,100 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarela Dam was 1467.93 feet and was 69.93 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow each in the dam was recorded as 152,400 cusecs.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1184.50 feet, which was 134.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.

The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 67,300 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 222,500, 158,700, 90,100 and 40,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 99,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 35,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: Ladies on the way under the cover of umbrellas to protect them from sunstroke during a hot weather at Ghouri Town. —APP Photo

## Naqvi announces initiatives to provide relief to residents

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday during his visit to Capital Development Authority (CDA) headquarters announced five initiatives with the aim to facilitate and provide best and fastest services for the residents of Islamabad.

He announced to launch of Capital Emergency Services in Islamabad and establishment of Capital Waste Management Company in Islamabad besides, establishment of

Capital Safe City Authority, establishment of CBD Islamabad and Capital WASA will be built for the convenience of the citizens of Islamabad.

Mohsin Naqvi assigned the task to Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa, to expedite the projects. "Inshallah soon Islamabad will be made a model city," said Mohsin Naqvi.

During his visit to CDA headquarters, the minister met the staff of Ambulance 1122 and Fire

Brigade and urged them to perform their duties diligently.

He directed to merge Ambulance, Fire Brigade and Water Rescue Services under Capital Emergency Services. He said that citizens will be able to avail emergency services by calling at Rescue 1122 in case of any emergency and a unified emergency control room will be established in CDA for live tracking of vehicles through GPS.

He directed to pay special attention on the staff training of staff while

ordering for setting up new emergency services 1122 stations in the city.

He also directed to fill the sanctioned vacant positions in Capital Development Authority (CDA) on merit while the number of ambulances may also be increased in Islamabad, he added. Chairman CDA and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Mohammad Ali Randhawa, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Memon and other emergency services officials were also present on the occasion.

## Rana Tanveer pays tribute to nation's heroes on Youm-e-Takbeer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industry, Production, and Food Security, Rana Tanveer on Tuesday paid tribute to the nation's heroes on the occasion of Youm-e-Takbeer.

"I pay tribute to the senior leadership of Pakistan Muslim League, especially former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, senior military leadership and scientists of Pakistan," said Rana Tanveer.

According to the Ministry of Industry statement, due to his determined will and courage, the defense of Pakistan became impregnable for ever.

He said that Pakistan's political, military, and scientific leadership came together to achieve this milestone, making May 28 a proud day for the nation.

Pakistan has crossed an important milestone in the face of constant defense threats. Today is definitely a proud day for us, as our dear country has emerged as a nuclear power on the map of the world, he added.

Rana Tanveer emphasized that Youm-e-Takbeer symbolizes the power of unity and strong will, enabling the nation to overcome external and internal challenges.

He urged the nation to come together under the green crescent flag to defend the country and stabilize Pakistan's economy.

## Salik for promotion of tolerance, unity to fight extremism

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Chaudhary Salik Hussain on Tuesday emphasized the concerted efforts to promote tolerance and understanding as well as unity to fight the menace of extremism posing threats to the world's peace and security.

"In today's world, extremism poses one of the most potent threats to peace and security... Let us promote tolerance and understanding recognizing that our diversity is our strength. We must stand united against extremism and injustice," the minister said addressing a symposium titled "From Gandhara to the World: The Legacy of Gandharan Buddhism" held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here in connection

with Vesakh Day.

The two-day event brought together religious leaders and experts from Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam, besides scholars, diplomats, historians, and art enthusiasts to provide them a platform to exchange ideas and foster connections.

The minister said that the diverse gathering representing different countries and cultures underscored the deep and enduring ties between the nations, besides serving as a reminder of the profound connections that unite them in shared aspirations.

Highlighting the significance of intercultural and interfaith dialogue, Minister Salik said the Vesakh festival reminded us of the profound wisdom and compassion that underpinned

Buddhist teachings.

In his address, Minister of Buddhasana, Religious and Cultural Affairs of Sri Lanka Vidura Wikramanayaka called for harnessing the values of Buddha and promoting cultural diplomacy to bring the people and nations together.

"Let us make Gandhara a bridge to serve for the purpose... We have to make Gandhara a living legacy," he remarked. He said Gandhara was a focal point of human civilization from where the message of Buddha was disseminated to other parts of the world.

He emphasised reviving Gandhara heritage not just as a tourist attraction but rather for self-development which was the epitome of Buddha's teachings.

## CDA implements efficiency rules for improved governance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Randhawa has approved the new Efficiency and Discipline Rules, 2020 to ensure transparent, effective internal accountability and streamline procedures within the civic body.

The rules aim to expedite inquiries and disciplinary actions, addressing delays. Approval was granted during a headquarters meeting that assessed the Administration

Wing's performance, encompassing Human Resource Development, Discipline Directorate, and other units.

Chairman CDA emphasized implementing a reward and punishment system to enhance service delivery and overall employee performance. He highlighted the adoption of Efficiency and Discipline Rules, 2020, to ensure swift conclusion of inquiries and disciplinary proceedings, emphasizing strict accountability.

The Chairman was

informed that currently, there is no set timeframe for concluding proceedings, leading to prolonged cases. He stated that the new rules will establish clear timelines for each step and hold inquiry officers accountable for delays in finalizing inquiries.

The Chairman of CDA was briefed that the Discipline Directorate is actively handling inquiries. Nearly 60 inquiries have been concluded in the last 4 to 5 months, with 55 new inquiries initiated during the same period.



ISLAMABAD: A major fire that broke out range on Margalla Hills was extinguished heat wave in the federal Capital. —APP Photo



126 personnel graduated

KABUL(BNA): Marking a milestone in military training, 126 young personnel from various units and divisions of the Ministry of National Defense have graduated after completing a four-month professional training program at the Hazrat Abdullah bin Masood Joint Combat Training Command. The Ministry of National Defense's press office announced that the graduation ceremony was held on Tuesday, with officials addressing the new graduates.

Ministry steps up efforts

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Commerce and Industry says that they have increased marketing efforts for domestic products to be sold on global markets. Officials said markets of Central Asia and Russia are viable markets for Afghan goods and that they are trying to hold expos in these countries. They also said that large expos of Afghan products will be held in Uzbekistan, Russia and Kazakhstan in the near future.

Khalid Hanafi asserts women rights protected

KABUL (TOLOnews): Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, the acting Minister of Vice and Virtue, called on the world to reflect the true image of Afghanistan and to avoid misjudgments about the Islamic Emirate.

In a statement, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue said that Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, during a meeting with Turkish media representatives, stated that the Islamic Emirate has no other request from the world except to portray the true image of Afghanistan.

According to the statement, ensuring the rights of the country's citizens was

another key issue discussed in the meeting.

Mohammad Faqir Mohammadi, the deputy of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, said: "The minister made this request to show the true image of the Emirate to the world. Some people are biased and reflect the policies of the Islamic Emirate differently."

The acting Minister of Vice and Virtue once again assured the protection of citizens' rights and added that women's rights have been ensured in Afghanistan since the Islamic Emirate came to power.

Tafsir Syahposh, a women's rights activist, said: "Schools and universities are closed, new restrictions are imposed every day, and we do not see any rights being respected."

Since the rise of the Islamic Emirate, human rights, especially women's and girls' rights, have been a topic of discussion in Afghanistan. However, the Islamic Emirate has consistently emphasized that women's rights are protected within the framework of Islamic Sharia and that other countries should not interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

EU brings relief to victims of floods

KABUL (Ariana News): The European Union has pledged 200,000 (\$217,000) to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to families affected by the widespread flooding that hit large parts of the country over the past weeks.

The aid will benefit 28,000 people in some of the most affected provinces, particularly in the western, northern and eastern regions, the EU said in a statement Tuesday.

The funding is part of the EU's overall contribution to the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and responds to an Emergency Appeal from the IFRC to fund critical interventions.

The emergency response includes the provision of health care services, shelter items, dignity kits and household items such as blankets, jerricans, tarpaulins, and kitchen sets.

Multipurpose cash grants will also be provided to ensure they can meet their daily basic needs.

The latest contribution comes on top of the aid package of 400,000, channeled earlier this month in response to the floods.

Since 10 May, heavy rainfall has been affecting northern and northeastern Afghanistan, causing widespread floods and mudslides that have resulted in casualties and extensive damage.

According to the United Nations and other media reports, more than 300 people are estimated to have died.

As thousands of houses are also destroyed or damaged, a large number of people are displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance. The floods of this spring have affected 24 out of a total of 34 provinces in Afghanistan.

Agreement signed for railway design

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Afghanistan Railway Authority signed a survey and design agreement for the Torghundi-Herat railway with a domestic company.

The survey and design process for this railway, which extends from Torghundi port to Rabat Parian near Herat city, is expected to be completed within three months.

Abdul Bari Sediqi, deputy of the Afghanistan Railway Authority, said: "Once the Torghundi-Herat railway is connected to the airport, the next plans of the Afghanistan Railway Authority are to extend this line towards Farah, Helmand, Kandahar, Spin Boldak, and Chaman, enabling us to connect to Pakistan's railway. This will establish bilateral regional transportation links."

The Afghanistan Railway Authority assures that the construction of this railway will commence after the survey and design phase is completed.

According to this authority, the practical construction work on this railway is also set to begin.



Sultan Ahmad Sarwari, the head of the contracting company, said: "Our team will arrive in Herat from Russia this week. We will conduct an initial and final survey to determine the length of this line. Subsequently, we will focus on the survey and design work."

Local officials in Herat state that the implementation of the Torghundi-Herat

railway project will bring economic transformation to the province.

Noor Ahmad Islam Jar, the governor of Herat, said: "Herat will become a crossroads for goods traveling from northern Asia to southern Asia and vice versa. This is a blessing from Almighty Allah for the people of Afghanistan, especially for the people of Herat."

The Torghundi-Herat railway is recognized as one of the main railway routes in the country, connecting Afghanistan to Central Asia, Russia, and China.

Dozens of wagons carrying imported goods from various countries arrive daily at the Torghundi station on the border between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan.

Afghan Minister meets Chinese ambassador



KABUL (BNA): During a productive meeting, with Chinese Ambassador Zhao Xing, the acting Minister of Urban Development and Housing, Sheikh Hamdullah Nomani, emphasized that China's aid and investment in Afghanistan will further strengthen the relations between the two countries.

In recent diplomatic efforts, the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing released a statement on Tuesday, highlighting the meeting

between Sheikh Hamdullah Nomani and Ambassador Zhao Xing in Kabul, where they discussed various topics.

In the meeting, the acting Minister provided a comprehensive update on the progress of the Neela Bagh housing project and requested that the Chinese side encourage Chinese investors to invest in the New Kabul City project.

Ambassador Zhao Xing stated that he had discussed the quality and pace of the Neela Bagh housing project

with the relevant company and expressed hope that the project would be completed on schedule.

Emphasizing the importance of ongoing projects, he described the Neela Bagh project as valuable and assured that efforts would be made to implement the remaining sections.

The Ambassador further expressed confidence that completing key projects in Afghanistan would lead to increased investment, marking a positive start for the future of both countries.

Nearly 3,000 Afghan migrants deported

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation has reported the forced deportation of nearly 3,000 Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran.

In a statement released on Tuesday, May 28, the ministry stated that 622 Afghan refugees were deported from Pakistan, and 2,859 refugees were deported from Iran.

According to the statement, these refugees returned to the country through the Spin Boldak border, the Torkham border in Nangarhar province, and the Islam Qala border.

This comes amid a dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, exacerbated by the recently forced deportation of Afghan refugees from neighboring countries and natural disasters.

The forced deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan has worsened the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Thousands of refugees are being sent back to a country already struggling with severe economic and social challenges.

The recent deadly floods in various provinces have

added to the woes of the Afghan population. These floods have caused extensive damage to infrastructure, homes, and agricultural lands, further increasing the demand for urgent humanitarian assistance.

With the expulsion of refugees and the impact of natural disasters, the need for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan has reached unprecedented levels.

The international community is urged to provide immediate assistance to address the escalating crisis and support the affected populations.

ARCS official in Turkey to seek humanitarian aid



KABUL (Ariana News): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) said on X the organization's deputy president, Nooruddin Turabi and his delegation, met with the heads of 17 humanitarian and charitable organizations in Istanbul, Turkey.

These 17 charitable institutions, which work under the umbrella of a union, were provided with comprehensive information regarding the economic situation and problems of Afghans by Turabi.

"Besides appreciating the humanitarian activities of these organizations, I requested them to boost

their assistance with the vulnerable and affected citizens by recent floods in Afghanistan," the organization said in its post on X.

According to ARCS during this meeting union officials assured Turabi of their support.

On 10 and 11 May, heavy rainfall and flash floods struck northeastern Afghanistan, affecting 21 districts across Badakhshan (5), Baghlan (10), and Takhar (6) provinces.

To date, reports suggest that 347 people are confirmed killed and 1,651 injured.

UNICEF reported this

week that approximately 7,800 homes were either destroyed or damaged, leaving over 5,000 families displaced.

In addition to damaged or destroyed roads, bridges, health facilities and public schools, agricultural land and livestock were also lost.

Between 16 and 17 May 2024, Ghor province experienced heavy rains and flash floods that affected 10 districts, with Murghab being the most affected. Reports suggest that 40 people were killed, including 10 children; 20 people are missing and 49 are injured.

6.5m children to face crisis levels of hunger

KABUL (Ariana News): An estimated 6.5 million children in Afghanistan – or nearly three out of ten – will face crisis or emergency levels of hunger this year as the country feels the immediate impacts of floods, the long term effects of drought and the return of Afghans from Pakistan and Iran, said Save the Children in a statement this week.

New figures forecast that 28% of the population – or about 12.4 million people – will face acute food insecurity before October. Of those, nearly 2.4 million are predicted to experience emergency levels of hunger, which is one level below famine.

The figures show a slight improvement from the last report in October 2023, but underline the continuing need for assistance, with poverty affecting one in two Afghans.

Torrential rain and flash floods this month in Northern Afghanistan have killed more than 400 people, destroyed or damaged thousands of homes and turned farmland to mud.

Children in the flood hit areas have limited access to clean water, with some reporting stomach problems, Save the Children said.

In addition, an estimated 2.9 million children under the age of five are projected to suffer from acute malnutrition in 2024.

Dr Nawid who works for a Save the Children health team in Northern Afghanistan said: "These people face financial problems.

From an agricultural standpoint, they have land but don't have water or adequate land for farming – they are jobless. These things affect children.

"When children are affected, they may not be able to go to school or may become busy working to find food for their homes. They become deprived of their rights or become ill and malnourished. All these problems are affecting children."

3 million children in Afghanistan suffer from malnutrition

KABUL (Khaama Press): The World Food Programme (WFP) announced on World Nutrition Day that 3 million children in Afghanistan are suffering from malnutrition.

On Tuesday, May 28, in observance of World Nutrition Day, the WFP warned on its social media page about the ongoing situation in Afghanistan, emphasizing that the financial crisis and humanitarian conditions have had the greatest impact on children.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has written that three million children in Afghanistan are suffering from malnutrition, and among them, only 1.3 million have received aid.

This comes as the latest report from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs indicates that the number of people in need in Afghanistan has increased fivefold.

Adam Serrano, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, recently stated in a press conference that 23 million people in Afghanistan will need humanitarian assistance this year.

This comes amid the forced deportation of Afghan migrants from Pakistan and Iran has worsened the already dire situation in Afghanistan.

Thousands of displaced individuals are returning to a country struggling with instability and lack of resources. This influx of returnees has placed additional strain on the already overburdened humanitarian

system.

The shortages of funding for aid agencies and the lack of infrastructure within Afghanistan make it nearly impossible to meet the basic needs of these vulnerable populations.

Adding to the crisis, deadly flash flooding has exacerbated the hardships faced by Afghans. These natural disasters have destroyed homes, displaced families, and further depleted the limited resources available.



Herat-Khaf Railway planned to be completed in 18-24 months

HERAT (TOLOnews): The construction of the second segment of the fourth phase of the Herat-Khaf railway began in Herat.

This railway is planned to span 47 kilometers and is expected to be operational in less than two years.

Officials from the Afghanistan Railway Authority stated that upon completion, the Herat-Khaf railway will connect Afghanistan to global markets.

Bakht Rahman Sharafat, head of the Railway Authority, said: "According to the contract with the

company, this project will be operational within 18 to 24 months. This railway will connect Herat's industrial city and airport to Europe via Iran."

The construction of the fourth phase of the Herat-Khaf railway is being jointly carried out by Afghan, Russian, and Turkish companies.

A large, standard station is also planned to be built at the end of this railway near Herat's industrial city.

Zia-ur-Rahman Farahi, the representative of the contracting company, said:

"In addition to the railway construction, a standard terminal worth \$5 million will be built. Green spaces will also be created along the entire railway route."

According to officials, all the equipment for this railway will be imported from Kazakhstan.

"Afghanistan is the heart of Asia, and Herat is the artery of this heart. Herat can connect Afghanistan to regional and global countries," said Hamidullah Khadem, head of the Chamber of Industries and Mines in Herat.

Hayatullah Mahajer Farahi, acting Deputy Governor of Herat, said: "This railway can be beneficial for exports, imports, and the transport of goods for traders and investors."

The Herat-Khaf railway consists of four sections, with two sections operational in Iran and one in Afghanistan.

The fourth section, over 90 kilometers long, is divided into two smaller segments, with more than 60 percent of the construction of the first segment already completed.



# No restriction in law for presenting budget before federation: PA informed

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Finance Minister Aftab Alam in his winding up speech on budget debate for the financial year 2024-25, in the Speaker Babar Salim Swati in chair on Tuesday said that there is no restriction in the law that the province cannot present the budget before the federal government.

Responding the criticism of the opposition, Minister Finance Aftab Alam said that the budget has been made in the same proportion as the 14 percent that is made in NFC. He said that after the merger, the share of our province has increased from fourteen to 19 percent which is not being given to us. We will get Rs902 billion at the ratio of 14 percent and Rs260 billion at the ratio of 19 percent, he added. Aftab Alam said that in 2023 census, the proportion of our province has increased more.

The BRT project will become a sustainable project once its all the projects are completed, said Alam. He said that if the federal government does not provide full funds for the tribal districts, then the funds of the province will be used there to provide facilities to people. Rs2 billion has been allocated for Chashma Lift Bank Canal and can give more money for this project in future, Alam informed the House.

He said that three projects of PEDO will be completed and start working in August this year. He further informed the House that under AGM Qazi formula, our hydropower profit will be Rs1,800 billion "Under the 2016 agreement, our hydropower arrears due to the federation is Rs 111 billion." Like Swat Expressway, work will also be done on DI Khan Motorway.

Earlier, Parliamentary Leader of PPP Ahmad Karim Kundi said that the NFC award 2009 and 18 constitutional amendments were revolutionary measures after the 73rd constitution in the country. Ahmed Karim



Kundi said that if the seventh NFC award was not there, today the province would have received Rs500 billion instead of Rs900 billion. Out of Rs1,754 billion, the province's own income is only Rs93 billion, Ahmad Kundi said.

He said that the provincial government wants to solve every problem by force., adding problems will be solved by expediency and understanding instead of power. In PTI's central government, the province received only Rs80 billion in terms of net profit of electricity, Kundi criticized the government. He said that real profit of electricity is the constitutional right of this province.

In ten years, only fifty megawatt projects were built in the province, said Ahmad Karim Kundi It is estimated to receive Rs40 billion from the rest of the provinces for the former FATA, Kundi told the House. He said that the provinces will give money for former FATA as it is not written in any document. The government is requested to bring institutional reforms instead of the royal decree, said Ahmad Karim Kundi

If reforms are brought, they will support this so-called state of Medina, Ahmad Karim Kundi said. May 28, Takbeer Day is not only the credit of scientists, politicians have played an important role in this, Ahmad Kundi said, First Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and then Nawaz Sharif gets credit for it, he said.

The party should appreciate the good work, whatever it is, Ahmad Kundi concluded. Sobia Shahid of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz said

that Nawaz Sharif made Pakistan's defense impregnable by detonating nuclear weapons on May 28. She said that the projects started by Jamaat-e-Islami MPA in Dir, have been canceled by the KP government

She said that the university which was inaugurated by Imran Khan in Dir has been abolished. A Special Assistant has been appointed from Dir but it has been completely ignored. If the people of Dir are not given their right, I will attack the Chief Minister's House together with the people, she said.

Makhdoomzada Aftab Haider of JUIF, said that Rs362 billion have been allocated for education, but the children of teachers themselves are enrolled in private schools. He said that no candidate of KP visible in CSS examination. Rs332 billion is allocated for health but the hospital in my area does not even give an injection, he said.

He said that the health card does not include any government or private hospital in the two tehsils of my constituency in Dera Ismail Khan. He said that nothing special for KP police salary in budget. The salaries of government employees should be increased by 50 percent instead of 10 percent, said Haider. The DIC has oppressed the province by taking a loan of Rs632 billion during 10 years, Aftab Haider added.

Meanwhile, the House also passed a resolution moved by Abdus Salam Afridi of SIC with majority against the inclusion of retired judges in election tribunal. Later, the Speaker Babar Salim Swati adjourned the proceedings till Wednesday 2pm.



OTTAWA: Senior Judge, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Syed Mansoor Ali Shah meeting with Chief Justice of Canada, Richard Wagner.

## Pakistan grants Delhi consular access to two Indian spies

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad has granted consular access to New Delhi for meeting two Indian spies imprisoned in Pakistan. According to media reports, the consular access was provided on the request of the Indian government.

Pakistan decided to grant access to Indian to meet two youth from Occupied Kashmir who were arrested from Gilgit Baltistan on charges of spying for New Delhi. The two Indian spies were identified as 29-year-old Feroze Ahmad Lone and 24-year-old Noor Muhammad Wani. Both belonged to Gurez area of Held Kashmir's Bandihurah town.

According to the Indian media, both youth had been missing from Occupied Kashmir since November 2018, said the sources and added they had crossed border illegally and got arrested on spying charges. The sources further revealed that the two Indian spies were shifted to Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail from Gilgit Baltistan prison during the last few days.

A three-member delegation from Indian High Commission in Islamabad met with the two prisoners at Adial Jail, said the diplomatic sources and added the Indian delegation included HC's first secretary Venkatesh Varlo Sidhara and two staffers – Dharowabar Gujar and Peetam Singh Kiran. During the meeting, Interior Ministry officers were present, said the diplomatic sources.

## IMF predicts increase in Pakistan's trade deficit

WASHINGTON (INP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has predicted an increase in Pakistan's trade deficit. According to details, the IMF has forecasted that in the next fiscal year, Pakistan's trade deficit is expected to increase, with estimates of growth in both exports and imports.

The IMF has stated that in the new fiscal year, Pakistan's trade deficit is likely to increase by \$4.165 billion. Pakistan's imports are estimated to increase by \$5.517 billion, while exports are expected to rise by \$1.352 billion. According to the IMF, Pakistan's trade deficit could increase to \$27.923 billion.

The forecast for the new fiscal year predicts the volume of imports to be \$60.48 billion, while Pakistan's exports are estimated to be \$32.56 billion in the next fiscal year. In the current fiscal year, Pakistan's trade deficit is expected to be \$23.76 billion, with imports estimated at \$54.96 billion. By the end of the current fiscal year, exports are expected to reach \$31.2 billion.

Earlier, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released an official statement following discussions with Pakistan. The statement confirms that Islamabad has formally requested a new loan program from the IMF. The IMF delegation, led by Mission Chief Nathan Porter, visited Pakistan and held extensive negotiations from May 13 to May 23 to discuss the country's economic improvements. The statement highlights that the Pakistani government is making serious efforts to increase revenue and emphasizes the need for fair tax collection from privileged sectors.

# Country in grip of high temperature, heatwave

MOHENJO DARO (INP): Upper parts of the country are expected to get much needed relief amid a persistent heatwave with the arrival of a westerly after temperatures rose above 52 degrees Celsius (125.6 degrees Fahrenheit) in Pakistan's southern province of Sindh, the highest reading of the summer and close to the country's record high amid an ongoing heatwave.

Extreme temperatures throughout Asia over the past month were made worse most likely as a result of human-driven climate change, a team of international scientists have said. In Mohenjo Daro, a town in Sindh known for archaeological sites that date back to the Indus Valley Civilization built in 2500 BC, temperatures rose as high as 52.2 C (126 F) over the last 24 hours, a senior official of the Pakistan Meteorological Department, Shahid Abbas told Reuters. The reading is the highest of the summer so far, and approached the town's and country's record highs of 53.5 C (128.3 F) and 54 C (129.2 F) respectively.

Mohenjo Daro is a small town that experiences extremely hot summers and mild winters, and low rainfall, but its limited markets, including bakeries, tea shops, mechanics, electronic repair shops, and fruit and vegetable sellers, are usually bustling with customers. "The customers are

not coming to the restaurant because of extreme heat. I sit idle at the restaurant with these tables and chairs and without any customers," Wajid Ali, 32, who owns a tea stall in the town.

"I take baths several times a day which gives me a little relief. Also there is no power. The heat has made us very uneasy." Close to Ali's shop is an electronic repairs shop run by Abdul Khaliq, 30, who was sat working with the shop's shutter half down to shield him from the sun. Khaliq also complained about the heat affecting business. Local doctor Mushtaq Ahmed added that the locals have adjusted to living in the extreme weather conditions and prefer staying indoors or near water. "Pakistan is the fifth most vulnerable country to the impact of climate change. We have witnessed above normal rains, floods," Rubina Khurshheed Alam, the prime minister's coordinator on climate, said at a news conference on Friday adding that the government is running awareness campaigns due to the heatwaves.

Meanwhile, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a weather alert warning of rain accompanied by dust, wind, and thunderstorms in the upper regions of the country from Tuesday to Saturday. The alert advises all concerned institutions to exercise caution during this period.

The NDMA has highlighted the risk of landslides and mudslides that could disrupt roads and traffic systems in upland areas. Heavy rain in these regions may also cause flooding in local rivers and nullahs, prompting the NDMA to instruct relevant departments to remain vigilant.

Local emergency departments have been directed to keep personnel and machinery on standby to handle any potential floods or landslides. The district administration has been tasked with evacuating residents from slums and relocating them to safer areas to prevent casualties and property damage. There is also concern over the potential damage to standing crops, electricity poles, and other structures due to strong winds. The NDMA has advised the public to avoid taking shelter in weak structures during the rain and to be cautious of the increased risk of lightning strikes during thunderstorms.

Farmers are urged to adjust their cropping routines in accordance with the anticipated weather conditions. Tourists and travelers in mountainous regions should exercise caution and seek weather and route information from local authorities before embarking on their journeys. The NDMA's alert is aimed at mitigating risks and ensure the safety of residents and travelers in the affected regions.

# 12 Indians killed in quarry collapse after cyclone rains

NEW DELHI (AFP): Torrential rains in the wake of a powerful cyclone caused the collapse of a quarry in India's Mizoram state killing 12 people, government officials said on Tuesday. "So far 12 bodies have been found, we are looking for more," deputy commissioner of Aizawl district Nazuk Kumar told AFP.

Rescue efforts in the quarry were being hampered by "heavy rains", police director general Anil Shukla said, NDTV news network reported. Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma offered compensation to families of the victims of the "landslide due to Cyclone Remal".

"I pray for the success of rescue and relief operations and wish a speedy recovery of the injured," India's President Droupadi Murmu said on social media. In Mizoram, several highways and key roads were disrupted by landslides. All schools were shut and government employees were asked to work from home.

India's weather office has issued warnings of extremely heavy rainfall across Mizoram and other northeastern states on Tuesday. In India's neighbouring Assam state, one person was killed and heavy rains had cut the power supply, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa

Sarma said in a statement. The cyclone made landfall in low-lying Bangladesh and neighbouring India on Sunday evening with fierce gales and crashing waves. Overall, at least 38 people died in the cyclone or storms in its wake. In India, eight people died in West Bengal state, officials said Tuesday, updating an earlier toll of six, taking the total killed in the country to at least 21. In neighbouring Bangladesh, which bore the brunt of the cyclone that made landfall on Sunday, at least 17 people died, according to the disaster management office and police.

# ‘Strike in Rafah was result of a tragic mistake’

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP): Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that a "tragic mistake" was made in an Israeli strike in the southern Gaza city of Rafah that set fire to a camp housing displaced Palestinians and, according to local officials, killed at least 45 people.

The strike only added to the surging international criticism Israel has faced over its war with Hamas, with even its closest allies expressing outrage at civilian deaths. Israel insists it adheres to international law even as it faces scrutiny in the world's top courts, one of which last week demanded that it halt the offensive in Rafah.

Netanyahu did not elaborate on the error. Israel's military initially said it had carried out a precise airstrike on a Hamas compound, killing two senior militants. As details of the strike and fire emerged, the military said it had opened an investigation into the deaths of civilians. Sunday night's attack, which appeared to be one of the war's deadliest, helped push the overall Palestinian death toll in the war above 36,000, according to the Gaza Health

Ministry, which does not distinguish between fighters and noncombatants in its tally.

"Despite our utmost efforts not to harm innocent civilians, last night there was a tragic mistake," Netanyahu said Monday in an address to Israel's parliament. "We are investigating the incident and will obtain a conclusion because this is our policy." Mohammed Abuassa, who rushed to the scene in the northwestern neighborhood of Tel Al-Sultan, said rescuers "pulled out people who were in an unbearable state."

"We pulled out children who were in pieces. We pulled out young and elderly people. The fire in the camp was unreal," he said. At least 45 people were killed, according to the Gaza Health Ministry and the Palestinian Red Crescent rescue service. The ministry said the dead included at least 12 women, eight children and three older adults, with another three bodies burned beyond recognition.

In a separate development, Egypt's military said one of its soldiers was shot dead during an exchange of fire in the Rafah area,

without providing further details. Israel said it was in contact with Egyptian authorities, and both sides said they were investigating. An initial investigation found that the soldier had responded to an exchange of fire between Israeli forces and Palestinian militants. Egypt's state-owned Qahera TV reported. Egypt has warned that Israel's incursion in Rafah could threaten the two countries' decades-old peace treaty.

The UN Security Council scheduled an emergency closed meeting for Tuesday afternoon on the situation in Rafah at the request of Algeria, the Arab representative on the council, two council diplomats told. The Associated Press ahead of an official announcement. Rafah, the southernmost Gaza city on the border with Egypt, had housed more than a million people — about half of Gaza's population — displaced from other parts of the territory. Most have fled once again since Israel launched what it called a limited incursion there earlier this month. Hundreds of thousands are packed into squalid tent camps in and around the city.

## Pak Navy foils drug smuggling bid

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy has foiled a major drug smuggling attempt in the North Arabian Sea, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday.

According to a statement issued by ISPR, the Pakistan Navy ship PNS Aslat seized a large quantity of narcotics in the North Arabian Sea during a regional maritime security patrol. "The seized drugs are worth thousands of dollars in the international market. The successful operation against drug smuggling is the result of effective surveillance at sea by Pakistan Navy," the statement added.

The ISPR said that the ships of the Pakistan Navy regularly perform duties on Regional Maritime Security Patrol to prevent drug smuggling, piracy and human trafficking at sea. Earlier on May 20, the Airport Security Forces (ASF) thwarted a drug smuggling bid and arrested a Dubai-bound passenger at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi.

The ASF officials claimed to have arrested a passenger, named Mohammad Ahsan, traveling to Dubai from Karachi airport and recovered a total of 2.28 kg of ICE heroine and 420 grams of brown heroine from his possession. The drug was expertly hid in a dough kneading machine, but the ASF staffers foiled the smuggling attempts by recovering the drugs during the search of the goods. The ASF officials after initial investigation handed over the arrested accused along with the seized drugs to the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) officials.

## KP Governor lauds BISP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Rubina Khalid called on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at Islamabad.

The Governor lauded the BISP program for socio-economic empowerment of poor and underprivileged segments of the country especially for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She congratulated Faisal Karim Kundi for assuming the office of Governor and presented flowers bouquet to him.

The Governor underlined the need for ensuring transparency and providing assistance to the deserving families so that no poor could be deprived of the facility.

# Today, we honor legacy of ZAB, says Bilawal

F.P. Report

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended warm greetings to all Pakistanis across the world on the anniversary of the day when Pakistan emerged as nuclear power.

According to the press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, in his message, said that today, we honor the legacy of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali

Bhutto, the founding chairman of the PPP and the country's first elected Prime Minister, whose visionary dream of a nuclear Pakistan, realized amid immense international pressure, laid the unshakable foundation of our nuclear program.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also paid tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who steadfastly carried forward her father's vision as her contributions, particularly the advancement of modern missile technology,

remain pivotal to Pakistan's defense. "Her leadership, even as the leader of the opposition in 1998, was crucial in urging the government to respond decisively to nuclear threats from India, ensuring our national security," he noted.

Chairman PPP salutes the dedication and expertise of our scientists and all those who have been instrumental in making Pakistan a formidable nuclear power. "These heroes embody the resilience and brilliance of our nation," he added.



KARACHI: Former president, Dr. Arif Alvi talking to media persons during PTI protest.

# Nawaz's services

(Continued from Page 1)

Ehsan Afzal, WAPDA chairman and relevant senior officers. The provincial chief secretaries and inspector generals of police joined the meeting via video link.

PM invites Chinese firms to establish textile industry in Pakistan; assures facilitation: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif assuring all-out facilitation by his government, invited Chinese companies, particularly related to the textile sector, to establish their industry in Pakistan.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the promotion of Pakistan-China cooperation, said China was a key partner in Pakistan's development. Pakistan desires to enhance cooperation with China in agriculture, information technology, and energy besides enhancing its exports to China. In the meeting, different ministries presented their proposals to promote the Pakistan-China economic relationship, a PM Office press release said.

The prime minister reiterated that the government would provide foolproof security to Chinese nationals working in Pakistan as a comprehensive security plan had already been formulated. He told the participants of the meeting that the government was preparing for the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and expressed the hope that with China's cooperation, Gwadar Port would become a logistics hub.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the CPEC second phase would also feature the establishment of Agriculture Demonstration Zones, and instructed the ministries to prepare for the launch of new projects with Chinese cooperation and enhancing business-to-business linkages. He told the meeting that China could also assist Pakistan in formulating a strategy to boost its exports.

Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Dr Musaddik Malik, Rana

Tanveer Hussain, Awaish Ahmed Leghari, and Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, State Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Jahanzeb Khan and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif commended the efforts of Pakistan Navy in thwarting narcotics smuggling attempt in the Northern Arabian Sea.

The prime minister appreciated the crew members including offices and Jawans of PNS Aslat for intercepting the vessel used for drug smuggling. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The Pakistan Navy had been working round the clock to safeguarding the maritime frontiers; and controlling pirates and human trafficking, he observed. The prime minister further said that he along with the entire nation lauded the officers and personnel of Pak Navy who had been performing duties away from their near and dear ones.