

Three more terrorists killed
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted a joint intelligence based operation in Tank District, on reported presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, after intense fire exchange, three terrorists were successfully neutralized and sent to hell. These terrorists have been identified as, Terrorist Ringleader Azmat @Azmati, Terrorist Ringleader Karamat @Hanzla and Terrorist Rehan.



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FO flays HR abuses in Gaza

— Indian campaign of attacking, seizing Kashmiris' properties destined to fail

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday reiterated that the ongoing Indian campaign of attacking and seizing the properties of the Kashmiris in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) was destined to fail, just like its colonial strategies and harsh statements.

"Pakistan strongly condemns India's continued campaign of attacking and seizing the properties of Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The reality is that the harsh statements and colonial strategies have been unsuccessful in quelling the determination of Kashmiris for freedom, and these measures are destined to face similar outcomes in the future," Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said at her weekly press briefing here.

She reiterated Pakistan's determination to continue to extending political, diplomatic, and moral support to Kashmiris for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council's resolutions.

As different parts of the IIOJK recently witnessed heavy rains, flash floods, and landslides, resulting in loss of life and property, the spokesperson expressed sympathies with the victims of these national calamities and prayed for the eternal peace of the deceased and wished speedy recovery to the injured.

Apprising the media of the ongoing visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar to The Gambia to attend the Council of Foreign Ministers and the OIC Summit, the spokesperson said that at the Summit, Pakistan would highlight the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the right to self-determination of Kashmiris people, the imperatives of solidarity and unity of the Muslim Ummah, rising Islamophobia, issues of climate change, terrorism, and other contemporary global challenges.

On the sidelines, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister would hold bilateral meetings with leaders and foreign

ministers participating in the summit. Pakistan will also underline the need to find collective solutions to challenges confronting Muslim Ummah, she added.

Highlighting other diplomatic engagements during the previous week, she informed the media of the visit of US Under Secretary for Political Affairs John Bass and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Elizabeth Horst to Pakistan and their meeting with Acting Foreign Secretary Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi. Two sides discussed various aspects of bilateral cooperation and underscored the importance of sustained engagement through various dialogue processes, including areas of trade, investment, energy, health, education, agriculture, and climate change.

Pakistan will continue to engage with the United States to enhance bilateral cooperation and understanding, the spokesperson remarked. Coming to Gaza, Spokesperson Baloch said the Israeli occupation forces continued to take illegal steps in the West Bank in violation of international law.

"Pakistan strongly condemns the rising violations of human rights by Israel and the increasing number of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Israel's actions constitute a breach of international law, including humanitarian laws and United Nations and OIC resolutions. These acts also undermine any prospects of a two-state solution," she remarked.

She called for the international community's efforts to prevent Israel from committing the egregious crimes in Palestine and the UN Security Council to impose an immediate prominent ceasefire, urge Israel to lift the siege of Gaza, facilitate humanitarian assistance, protect the civilians, and hold the perpetrators of the genocide accountable. Reiterating Pakistan's full support to the people of Palestine, she called for the establishment of an independent, viable, and contiguous Palestinian state with pre-1967 borders and Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar and Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Attaullah Tarar addressing during a press conference.

Reforms in FBR govt's top priority: Law Minister

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar Thursday said that as per the vision of the Prime Minister, it was the top priority of the incumbent government to introduce reforms in Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to address economic crisis. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is leading the entire reform process in this regard, he said while addressing a press conference here.

The minister highlighted that currently, tax cases pertaining to the recovery of more than Rs2700 bil-

ions were pending in courts, which should be concluded early. The parliament, he said, for the first time, has legislated on tax tribunals in order to not only expedite the process but also make it efficient. Under the law, cases of Rs 20 million will go to the Commissioner while the cases above this will go to the Tribunal, he added.

Azam Nazeer Tarar said that some postings and transfers have been made in the FBR and more are expected in the coming days with strict adherence to merit. Competent officers with good reputation were being brought in from so

the policies would be implemented efficiently, he said, adding that changes were not being made to declare anyone corrupt. He said that transfers would also be made in customs office to streamline the system and its effects would also go to the lower level.

He said that steps were also being taken to expand tax net, recoveries, income tax collection and stop electricity theft in the country so that this money could be used for the welfare of the public. The Prime Minister, he said, is committed for the revival of economy and has given a full liberty to the FBR to perform well.

Bilawal expresses solidarity with journalists

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended sincere solidarity to journalists and media professionals worldwide on the World Press Freedom Day. Emphasizing the paramount importance of press freedom, he reaffirmed his party's staunch support for the invaluable role of a free and independent press in fostering democracy.

According to a press release by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, in his message, underscored that press freedom is not merely a cornerstone of democracy, but also vital for nurturing transparency, accountability, and the proliferation of diverse ideas within society. He urged that safeguarding and upholding this fundamental right should be the responsibility of every democratic government and party.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that historically, the press in Pakistan has served as a watchdog, uncovering injustices, exposing corruption, and amplifying the voices of the marginalized. Expressing concern over challenges such as censorship, fake news, and violence faced by journalists, he urged media organizations to uphold journalistic integrity, impartiality, and professionalism in their reporting.

Chairman PPP reiterated the party's unwavering support for press freedom, grounded in democracy and liberty principles. He underscored the 1973 Constitution's guarantee of freedom of expression, including press freedom, a legacy of Quaid-e-Azam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. "Under his leadership, reforms liberalized media policies, fostering greater independence," he noted. He highlighted Prime Minister Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's efforts to promote press freedom, including abolishing censorship laws and supporting independent media growth, adding that she also championed press freedom and human rights globally, underscoring their significance in democratic governance and seeking international support during dictatorial regimes.

Bilawal noted that President Asif Ali Zardari honored the vision and guiding principles of Shaheed Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto by enshrining the "Right to Know" into the Constitution through the 18th Constitutional Amendment. Bilawal expressed PPP's solidarity with journalists in conflict zones like Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and Gaza, Palestine, praising their courage in reporting on human rights abuses despite grave risks.

Zardari resigns as PPPP chairman

KARACHI: President Asif Zardari has resigned from the chairmanship of the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP).

Sources say Asif Zardari has informed the Election Commission of Pakistan about his resignation from the presidency of the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians. Sources further revealed that after Asif Zardari's resignation from the party presidency, there is consideration being given to appointing Asif Zardari's sister and provincial assembly member Faryal Talpur as the new president of the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians.

Asif Zardari's resignation from the party comes at a time when some quarters are criticising him for leading a political party despite being the President of the country. On March 9, Asif Zardari was elected as the president of the country for a second time, securing 411 votes. He received 156 electoral votes from the four provincial assemblies and 255 votes from Parliament. — Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Lowest inflation rate in two years - result of hard work: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, declaring the downward trend of inflation as a welcome news for the people, said that the inflation falling towards the lowest level in two years was a sign of improvement in the economy.

"This is the result of the hard work done during the 16 month-long government led by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and continued by the interim government," he said in a statement issued by the PM Office. The prime minister pointed out that the inflation rate had come down from the peak of 39% to 20% last month and then to 17% in the current month.

He said bringing down the inflation rate was the top priority of the government. "With the support of Allah Almighty, the people will get more relief in coming days after increase in the economic activities."

He expressed the hope that the people might also get more relief by further cut in the petroleum prices which were on the downward trend in the international market. The prime minister directed the provincial governments to ensure that impacts of fall in the petroleum prices reach the common people, besides taking special measures for the implementation of the rates of food items fixed by the Federal Government.

"With the blessings of the Almighty, the life standard of the people will further improve with further improvement in the economy," he said. The government was trying its best to provide maximum relief to the people, the prime minister added.

Shehbaz for enhancing bilateral cooperation with Azerbaijan in various areas: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stressed the need to work

Inquiry committee setup to probe matter of wheat import

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday formed an inquiry committee headed by the Secretary Cabinet Division to probe into the matter of wheat import in the country. Chairing a high-level review meeting regarding the current status of wheat reserves in the country here, the prime minister inquired from the Ministry of National Food Security about the import of wheat last year.

The prime minister questioned that for what reason the decision to import wheat was taken despite the good production of the commodity last year. Expressing satisfaction over bumper crop production of wheat this year, the prime minister stressed to ensure that there was no delay in the purchase of wheat. All necessary steps should be taken regarding the purchase of wheat, he said adding the farmers should be immediately paid for their hard work. Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Jam Kamal Khan, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzaal and other high officials attended the meeting.

together with Azerbaijan to enhance trade and investment, energy cooperation, defence, connectivity, education and cultural exchanges, and people-to-people contacts.

The prime minister said that he intended to send a high level ministerial delegation to Baku for enhancing bilateral cooperation between the two countries. Pakistan, he said, was also prepared to convene the Pakistan-Azerbaijan Joint Commission meeting at an early date where both sides could discuss matters related to cooperation in various fields.

The prime minister was talking to Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov who called on him. The ambassador briefed the prime minister on the current state of bilateral relations, highlighting the recent inauguration of flights between Baku and Karachi, in addition to the flights already operating between Baku and Islamabad as well as Baku and Lahore. He said that the Foreign Minister of

Azerbaijan was also expected to visit Pakistan later this month. He also briefed the prime minister on various institutional mechanisms and their upcoming meetings later this year. While admiring the beauty of the city of Baku, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that he wanted to replicate the beautification of Baku in Islamabad and suggested that both cities could explore enhanced cooperation through sister city agreement among them.

He emphasized that Pakistan attached great importance to Azerbaijan as the two countries enjoyed excellent brotherly relations. He conveyed his greetings for President Ilham Aliyev and fondly recalled their telephonic conversation on Eidul Fitr. He also recalled his interactions with the leadership of Azerbaijan during his visit to Baku in June 2023 and reiterated his invitation to President Aliyev to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

Arms' race likely to disturb balance of power in South Asia: COAS

F.P. Report

RISALPUR: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Thursday said that the growing arms race was likely to disturb the balance of power in the South Asia region. The Army Chief was addressing the passing out parade of the Pakistan Air Force.

The COAS said, "Advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, robotics and quantum computing are changing the use of air power as well as expanding its scope. However, without a strong air force, a country is at the mercy of any aggressor." He said the Pakistan Air Force had always lived up to the expectations of the nation. It patrolled the airspace in all kinds of difficulties with unparalleled bravery and professionalism, a great example of which was demonstrated before all in February 2019.

The Army Chief, while addressing

the passing out of cadets, said, "You are the center of our hopes, the guardian of the skies and the guarantor of regional unity. You are expected to lead a life adorned with the virtues of character, courage and competence. Your conduct will be extraordinary not only for your personal ethics but also for the respected institution. You will never hesitate to sacrifice for the defence, honour and dignity of the motherland."

He said the military leadership expected that the young cadets would always uphold the eternal tradition of the nation's best spirit, professionalism and bravery. Article 19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, he said, clearly defined the limits of freedom of speech and expression of opinion.

"Those who flout the clear restrictions imposed on freedom of expression in the Constitution cannot point fingers at others. We are well aware of our constitutional limits and expect

others to uphold the Constitution," he underlined. He said that the Gaza war was the latest example of the suffering that was could bring. "Indiscriminate killing of elderly, women and children in Gaza is proof that violence is increasing in the world." The Army Chief noted that India had illegally occupied the Jammu and Kashmir whereas the silence of the whole world on the ongoing Indian aggression in Kashmir could not suppress the voice of freedom echoing there. "We will continue to provide moral, political and diplomatic support to our Kashmiri brothers."

The COAS advised the cadets, "Always remember that truth is power while falsehood can never be powerful. Be like Rashid Minhas, Sarfaraz Rafiqi and MM Alam who gave their services and lives to protect the dignity of the dear country. Be committed to the responsibility you are being entrusted with and remain loyal to the State of Pakistan."

KP will get its legitimate rights from Center at any cost: CM

Ali Sheikh

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, while reaffirming his determination not to compromise on the constitutional and legal rights of the province, has urged the journalist community to support the provincial government in its struggle for provincial rights.

"This province belongs to all of us, and collectively, we must work for its development," the Chief Minister said while adding that the province can only progress when it receives its legitimate rights from the federal government.

Speaking during oath taking ceremony of newly elected cabinet of Peshawar Press Club on Thursday, Gandapur

expressed pride in the fact that the resources of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are being utilized for the development of the country. However, he stressed that the province must also receive its due rights.

Gandapur asserted that he is a soldier of Imran Khan and will not back down from asserting their rights. "If our rights are not granted, we are aware of how to take them," Gandapur said while warning the federal government that if the province was not given its rights, the federal government will also not be able to function peacefully.

"It would be better that Center should give KP its due rights without any hesitation so that we can thank the center otherwise he would lead the people of the province and will make sure they

will get their rights.

Gandapur emphasized that many districts and sectors in the province have fallen behind in development, and it is imperative to develop all areas and sectors on the basis of equality as per Imran Khan's vision, for which the provision of the province's rightful rights and resources from the center is indispensable. Highlighting the priorities of the provincial government, Gandapur said that upholding the rule of law is their top priority. He stated that they will create a system in which no innocent person will be subjected to any injustice. Gandapur lamented that unfortunately, some institutions in our province have been established for political vengeance, but they intend to reform and correct the system.



Sindh CM orders crackdown on illegal foreigners, drug mafia after KPO attack investigation

KARACHI (APP): The investigations in the Karachi Police Office (KPO) attack case, presented in the 31st Apex Committee meeting held under the chair of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah revealed that a Madarsa teacher was found involved in the terrorist attack and was killed there during the operation.

The meeting was held at CM House on Thursday and was attended by Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon, Home Minister Zual Hassan Lanjar, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Corps Commander Karachi Lt Gen. Babar Iftikhar, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Secretary Home Iqbal Memon, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, DG Rangers Maj Gen Azhar Waqas, IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, Adl IG Karachi Imran Yakoob and Chief Collector Customs Yakoob Mako, Director FIA Zaeem Iqbal and others.

The Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) presented an investigation report to the Apex Committee which revealed that a Madarsa teacher was found involved in the KPO attack dated February 17, 2023. The teacher was a terrorist and had attacked the KPO along with his accomplices.

During the KPO clearance operation carried out by the agencies, the terrorists were killed and through their fingerprints and other investigations, it was revealed that one of them was a teacher in Madarsa.

It was pointed out that illegal foreigners were studying in different educational institutions, including Madares. At this, the CM in consultation with the Apex Committee members decided to carry out a joint mapping of the illegal foreigners living in the province and educational institutions so that actual data of illegal foreigners could be developed.

Home Minister Zia Lanjar, and Home Secretary Iqbal Memon briefing the meeting said that 43,762, and 1,653 illegal foreigners have been repatriated and deported respectively. As many as 42,109 illegal foreigners

have returned voluntarily, 81, 106 have Proof of Residence (PoR) card holders and 65,936 have other cards.

It was pointed out that 57,000 fake/bogus Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) have already been blocked while 17,217 were under the process of blockage.

Murad Ali Shah said that the joint mapping of illegal foreigners living in the province, particularly in Karachi was necessary so that their credible data could be developed for their repatriation. "I want the joint-mapping exercise should be carried out by Sindh police (Special Branch), and concerned federal government agencies," he said.

At the outset, the CM briefed the meeting about the decisions taken in the special meeting on Law & order chaired by the President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari at CM House on Wednesday. President has directed the provincial government to launch well-prepared, properly coordinated vigorous operation against dacoits in the kitchen area, street criminals in Karachi, land grabbers and drug mafia so that people could live a peaceful, content life.

He reiterated the government's commitment to implementing the directives of the President of Pakistan in true letter and spirit which were also part of the Apex Committee agenda. Senior Minister for Excise, Taxation & Narcotics Control (ET&NC) Sharjeel Memon said that through a joint mechanism, an Intelligence-based crackdown has been started by his department against the drug mafia. He added that 166 accused have been arrested in 164 drug cases. Memon said his department launched an awareness campaign in different educational institutions to save the students from the menace. He said that a dedicated Helpline to report any narcotics-related activity has been developed so that immediate actions could be taken.

The meeting decided that a fusion centre may be established for the strongest coordination of all the con-

cerned law enforcement agencies (LEAs) so that coordinated info-based operations against Narcotics could be carried out. The CM directed the Excise and Home depts to submit their proposals for the establishment of the Fusion centre.

The chief minister strictly directed the police, Rangers and other concerned agencies to take strict action against the guards wearing civil dress and displaying arms while sitting in open trucks/vehicles. "This is illegal and would not be allowed," the CM said. The IG police said that he would issue such instructions to all the police stations in the province.

Murad chairs SDT board meeting to appoint MD from market: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presided over the 5th Governing Body meeting of the Sindh Digital Technology Board, which decided to appoint a managing director of the board through the head search process from the market.

The meeting was attended by the Principal Secretary to CM Agha Wasif, Secretary IT Asif Ikram, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi, Board members Jaham Ara, and (through a video link) Junaid Qureshi, Asif Peer, and Osama Nasir.

After discussion, the CM decided that the board should have a managing director, who must be appointed from the market through a head search. He directed Secretary of IT Asif Ikram to complete the appointment process within six weeks.

Shah directed the IT secretary to establish the office of the IT board in the market, such as at Shahrah-e-Faisal, so that they could perform in market competition.

The meeting decided that the IT board would be registered as a company. The Secretary of IT was directed to develop a plan to make the provincial government departments paperless. "There must be an E-file system in all the departments so that a paperless digital filing system could be evolved," he said, and he directed him to submit the proposals.



KARACHI: A delegation of Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) meets with Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi.

Asian Development Bank mission visits FBR

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) mission visited Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Thursday and met FBR leadership who have been assisting in the implementation of the Domestic Resource Mobilization Program (DRM).

The mission was led by Mr. Tariq Niazi, Senior Director ADB from Manila and included Mr. Laisiasa Tora, Senior Public Sector Management Specialist, Ms. Sana Masood, (Economist) and Ms. Farzana Noshab (Economist). Mir Badshah Khan Wazir, Member (IR Operations), Mr. Ardsheer Salim Tariq, Member (Reforms and Modernization), Mr. Qasim Raza Member (IT), Mr. Karamatullah Chaudhry, Member (Digital Initiative), and Arbab Muhammad Tariq, Member (Legal-IR) were also present in the meeting.

The mission's objectives included discussion on structural and policy reforms under the DRM Program funded by the ADB. The ADB showed satisfaction on the successful rolling down of the DRM Program. It was noted that significant achievements were made in the Sub Program I of the DRM program and due to the dedicated efforts of FBR, \$300 Million was disbursed by



ADB to the Government of Pakistan in December 2023. Subprogram I laid down the foundations for improved policies, laws, and institutional capacity for the FBR. Subprogram II reforms are to be completed by end 2024 which will build on earlier actions to ensure full implementation and operationalization. FBR apprised the ADB team that the Revenue Division in line with the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to transform Federal Board of Revenue into a Digital Tax Administration and keeping pace with global trends, has embarked on a journey of digitalization focused towards automation of its processes and digitalizing of the economy.

These initiatives reduce the cost of compliance of taxpayers, document the economy, expand the tax base and lead FBR on a sustainable path to revenue growth. FBR will be collaborating with Karandaaz for developing a comprehensive digital strategy for realizing the digital transformation of FBR and its digitalization initiatives and their implementation. Contours of a Digital Tax Administration Project of the FBR with the support of ADB were also discussed and the ADB team showed keen interest in this reform. Both sides agreed to explore ways to strengthen collaboration in support of Government of Pakistan's Digital Tax Administration Project.

21 lawbreakers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders, and other lawbreakers here on Thursday arrested 21 accused besides recovering over 1.5 kg charras, 30 liters liquor, four 30-bore pistols, two 12-bore rifles, ammunition and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Pirwadhai police held Tasleem with 730 grams of charras while Cantt police rounded up Sher Zaman for having 450 grams of charras.

Rawat police netted an accused namely Mehboob and seized 360 grams of charras. City, Sadiqabad, Taxila, and Saddar Wah police arrested Ibrar, Nazakat, Hamad, Saqib, Shahid, and Hassan and recovered 30 liters of liquor from their possession.

Similarly, R.A.Bazar, Civil Lines, Taxila, Mandra, and Rawat police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and arrested six accused namely Abdul Basit, Arshad, Muhammad Almas, Owais, Shehzad, and Waseem Abbas, and recovered four 30 bore pistols, two 12 bore rifles and ammunition. The spokesman informed that R.A. Bazar police managed to net a robber namely Shehzad and recovered a pistol and other items from his possession.

Delegation visits temple

LAHORE (APP): A 10-member delegation, including Civil Service Academy Dr Sajad Mehmood and Additional Director Muhammad Akram, on Thursday visited Katas Raj temple.

According to a press release issued here, the delegation appreciated the steps taken to restore the temple.

Evacuee Trust Property Board Secretary Farid Iqbal briefed the delegation about the construction of rooms, dining halls and other development measures

for the accommodation of Hindu pilgrims coming from all over the world.

The delegation also visited different places of the temple and was informed about the historical background of the temple. The delegation was also briefed about different initiatives, including the renovation of the temple, by the Shrines & Technical Branch of the Board. A shield of appreciation was presented to Secretary Fareed Iqbal for his excellent services.

Officers from SMC meet IGP Sindh

KARACHI (APP): A delegation of 38 officers from the 35th Senior Management Course (SMC) visited the Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi and met Inspector General of Police Sindh, Ghulam Nabi Memon.

Led by Abdul Khaliq Shaikh, Chief Instructor of the National Institute of Management (NIM) Karachi, the delegation had the opportunity to explore various departments of the Sindh Police and engage with senior officers, said a spokesman for Sindh Police on Thursday.

During their visit, the officers were warmly welcomed by DIGP Headquarters Sindh, Zubair Dareshak, who briefed them on the diverse challenges encountered in mod-

ern policing. A key focus of the discussions revolved around the adoption of people-friendly policing strategies, aimed at fostering stronger ties between law enforcement agencies and the community.

IGP Sindh, Ghulam Nabi Memon, shared inspiring insights into the relentless efforts undertaken by the Sindh Police in combatting crime. He underscored the unwavering support and assistance extended by the Sindh government in this collective endeavor.

He said that the Karachi Safe City project was not limited to Karachi only, but it was being started from Karachi which would be later extended to Hyderabad, Sukkur, Mirpurkhas, Larkana. The Government and Sindh

Police are going to install fences and cameras on the entrances and exit points of Karachi to prevent crimes and make the city safe internally and externally.

Furthermore, the IGP Sindh reaffirmed the Sindh Police's commitment to tackling street crime and assured that measures would be taken to control it in the near future.

As a symbol of mutual respect and collaboration, a commemorative shield was exchanged between the IGP Sindh and the Chief Instructor of the National Institute of Management Karachi during the meeting. DIGP IT, Establishment, Finance, Training and other senior police officers were also present on the occasion.

Customs foil gold smuggling attempt

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Customs thwarted an attempt to smuggle a large cache of gold ornaments at Karachi airport, leading to the apprehension of the suspects involved.

A spokesperson for Pakistan Customs revealed that acting on intelligence, officials from the Customs Collectorate at the Jinnah International Airport intercepted a family en route to South Africa via Dubai. Upon inspection, they discovered 9.5 kg of gold ornaments and coins.

The estimated worth of the confiscated items is Rs. 190 million. Legal proceedings have been initiated under the Customs Act, and the apprehended individuals are under custody as investigations continue.

Abacus consulting delegation calls on Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Delegation of Abacus Consulting, led by its Sr. Executive Director Naveed Hussain Thursday called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja and discussed digital transformation.

Abacus is an international professional services firm delivering world-class technology, outsourcing, and consulting solutions.

The discussions centered on a shared vision of propelling Pakistan's digital transformation and explored key areas of collaboration that include digital transformation to leverage technology to enhance government services and empower citizens, according to a news release.

Other members of the delegation included Sikander Jamshed, Head of International Business, and Muhammad Qasim Syed, Head of International Strategy & Growth, Abacus Consulting.

PRCS organises painting competition to mark Red Cross week celebrations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has kicked off its week-long celebrations of the Red Cross with a vibrant Art and Painting Competition held at the Citizen's Club, F-9 Park on Thursday.

In collaboration with the Capital Development Administration, PRCS organized this event to engage school-children from government and private schools across Islamabad, fostering creativity and promoting the humanitarian spirit among the youth.

Under the theme "Keeping Humanity Alive," participants highlighted their artistic talents through sketches and paintings using various mediums such as coloured pencils, crayons, and water colours. The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of students, teachers, PRCS staff, Movement Partners, and volunteers, creating a lively atmosphere dedicated to the humanitarian cause.

In his message on the occasion, Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, expressed profound appreciation for the dedication and compassion exhibited by all involved in advancing the humanitarian mission in Pakistan. He underscored the importance of this year's

theme, emphasizing PRCS's resolute commitment to upholding the principles of humanity, particularly during challenging times. Chairman Laghari noted that PRCS volunteers and staff have tirelessly operated on the frontlines, risking their safety to alleviate suffering and save lives. He highlighted their selfless commitment as a testament to the universal spirit of humanity. "Together, we can sustain the essence of humanity, fostering a world where compassion transcends boundaries and where every individual is esteemed and protected," remarked Laghari.

Ophoff, Head of IFRC Delegation in Pakistan, Mr. Peter (Pivi) commended the overwhelming turnout of children and underscored the importance of nurturing compassion and service towards the most vulnerable members of society.

The event concluded with the distribution of shields and gift packs among the Art and Painting Competition winners, symbolizing recognition for their creativity and dedication to humanitarianism.

As PRCS continues its Red Cross Red Crescent Week celebrations until May 8th, the organisation remains steadfast in its commitment to serving humanity and building a better world.

Ahsan directs NHA to complete infrastructure projects without any delay

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Federal Minister of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal here on Thursday directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to expedite construction work on the existing projects related to the infrastructure while removing the bottlenecks without any delay.

He made these remarks, while chairing a meeting, in which he reviewed the progress of the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) and portfolio of NHA.

According to press statement issued by the ministry, the meeting was attended by the Secretary of Ministry of Communication, Secretary Planning

Chairman NHA and other relevant stakeholders.

During the meeting, the minister was given a detailed briefing over PSDP (2024-25) and the existing portfolio of NHA.

The minister directed the relevant stakeholders to remove the obstacles in the construction work on existing projects. Meanwhile, the minister in another meeting reviewed the Federal Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Policy.

The meeting was attended by the Minister of Petroleum & Water Resources, Musadik Malik; Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh; Professor of Economics & Strategy, Dr. Nadeem Javaid; Member Social Sector, Raffi Ullah Kakar; CEO of the Public

Private Partnership Authority (P3A), Malik Ahmad Khan; and consultants from the Asian Development Bank.

The meeting, aligning with the Prime Minister's directives outlined during the approval of the Federal PPP Policy 2023-2028, aimed at a strategic review of the policy's operational framework. This initiative is part of a broader effort to enhance the implementation mechanism and effectiveness of the PPP policy.

The agenda of the Committee meeting was focused on identifying areas for improvement within the Federal PPP Policy 2023-2028 and formulating strategies to enhance its implementation mechanism.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Ulema Council Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi addresses press conference.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur administering oath to newly elected office bearers of Peshawar Press Club.

CM announces Rs10,000 per month for 50 deserving journalists

Ali Sheikh

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur has announced Rs10,000 per month for education of children of deserving journalists. He also announced Rs50 million grant for Peshawar Press Club.

Addressing the oath taking ceremony of the newly elected cabinet of Peshawar Press Club on Thursday, Ali Amin Gandapur said that physical work on New Peshawar Valley will start this year and his government would fulfill the promise of giving plots to journalists of Peshawar Press Club as it is his priority.

Speaking about bringing change, the Chief Minister said that his government would bring legislation to stop corruption. "No one is doing corruption from outside. It is done by people from within us and we have to stop this," Ali Amin Gandapur said. He stressed the journalist community to openly criticize the government they see something wrong. "Criticism for the sake of improvement is welcomed by my government," the Chief Minister added.

He reiterated that they will welcome criticism for reform and will always stand with those who are victims of injustice, never siding with those who commit excesses. He further stated that good governance and merit are also among their top priorities, and effective legislation is needed to eliminate all social evils, including corruption, nepotism, and merit-based issues.

Gandapur said that in the process of reforms, the advice of journalists will be implemented, as it is important to raise awareness among the people against social evils, and in this regard, the role of media is of paramount importance. The Chief Minister announced a special grant of five crore rupees for the Peshawar Press Club on this occasion.

Earlier the Chief Minister administered oath from the new cabinet of Peshawar Press Club.

Speaking on the occasion President PPC Arshad Aziz Malik thanked the Chief Minister for this time and said that the current building of the press club was inaugurated by the father of Ali Amin Gandapur. He also said that after a very long time a chief minister has come to press club for the oath taking ceremony. Arshad Aziz Malik also requested that Chief Minister to include the Media Enclave in New Peshawar Valley and allot the plots in the first phase.

CECVE lauds role of women in eradication violent extremism

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senior Manager of Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (CECVE) Dr. Irfan Khan has said that the role of educated women is of key importance in eradicating violent extremism and promoting peace and tolerance in society.

He expressed these views while addressing the "Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan" seminar organized by CECVE at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar. University faculty, academicians, scholars, and social leaders also addressed to the participants of the seminar and suggested measures to solve the important problems faced by women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The seminar brought together experts, scholars, and activists to address the pressing issues facing women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to explore avenues for their empowerment. Dr Irfan Senior Manager CVE said "Dukhtaran-e-Pakistan is committed to promoting the rights and well-being of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "By partnering with institutions like Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, we aim to create spaces for dialogue, advocacy, and action to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

Ms. Beenish Irfan a prominent social activist highlighted the role of women, their responsibilities, and self-respect in society, we need to know about the female harassment. We need to stay firm by living on the limits of being respectful. Our religion has given a lot of rights of women. Confidence and self-dependence are very necessary for girls to excel in their fields and play an important role in the society. We need to make sure that we raise gentleman how to respect a woman in our society.

The seminar delved into various aspects of gender equality, women's rights, and opportunities for advancement. Distinguished speaker shared their insights and experiences, shedding light on the challenges and triumphs of women in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Through engaging discussions, participants explored strategies to overcome barriers to women's empowerment, including access to education, economic independence, and social equality.

The seminar also highlighted the importance of women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels of society. The seminar concluded with a call to action for stakeholders across society to prioritize women's rights and work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable future for all.

Sami Ud Din mentions that the reality of stereotyping. This is the era of narratives, where men use them as self-defence. We need to understand the male centric societies and female centric societies in the world to understand how strong females are decision making by females is considered as an ignored element.



ICTIS-24 held at UET

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The two-day International Conference on Innovation in Computing Technologies and Information Sciences (ICTIS-24), organized by the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC), UET Peshawar and Department of Computer System Engineering in collaboration with the National Center for Big Data and Cloud Computing, was held on April 29th and 30th at UET Peshawar. The conference aimed to foster extensive discourse and collaboration among academics, researchers, and professionals on the latest advancements in the realm of Computing Technologies and Information Sciences.

The chief guest of the opening ceremony of the conference was Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali, Vice Chancellor of UET Peshawar, while the Chief Guest of the Closing Ceremony was Mr. Khalid Latif, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Science and Technology, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The keynote speakers included Mr. Huzaiifa Habib (Community Manager at Google), Dr. Asif Khan (Water & Climate Change expert with ADB & World Bank), Muhammad Zeeshan (Web & App Developer), Engr. Hameed Ullah Jan (CEO Aptech Media Game Development), and Mr. Imran Khan (Digital Transformation Professional).

Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali expressed his hope that ICTIS-24 would play a pivotal role in shaping both academic research and professional development. He stated, "ICTIS-24 will serve as a platform for the exchange of ideas, the exploration of new methodologies, and the dissemination of groundbreaking discoveries. These gatherings will not only push the boundaries of knowledge forward but also foster enduring connections that transcend geographical and disciplinary boundaries."

During the closing ceremony, Mr. Khalid Latif, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Science and Technology in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, commended UET Peshawar for hosting such an impactful conference. He stated, "This conference provides an incredible opportunity for all of us to come together, share our knowledge, and explore the latest developments in the field of technology." Additionally, he announced scholarships for MS and BS students.

Dr. Nasru Minallah, Director of ORIC and Chief Organizer of the conference, expressed that they provided enlightenment to the participants regarding emerging trends and practices in the field of computing technology and information sciences. They invited esteemed speakers from the industry to provide insights into industrial practices and job prospects within this computing technology sector, aiming to motivate students to pursue careers in this field.



PHC stops NAB proceedings against Chinese company

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Waqar Ahmad stopped National Accountability Bureau (NAB) from actions against a Chinese company involved in the Peshawar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project while directed the company's officials to cooperate with officials during the investigation.

PHC has withdrawn the interim relief granted Masood Sons Director Masood Shah on his absentia from the court. During hearing Shumail Ahmad Butt, Abdul Munem, Waseem Sajjad advocates on behalf local companies while Naem Bukhari advocate represented Chinese's company, NAB prosecutor Azeem Dad and Additional Deputy Prosecutor General Muhammad Ali appeared before the court.

The counsel argued that NAB had issued a notice to Chinese's company without following proper procedures and that the company had already completed the project. The lawyer further argued that PHC and Supreme Court of Pakistan had declared the project as lawful.

NAB's lawyer argued that the Chinese company was a 2% shareholder in the project and that NAB had the authority to investigate. The lawyer also mentioned that the company could may approach the international arbitration council for their grievances.

PHC ordered NAB for submission of reply on Chinese's company writ plea and extended interim relief of other petitioners expect Masood Shah over his absentia from court and adjourned further hearing till 25th June.

PHC orders appointment of LDC at Directorate of Immigration & passport

A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Waqar Ahmad ordered Directorate of Immigration and Passport to appoint Zeeshan Alam as Lower Divisional Clerk (LDC), on Thursday.

The counsel Nauman Mohib Kakakhel advocate appeared on behalf of Zeeshan Alam, who had challenged the refusal of the directorate of immigration and passport to issue appointment letter to him on the post of LDC.

The counsel argued that the petitioner had applied for the post LDC BPS-09 and thereafter passed the screening test and typing speed test hence was called for interview. He added that there was 6 people contesting for 5 seats and one of them refused to join hence all of them were to be appointed, however, the department appointed 4 persons and refused to appoint the petitioner.

The counsel argued that it is a settled law that those on the waiting list are to be appointed when a selected candidate refused to join. Additional Attorney General contended that No Objection Certificate (NOC) for appointments was expired and the position remained vacant therefore was re advertised.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Waqar Ahmad allowed the writ plea while directing the respondents including Directorate of Immigration and Passport to appoint the petitioner against the vacant post of LDC.

KPRA launches crackdown

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) has launched a crack-down against non-compliant taxpayers to improve tax compliance and discourage tax evasion here on Thursday.

A team of KPRA Peshawar including Assistant Collector Khalid Mansoor, Assistant Collector Roohullah Khan, Assistant Collector Shahnawaz Khan and inspectors conducted raids on two big restaurants located on University Road and confiscated their records.

The KPRA team conducted raids on Habibi Restaurant and Dampukh Khorak and confiscated their records.

The restaurants were served with notices and they were asked to submit their records to KPRA but they did not respond to the notices after which the raids were conducted and records were confiscated as per KPRA rules and regulations.

The Director General (DG) KPRA Fouzia Iqbal has said that they have noticed persistent non-compliance from restaurants and hotels in Peshawar and despite the issuance of several notices by KPRA, numerous hotels and restaurants are still non-compliant.

**JUI-F rejects victimization
of govt employees**

PESHAWAR (APP): Former MPA Mehmood Ahmad Khan Bettani on Thursday accused PTI Tank's selected representatives of initiating retaliatory actions against government employees, burying their righteous policy in the process.

He claimed that workers and supporters of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUIF) are never intimidated by such tactics, asserting that transfers and postings are part of the job, whether in Chitral, Peshawar, or even outside the country.

He made these remarks in a statement, refuting the notion that JUI, during its tenure, ever resorted to vindictive measures. He emphasized that no party, including PTI, should view political transfers as retribution.

He further expressed confidence that such actions would only strengthen JUI's resolve, stating that their workers would not retreat.

Mehmood Bettani vowed to resist such political transfer postings vigorously, stating that PTI Tank's selected representatives should not expect tolerance for their injustices.

Mehmood Ahmed Khan Bettani concluded by expressing his deep regard for JUI workers, asserting that the upcoming era belongs to patience and perseverance.

Sit in of local govt officials postponed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Local Government Arshad Ayub Khan was called on by the Village Council, Neighborhood Council and Tehsil Mayors and was informed about their demands.

On the assurance of the Provincial Minister, the Village Council, Neighborhood Council and Tehsil Chairman postponed their sit-in for two weeks subject to approval of their demands.

The Village Council, Neighborhood Council and Tehsil Chairman put their demands before the Provincial Minister to amend the Rules of Business and to provide the pending funds so that they can run their offices and day-to-day affairs.

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This time operational and development funds will be given to them in this coming budget. Executive summary for development grants has been sent to the cabinet, further more the rules of business will also be amended with their consultation. He said that our government is in favor of decentralization of powers at the lower level, we will try to solve all their problems.

A meeting of local body representative will be scheduled with Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to fix the framework for solving all their problems. We have to recognize each other's mandate. Solving the issues of local bodies will benefit us.

Meat Quality Testing Laboratory inaugurated

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In collaboration with UNIDO, to check the quality of meat and increase capacity of Livestock and Dairy Department a Meat lab testing laboratory inauguration ceremony held the office of the District Director livestock Peshawar.

Secretary Livestock and Fisheries Cooperative Department Dr. Ambar Ali Khan attended the event as a special guest. UNIDO Country Representative Pakistan Nadia Aftab, officials of Halal Food Authority and Local Council Board, Professors of Agriculture University Peshawar also participated. Speaking at the event, Chief Guest Secretary Livestock Dr. Ambar Ali Khan appreciated the establishment of a laboratory to test the quality of meat and emphasized on strengthening the inter-relationships of all departments so that the public is aware of the principles of hygiene and to ensure the supply of healthy meat.

Director General Livestock and Dairy Development Dr. Asal Khan thanked UNIDO for highlighting the importance of the Livestock Department's role in providing healthy meat to the people of the province and strengthening service delivery. Speaking at the event, Nadia Aftab, representative of UNIDO, highlighted the provision of healthy meat keeping in mind the production capacity of meat in the province and all business activities. With the collaboration of the department, the work on the establishment of a model and teaching seminary in Peshawar is in the stages of completion, thanks to which the meat entrepreneurs will be given training based on international principles, which will have far-reaching results.

In the ceremony, the Director General Livestock Research Dr. Ijaz Ali, Director merged Districts Dr. Sajjad Wazir, District Director Kamran Farid and others participated. Later the chief guest distributed the shields.

Peshawar to be made drug free

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Zakat and Ushar, Social Welfare and Empowerment Mashal Azam Yousafzai has said that Peshawar would be made drug free and measures would be taken to prevent begging and drug addiction.

She said this while presiding over a meeting that was also attended by Commissioner Peshawar, Riaz Mehsud, Director Social Welfare, Rafiq Mohmand, District Officer Social Welfare and relevant officials of Peshawar district administration.

She said that deliberations are underway to increase capacity of Zamang Kor with the cooperation of international organizations. She said that drug addicts should be monitored for one year after rehabilitation to prevent them from indulging into drug addiction again.



In brief

Man tortures wife to death

DASKA (INP): A man along with his first wife tortured his second wife to death here on Thursday, police said. According to details, Alishba got married to Shehbaz, hailing from Kundan Sian area of Daska four years earlier. Shehbaz who was already married along with his first wife used to torture Alishba. The couple brutally tortured the woman which resulted in her death. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case into the incident started raids to arrest the culprits.

Two minor girls drown in canal

KANDIARO (INP): Two minor girls drowned in a canal located in Sindh Colony in Moro area of Kandiaro, police said on Thursday. According to police sources, the bodies of the girls were retrieved from the canal by the local people and were shifted to a nearby hospital in Moro. Police sources said that the deceased girls were identified as 8-year-old Azra and 9-year-old Sawera. The bodies of the deceased girls were handed over to their families after necessary legal procedure. However, the family members of the deceased girls said that they do not know how girls were drowned. Both girls were cousins in relation.

One killed, five injured

HYDERABAD (INP): One person was killed and five other were critically injured when a trailer hit a loader rickshaw in Hyderabad. According to details, the accident occurred at the Jamshoro-Kotri Site National Highway where a speeding trailer hit a loader rickshaw from behind, killing one woman on the spot and injuring five other persons. Police and rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead and injured to District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital. Police have confiscated the trailer while its driver managed to escape from the scene.

Concern shown over food wastage

HYDERABAD (PPI): The Vice Chancellor of Sindh Agriculture University (SAU), Dr. Fateh Marri, today expressed concern over food wastage in the country, citing it as a significant threat to food security and safety. He emphasized the urgent need for societal reform and awareness to address and mitigate food wastage, particularly in households, hotels, and wedding venues. Speaking at the concluding ceremony of the "Say No to Food Waste" training program, organized in collaboration with the Institute of Food Sciences and Technology (IFST) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) on Thursday, Dr. Marri highlighted that 17% of food is wasted in the country. He underscored that achieving a reduction of 10% could resolve the issue of wheat scarcity. Ms. Anne-Klervi Cherièrre, a FAO representative, highlighted the FAO's serious efforts in Pakistan, especially in Sindh Province. She emphasized their collaboration with various institutions, including Sindh Agriculture University, to enhance agriculture, improve food quality, and bolster food security. Dr. Aijaz Hussain Soomro, Director of IFST, stated that approximately 36 million tons of food is wasted annually in Pakistan, accounting for almost 40% of the total food produced in the country. He attributed this to a lack of awareness and education.

Teachers' role cannot be denied in society, says experts

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Speakers at a function held at the government high school Adam Dherai in Adenzai have said that teachers occupied a key status in society due to their role and responsibilities. The GHS Adam Dherai's staff and students arranged the function on the retirement of its teacher Syedul Ibrar who retired from services as secondary school teachers after serving for 36 years and 7 months.

Former district education officer Saeed Khan, Principal Ayaz Khan, Principal Bahadar Zeb, former Principal Gul Rehman, Dr. Ihtishamul Haq, prominent poet Jehan Bakht Jehan, Qari Tahseenullah Qadari and others addressed the function.

They lauded the services of the retiring teacher and said that he had never compromised on his official duties. Teachers, students and friends also presented gifts to Syedul Ibrar for his devotion to teaching and performing his services honestly. Former DEO Saeed Khan said the Lower Dir education department was deprived of one of the best teachers who was a role model for all. He asked teachers to perform their

duties devotedly and earn a good name in society. He said that all teachers were regarded but people loved only those teachers who performed honestly.

College action: The government postgraduate college Timergara in Lower Dir has directed all its female students to avoid taking part in any extra-curricular activities including political gatherings, birthday parties, outings, unjustified and unauthorized stage-in etc in their best interest. An official letter issued by the chief proctor of the college and circulated here the other day said that during the college hours both within and outside the college premises; once the female students left for college from their homes, they should be either in the college or on the way to and from the college, no third possibility would be considered.

The parents of female students were also directed to remain in touch with the college administration in order to improve the academic standard of the college and their children. Meanwhile Prof. Riaz Muhammad, the chief proctor of the college, not only confirmed the letter but added that the step had been taken in the best interest

of female students. Talking to this reporter on contact, he said that several unpleasant incidents had occurred somewhere else in colleges where co-education was imparted, so the GPGC Timergara took the action to avoid any such incident. The chief proctor said the college administration equally cared for both male and female students but owing to local norms and tradition, female students had been directed to avoid attending joint gatherings and parties.

Clarification: The board of intermediate and secondary education (BISE) Malakand Chakdara has rejected the social media reports about papers' leak and termed it baseless. In a written statement the BISE Malakand controller of examinations has said that smooth examinations were in progress in a peaceful environment and there were no proofs about papers' leakage.

He said that some vested interested elements were blackmailing the board by spreading false and baseless information regarding the ongoing secondary school certificate annual examinations. He said that not a single paper had been leaked in the limits of the board.

Absent store keeper at THQ hospital suspended

F.P. Report

BUNER: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Buner suspended Tehsil Headquarters Hospital (THQ) store keeper on alleged mismanagement and directed inquiry in this regard during his surprise visit, on Thursday. The absenteeia of both medical practitioners/ doctors and supporting staff were exposed during the surprise of DC Buner Hamid Ali Khan to THQ Pacha Kali (Peer Baba Hospital) while expressed

dissatisfaction over poor sanitation conditions. He was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief & Human Rights Syed Akram Shah, Deputy District Health Officer Dr. Raj Wali, Tehsil Chairman Sher Alam Khan and hospital in-charge Dr. Kazim.

DC inspected the medical store and suspended the in-charge for mismanagement and asked the DHO to conduct an inquiry against him. He expressed complete dissatisfaction on the

status of sanitation and directed AC and TMO for initiating cleanliness drive immediately.

DC inspected all the departments at THQ hospital and meet with patients while inquired about provision of health facilities. He also inspected the medical store, X-ray machine, vaccination center and other departments and best abreast himself of its status. He directed the DDHO and MS to improve facilities in the hospital.



QUETTA: Pashin Mayor, Sardar Akber Khan Tareen addressing a press conference.

Pakistan Arts Council presents 6th improvisational drama

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Pakistan Arts Council Larkana presented sixth drama which was authored by Ayub Gul while directed by Abbas Gul showing livelihood of local populace. It is worthy to mention that the writer has been surrounded by the same difficulties.

The drama titled Wijdaan, teacher role played Ahmed Pathan and S Bhatti while guests Dr. Mola bakhsh Kalhoro. Dr. Badruddin Dhamraho. Professor Mukhtiar Samon pay paid rich tribute. This drama was written by Ayub Gul and directed by Abbas Gul. On that occasion, Dr. Mola bakhsh Kalhoro said that my good fortune is that I am the founder member of Arts Council of Pakistan Larkana.

The then district nazim and today's MPA. With the efforts of Khurshid Ahmed Jonejo and other friends, this Arts Council of Pakistan was established in Larkana. If we talk about today's drama, every role of Wijdaan is not made to feel that they are acting. I watched the drama carefully. I came to see a blues performance somewhere. I will not talk about anyone. The entire team of the

drama performed well. Prof. Mukhtiar Samon said that conducting drama festival by Arts Council of Pakistan Larkana is a big step.

The effects of frustration on society. There are deprivations. Drama gives them a new way of thinking. After watching the drama. Desperate people go their own way. In today's drama Wijdaan, each actor has played his role well. I saw that these friends have truth and love for their art. Dur Mohammad Burro said that our writers are our capital. Our artists. actor And other friends who are fond of art are suffering a lot. They face many challenges. There will be problems at home. You will be forced. They showed all the letters.

Dr. Badruddin Dhamraho said. Thanks to the officials of Arts Council of Pakistan, Larkana. The drama intuition team did very well. Very good writing by the writer here. I'm an actor. the writer guide All are blessing blessings. At that point. Secretary Muhammad Hanif Suhag. Shams, Abdul Nabi Sariyo. Sikandar Abbasi. Drama Chairman Amjad Gul Soomro Barkat Gad, greeted and welcomed the guests. The author of

this play is Ayub Gul. Director Abbas Gul. Assistant Director Mama Naseer Noor. Raja Nadir was stoned. The supervising director was Ijaz Kathi. The actors are Ustad Ahmad Pathan. Abbas Gul. Rima Naz S Bhatti. Sajjad Ali Soomro in the beginning. Artist Nadir Lashari. Aslam Lark Syed Sefat Shah sings the songs.

Hotel employee stabbed to death

NANKANA SAHIB (INP): A hotel employee was stabbed to death by co-worker over petty dispute, police said on Thursday.

According to details, two employees of Lalpal commonly named as Chhanga Hotel of Nankana Sahib exchanged hot words. After verbal clash, accused Sarfraz stabbed to death his colleague Walayat with sickle while he was sleeping in a room of hotel. The culprit detached the ears, hands and other body parties of the deceased. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem. The police arrested accused with murder weapon and after registering a case against him started investigations.



CHARSADDA: Quami Watan Party leader, Sikandar Hayat Khan addressing party workers at Tangi.

Tribesmen flay new schedule of power supply

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: People from different walks of life rejected the new schedule of power supply according to which only two hours of power will be provided to the rural areas of Landi Kotal round the clock.

Expressing their views in the "Meet the Press" program held in Landi Kotal press club, district Khyber, Tehsil chairman Haji Shah Khalid, Awami National Party (ANP) provincial council member Fazal Rehman Afridi, district head of Pakistan People Party (PPP) Shah Rehman Shinwari, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) local leader Zarbullah said that it was irony of the time that the Tribal Electric Supply Corporation (TESCO) decreased power supply timing from four hours to two hours that was injustice to them.

Due to lack of electricity, routine life disturbed and artificial problem of scarcity of potable water raised in the area, they opined. It is a serious matter being faced by the whole merged district that should be dealt with jointly, they added and said Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and parliamentarians of the concerned constituencies need to tackle the issue with the Federal government on behalf of the former tribal region to get their rights.

The speakers lamented that the rulers deceived them as promises of provision of incentives made at the time of merging were not fulfilled so far that was a step mother behavior towards them. Khyber was the most affected district that suffered in militancy for the last two decades but instead of healing their wounds, the rulers denied their basic rights that was equivalent to dishonoring their sacrifices, they remarked.

They threatened that if the electricity was not resumed as per old schedule then a strategy would be formulated with approval of political and social organizations to initiate agitation against it.

LG to join hands with civil society

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A meeting of FANSA and IRSP held to highlight the need for comprehensive sanitation in the city of Mardan and specifically on the management of human waste in a co-scientific manner.

In which Mardan City Mayor Himayat Ullah Mayar, Executive Director of Integrated Regional Support Program (IRSP) Shah Nasir, female member of Tehsil Council Kausar Waseem students of the university and other stakeholders participated. Mayor Himayat Ullah Mayar and Shah Nasir said that various stakeholders have to act as a platform to tackle the major sanitation challenges facing the city of Mardan.

All relevant stakeholders build strong alliances for sanitation and effectively address issues related to basic sanitation planning, management structures, waste management, hygiene practices and access to sanitation services. The members of the meeting appreciated the role of CWIS for the improvement of the system and emphasized on the continuous involvement of various stakeholders and coordinated efforts across departments and organizations to tackle the major sanitation challenges faced by Mardan city.

Cadet college conducts passing-out parade

F.P. Report

TURBAT: The first passing-out parade ceremony of Sheikh Fatima Bint Mubarak Girls Cadet College was held on Thursday in Turbat, which marked a historic milestone in Balochistan's educational landscape.

The ceremony marked the passing-out of 67 girl cadets from the first batch. These successful passing-out cadets represent Makran, Kalat, Naseerabad, Sibi, Zhob, Quetta, and Rakshan divisions, and stand as a testament to the dedication and perseverance of

Balochistan's girls.

Commandant of the Girls Cadets College, Brigadier Humayun Ajmal, graced the occasion as the chief guest, underscoring the significance of this momentous event. Various prizes and awards were also presented to high achiever cadets, recognizing their outstanding performance and commitment to excellence during their academic sessions.

In a heartening display of support, the passing-out parade ceremony was attended by the cadets' parents and a large number of

representatives from civil society, reaffirming the collective commitment to the empowerment and advancement of Balochistan's youth. Today's parade not only showcases the prowess of Baloch girls but also embodies the nurturing environment and sterling values instilled by the Girls Cadets College Turbat.

The graduating cadets are imbued with a sense of purpose, driven to pursue diverse professions and contribute meaningfully to the development of their homeland, particularly Balochistan.

KUST secures 5th position in KP, 25th in country

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) shined again in TIMES Higher Education World University Ranking 2024 for being ranked as 25th in Pakistan and 5th in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Vice Chancellor KUST Prof. Dr. Naseer ud Din congratulated Dr. Zeeshan Bangash (Director QEC)

and his team for their efforts in improving university ranking. He also congratulated all the Deans, Registrar, Faculty members, Administrative, support staff and students of the university for their efforts and hard work that resulted in improving the ranking of the university not only nationally but globally.

The Vice Chancellor expressed his commitment to put maximum resources of the university to uplift Quality academics and to create applied research and innovation culture in the campus in order to make this university of international standard in teaching, learning and centre of applied research.

SGPR satisfies over execution of HEC policy at KUST

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Self-Post Graduate Program Review (SGPR) of Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) was conducted comprising of Assessment Team (AT) of Senior academician and Quality Professionals.

The AT was headed by Prof. Dr. Jamil, Department of Biotechnology where Imran Ullah Marwat, Director Quality Assurance Higher Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Dr. Umme Kalsoom, Director QEC Women university Swabi were External reviewers. Other Member of the AT Comprised of Prof. Dr. Abdus Saboor (Institute

of Numerical Sciences), Prof. Dr. Ijaz Khattak (Department of Chemistry), Dr. Zeeshan Zaib (IBS), Dr. Rashid (Department of Physics), Dr. Shamim Saleha (Director AS&R), Dr. Rukhsana (Department of Chemistry) and Dr. Faisal Mehmood, Asst. Director QEC.

All active programs of MS and PhD were evaluated by the AT and shown satisfaction upon the execution of the level 7 and 8 programs in line with HEC guidelines and standards. The AT during the exit meeting shared findings of the visit along with the recommendations with the authorities of the university and shown satisfaction over

the quality of education and performance of the graduate programs.

Vice Chancellor KUST Prof. Dr. Naseer-ud-Din appreciated the efforts of the AT identifying the weaknesses for improvements and assured to implement the suggestions made. He also appreciated the hard work of all the Deans, faculty members and administrative staff of the university who are working hard to maintain quality standards of teaching and learning in the university and congratulated Directorate of Quality Enhancement Cell for their active role in uplifting academic standards at KUST.

JUI-F rejects political victimization of govt employees

F.P. Report

TANK: Former MPA Mehmood Ahmad Khan Bettani on Thursday accused PTI Tank's selected representatives of initiating retaliatory actions against government employees, burying their righteous policy in the process.

He claimed that workers and supporters of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) are never intimidated by such tactics, asserting that

transfers and postings are part of the job, whether in Chitral, Peshawar, or even outside the country.

He made these remarks in a statement, refuting the notion that JUI, during its tenure, ever resorted to vindictive measures. He emphasized that no party, including PTI, should view political transfers as retribution.

He further expressed confidence that such actions would only strengthen JUI's resolve,

stating that their workers would not retreat.

Mehmood Bettani vowed to resist such political transfer postings vigorously, stating that PTI Tank's selected representatives should not expect tolerance for their injustices. Mehmood Ahmad Khan Bettani concluded by expressing his deep regard for JUI workers, asserting that the upcoming era belongs to patience and perseverance.

Khunjerab Park's success boost conservation efforts in GB: CM

GILGIT (INP): Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister, Haji Gulbar Khan has said that the Gilgit-Baltistan is rich in natural resources, with most of its area covered in forests, which supports a wide range of wildlife. Due to the efforts of the Khunjerab Villagers Organization and the Ghulkin Conservation Committee, the Khunjerab National Park has been successful, he said.

These views were expressed by him while addressing a ceremony organized by the Department of Forests, Wildlife, and Environment to distribute 75 percent community shares of the Khunjerab National Park entry fee here on Thursday.

CM Haji Gulbar Khan emphasized the need to replicate this success in other national parks and encouraged communities to learn from the experiences of the Khunjerab Villagers Organization. He also

highlighted the importance of conservation efforts in other districts, such as Darel, Tangir, and Astor, where there are vast opportunities for conservation and community benefit.

He directed the Provincial Minister for Forests, Haji Shah Beg and the Secretary Forests to visit Darel, Tangir, and Astore to raise awareness among the public about conservation and its benefits, and to activate conservation committees.

The chief minister said some individuals were trying to create a negative impression about the establishment of national parks, which was not based on facts. The establishment of national parks was in the wider interest of the region, and the relevant communities can benefit greatly from them, as evident from the success of Khunjerab National Park, he maintained.



Taiwan says may be hard to attend WHO assembly, Blinken offers support

TAIPEI (Reuters): It will be hard for Taiwan to attend this year's World Health Organization annual assembly, and it hopes more countries will support its presence, the island's foreign minister said on Thursday after the United States pressed for an invite. Taiwan is excluded from most international organisations because of objections by China, which considers the democratically governed island its own territory.

Taiwan attended the World Health Assembly (WHA) as an observer from 2009 to 2016 under the administration of then-President Ma Ying-jeou, who signed landmark trade and tourism agreements with China. But Beijing began blocking Taiwan's participation in 2017 after President Tsai Ing-wen won office. Speaking to reporters in parliament, Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu noted a statement

from US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in which he said the United States "strongly encourages" the WHO to reinstate Taiwan's invitation. "When it comes to attending this year's WHA there may be some difficulties, but we are continuing to work hard, as before, to get more countries to support us," Wu said, without elaborating on those problems.

This year's WHA starts May 27, just a week after Taiwan president-elect Lai Ching-te takes office. China has a strong dislike of Lai, who it believes is a dangerous separatist and has rebuffed his repeated calls for talks.

Taiwan, which is allowed to attend some technical WHO meetings, says its exclusion hindered efforts to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Blinken's statement said the United States commended the WHO for taking steps to engage Taiwan more meaningfully

in its technical work over the past year and for improving lines of communication. "Yet Taiwan's continued exclusion from this preeminent global health forum undermines inclusive global public health cooperation and security," he added. "Inviting Taiwan to observe the WHA is a critically important step toward affirming the WHO's goal of 'Health for All'." Neither China's foreign ministry nor the WHO immediately responded to a request for comment. China has in recent years ramped up diplomatic and military pressure against Taiwan to force the island to accept Chinese sovereignty.

Taiwan's government rejects China's claims and says only the island's 23 million people can decide their future, and that Beijing has no right to speak for or represent Taiwan on the international stage.

Canada's Conservative leader ejected from House of Commons

TORONTO (BBC): Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre was ejected from Canada's House of Commons after fiery exchanges with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Mr Poilievre's removal came after he refused to apologise for calling Mr Trudeau a "wacko" and "extremist" during a question period.

They were debating British Columbia's controversial decriminalisation of hard drugs. Rachael Thomas, another Conservative MP, was also expelled. Conservatives in the British Columbia government are currently seeking to reverse the province's landmark decriminalisation of drugs. During the exchange in the national parliament, Mr Trudeau accused Mr Poilievre of "shamefully" flirting with "white nationalists", a reference to recent images showing him with protesters at an anti-carbon price protest that featured flags and symbols of groups including the far-right group Diagonal. Mr Poilievre, in turn, characterised Mr Trudeau's comments as his "latest distraction" from his own "extremist policies". "When will we put an end to this wacko policy by this wacko prime minister?" he said. By this point, Speaker Greg Furgus had already expelled Ms Thomas for calling the prime minister "disgraceful". He intervened again, calling Mr Poilievre comments "unacceptable" and asking him to "simply withdraw them". When Mr Poilievre failed to do so, Speaker Fergus ejected him from the chamber. The bulk of Conservative MPs followed.

"Today the Liberal speaker censored me for describing Trudeau's hard drug policy as wacko," Mr Poilievre said on Twitter, also called X. "This is a wacko policy from a wacko PM that's destroying lives." British Columbia's decriminalisation project, which began in January 2023, has faced increasing pushback over public disorder and drug use concerns. Earlier in April the province announced that it would re-criminalise the use of hard drugs in public, partly rolling back the policy. Police will soon have the power to again address drug use in all public places, including hospitals, restaurants, parks and beaches. It is unclear when the new rules will come into force. The province said it is working with the federal government to "urgently" change the policy.

Philippines summons Chinese diplomat over South China Sea flare-up

MANILA (Reuters): The Philippines summoned a Chinese diplomat on Thursday to protest Beijing's use of water cannon against Filipino vessels at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, describing it as harassment and "dangerous manoeuvres".

Its foreign ministry said the deputy chief of mission was summoned to hear the 20th protest made by the Philippines against China this year, one of 153 under the current administration, over the conduct of its coast guard and fishing vessels that Manila maintains are militia. "The Philippines protested the harassment, ramming, swarming, shadowing and blocking, dangerous manoeuvres, use of water cannons, and other aggressive actions of China Coast Guard and Chinese maritime militia," it said in a statement, urging the boats to leave the waters immediately.

The Philippines has accused China of elevating tensions in the South China Sea after its coast guard used water cannon and damaged two of its vessels while en route to the Scarborough shoal, opens new tab to assist Filipino fishermen. The shoal, which has been occupied, opens new tab by China for more than a decade, has been flashpoint between the Philippines and China on and off for years. Tensions have escalated there recently as the Philippines takes a more assertive approach in disputed areas, while strengthening alliances with the United States and Japan. A

Ten dead, 21 missing after heavy rains in Brazil

RIO GRANDE (AFP): At least 10 people have died in floods caused by torrential rains in Brazil's south, authorities said, as rescuers searched for nearly two dozen individuals reported missing. Deluges in the state of Rio Grande do Sul have displaced some 3,300 people in more than 100 municipalities, many of whom have been moved to shelters.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva announced he would visit the area, which governor Eduardo Leite said was dealing with "the worst disaster in the history of our state." Leite said work was continuing to locate the missing even as more heavy rains were forecast. And he appealed for help in the form of people "trained for situations of chaos and war."

Persistent rains have destroyed bridges and blocked roads, leaving several communities in the state completely cut off. "We lost everything, everything, all the food, everything we had in the house," Adriana Salete Gas of the city of Santa Cruz do Sul told local media. "Our house is two meters high and it still flooded." Authorities have urged people to avoid areas along state highways due to a risk of mudslides, and those who live near rivers or on hillsides to evacuate. Rescuers and soldiers have been scrambling to free families trapped in their homes, many stuck on rooftops to escape rising waters. The state's deputy governor, Gabriel Souza, said damages have been estimated at \$20 million.

At least 11 people have been injured and nearly 20,000 affected in other ways by the floods, officials said. Bad weather has hampered the rescue efforts, often in hard-to-reach



places, and the death toll has continued rising from an initial five reported. Lula wrote on X that he would visit the area Thursday "to verify the situation." The president had earlier announced the federal government was sending help to respond to the disaster, which he said was the result of climate change.

Tens of thousands of people across Rio Grande do Sul have been left without drinking water, officials said, and telephone and internet services were down in at least 60 municipalities. In an effort to reach dry ground, residents of the small city of Encantado have been leaving the area on foot or by motorcycle over damaged and mud-caked roads, AFP TV observed. About 100 kilometers (62 miles) away, the town of Sinimbu was submerged in water, its streets transformed into rivers. Mayor Sandra Backes said the town was

without internet, drinking water and electricity, describing the situation as "a nightmare."

"Sinimbu is like a war zone, completely destroyed... All the stores, businesses, supermarkets -- everything is devastated," she said in a video posted on Instagram. In Santa Cruz do Sul, lifeguards used boats to transport residents, many of them children, to safety. The region's rivers had already been swollen from previous storms, and torrential rains in late March left at least 25 people dead in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Espirito Santo. South America's largest country has suffered a string of recent extreme weather events, which experts say are made more likely by climate change. The floods came amid a cold front battering the south and southeast, following on a wave of extreme heat.

Georgian MPs move closer to passing 'Russian law' targeting media

TBILISI (AP): Georgia's Parliament moved a step closer to passing a law that critics fear will stifle media freedom and endanger the country's European Union membership bid, as police used water cannons, tear gas and pepper spray against the tens of thousands of protesters who thronged surrounding streets.

Dozens of people were arrested the night before, and mass rallies have continued daily in the capital, Tbilisi. Protesters denounce the bill as "the Russian law", because neighboring Russia uses similar legislation to stigmatize independent news media and organizations critical of the Kremlin. The law would require media and noncommercial organizations to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power," if they receive more than 20% of funding from abroad. The ruling Georgian Dream party withdrew a similar proposal last year after large crowds protested.

Eighty-three of Georgia's 150 lawmakers approved the bill in its second reading, while 23 voted against it. A third and final vote in Parliament is needed before it can be signed into law. Georgian lawmaker Irakli Kobakhidze told reporters that he expected that final vote to happen in mid-May.

Russia-Georgia relations have been complicated and turbulent since the Soviet Union's collapse in the early 1990s. The two countries fought a short war in 2008 that ended with Georgia losing control of two Russia-friendly separatist regions. In the aftermath, Tbilisi severed diplomatic ties with Moscow, and the issue of the regions' status remains a key irritant, even as relations have somewhat improved. Georgia joined international resolutions condemning Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, but it also became a main destination for Russians fleeing military mobilization and political crackdowns. Even Georgia's ruling party has seen internal tensions over its neighbor.

The Interior Ministry said that 63 people were detained following protest. Georgian television showed Levan Khabeishvili, chairman of the pro-West United National Movement party, arriving in Parliament with bandages on his nose and forehead. Members of Khabeishvili's party said that he had been assaulted by police during the protests. Purple bruising and cuts were visible around Khabeishvili's left eye as he urged fellow lawmakers to scrap the bill. "If you are not interested in how the leader of the main opposition party

has been beaten up, then - for the sake of those young people who were injured, who were hit on the heads and bruised - I want to ask you once more, even though I do not have any hope, withdraw this law," he said. Deputy Interior Minister Aleksandre Darakhvelidze alleged at a briefing that Khabeishvili broke through a police cordon the night before and was injured while he "resisted." Darakhvelidze alleged that protesters and opposition leaders were "constantly committing violence." Police broke up the protest after demonstrators tried to block entrances to Parliament. As protesters gathered once more, opposition lawmaker Beqa Liluashvili published a live video from the Parliament chamber showing lawmakers shouting and physically confronting each other. One threw a stack of papers at opponents.

Others restrained colleagues. Opposition lawmaker Helene Khoshtaria accused the ruling party of trying to "drag Georgia into Russian influence" and "close off its European future."

Speaking to The Associated Press outside Parliament, she described authorities' response to the rallies as "extremely authoritarian" but said it would not dissuade the protesters.

"We do not want the Soviet regime that our parents have experienced," one protester, Kato Salukvadze, told the AP. "I think that everyone should be in the streets and say no to the Russian law and yes to Europe."

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili, increasingly at odds with the governing party, has criticized the bill and vowed to veto it if it is passed by Parliament. But the governing party can overrule the veto and ask the parliamentary speaker to sign the bill into law. At a media briefing, Kobakhidze spoke openly of Georgian Dream's intention to do so, and defended Tbilisi's forceful response to the protests. "There will be demonstrations today, during the third reading, during the overriding of the veto. (When the law passes), there will be a few days of discomfort. However, in the long term, we will insure the country against polarization and radicalism for years," Kobakhidze told reporters.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on X, formerly Twitter, that Tbilisi's use of force against the demonstrators was "unacceptable." "Georgia is an EU candidate country, I call on its authorities to ensure the right to peaceful assembly," he said.

Solomon Islands lawmakers elect former FM as new PM

MELBOURNE (AP): Solomon Islands lawmakers elected former Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manele as prime minister Thursday in a development that suggests the South Pacific island nation will maintain close ties with China. Manele used his first speech as leader to promise to govern with integrity and to put his nation's interests first.

"I will discharge my duties diligently and with integrity. I will at all times put the interests of our people and country above all other interests," Manele said in a speech outside the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. Manele won 31 votes in a secret ballot of 49 lawmakers who won general elections on April 17. Governor General David Vunagi said, while Matthew Wale, who led the opposition in the previous parliament, received the

remaining 18. The withdrawal of pro-Beijing former Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare from the contest to make way for Manele as their party's candidate indicated the country could follow a similar direction. Sogavare had hoped to become the first Solomons prime minister to maintain power in consecutive four-year terms following the election. During his previous term, China's influence increased more in the Solomons than anywhere else in the South Pacific. Sogavare switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to Beijing and struck a secret security pact that has raised fears of the Chinese navy gaining a foothold in the region. In his speech, Manele also urged against any post-election violence. "Past prime minister's elections have been met with the act of violence and destruction.

Our economy and livelihoods have suffered because of this violence," Manele said. "However, today we show the world that we are better than that. We must respect and uphold the democratic process of electing our prime minister and set an example for our children and their children," he added. Sogavare's election in 2019 sparked riots in the capital Honiara over legal questions hanging over his eligibility to become prime minister. More serious riots resulted in arson and looting in Honiara in November 2021 after his leadership survived a no-confidence motion moved by Wale. Riots following the 2006 election, which were fueled by allegations of Chinese interference and resentment against Chinese business people, led to then-Prime Minister

Snyder Rini's resignation after a week in office and Sogavare taking power. It was the second of Sogavare's four stints as prime minister. Meg Keen, the director of the Pacific Islands program for Lowy Institute, a Sydney-based international policy think tank, said Manele will be a "less fiery and combative leader for the West to manage but he will continue to pursue close relations with China." "As the former foreign minister he helped broker the security deal with China that panicked the West. But he is also a seasoned diplomat with experience at the UN and in western countries -- he's no stranger to western engagement," Keen said. She said Sogavare had pulled out of the race because his party's loss of several lawmakers at the election was evidence that voters wanted change.

30 people are injured when a trailer overturns in Germany

BERLIN (AP): A trailer packed with people celebrating May Day overturned in southern Germany, leaving 30 injured, 10 of them seriously, police and media reports said. According to the German news agency dpa, the accident happened near

the city of Freiburg. Police say it took place in the village of Kandern, and that rescue helicopters were deployed, including some from neighboring Switzerland, as well as a large number of rescue and police forces.

None of the injured were

in life-threatening condition, dpa reported. Local papers said the trailer that was being pulled by an agricultural machine overturned at around 1 p.m. Reports said the people on the trailer were celebrating May Day, which is observed in many countries

to celebrate workers' rights. Police said that the injured included a group of friends aged between 20 and 25 years who came from surrounding villages and were celebrating on the open trailer when the it toppled over on a road going downhill.

Parts of India record hottest as heatwave kills 9

NEW DELHI (Reuters): Eastern India experienced its hottest April on record as a heatwave scorched parts of the country amid a general election, killing at least nine people, and the weather office forecast above normal temperatures for May too.

Searing heat has been cited by political analysts as one of the reasons for low voter turnout in the seven-phase parliamentary election that began on April 19, with results due on June 4. Heatwave conditions are, however, forecast to abate gradually in the coming days.

The mean temperature in eastern India was 28.12 Celsius (82.61 Fahrenheit) in April, the warmest since records began in 1901, with experts blaming a combination of factors. "In an El Nino year, you get more heating," said Mrutyunjay Mohapatra,

chief of the India Meteorological Department, referring to a climate pattern that typically leads to hot and dry weather in Asia and heavier rains in parts of the Americas. He said fewer thunderstorms and an anti-cyclonic circulation near India's southeastern coast were causing heatwaves. "Wind blows from land towards the sea during an anti-cyclone ..., so land becomes warmer and temperature rises." In April, the eastern Indian state of West Bengal recorded the most number of heatwave days for the month in the last 15 years, followed by the neighbouring coastal state of Odisha where heat conditions were the worst in nine years.

Authorities have also declared a rare heatwave in the southwestern coastal state of Kerala, where at least two deaths have been

recorded due to soaring temperatures. Central and northwestern India, which includes major wheat producing states that typically witness heatwaves this time of the year, have been largely spared due to intermittent thundershowers last month, Mohapatra said.

The weather office said rainfall in May is likely to be normal and that it expects more showers during the second half of the monsoon season in August and September as compared to June and July due to the La Nina climate pattern, which typically brings higher rainfall to India. Monsoon is the lifeblood of India's economy, delivering 70% of the rain needed to water crops and recharge reservoirs, and the met department has predicted that India will receive above normal monsoon rainfall in 2024.

Politicians flay Warsaw synagogue firebombing

WARSAW: Poland's political leaders have condemned a firebomb attack on a synagogue in Warsaw. The Nozyk Synagogue in the capital was attacked with three firebombs. The building sustained minimal damage, and there were no casualties.

Police said they have not established a motive for the attack and no perpetrator has been identified. Attacks against Jewish targets have risen around the globe since Israel launched its war on Gaza in October. However, it is also suspected Russia may be seeking to use the rising tension to encourage social divisions in Europe. "We

were informed overnight about an incident involving a bottle containing a flammable liquid being thrown onto synagogue grounds," a police spokesperson said.

President Andrzej Duda called the attack "shameful" in a post on X. "There is no place for antisemitism in Poland! There is no place for hatred in Poland!" said the head of state, who is closely linked with the nationalist, conservative Law & Justice Party (PiS), which governed Poland for eight years before losing to an opposition alliance in last year's elections. "We must respond very robustly and strongly to

this outrageous and vicious attack." Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski declared. The staunchly pro-Western minister also noted that the incident came on the 20th anniversary of Poland joining the European Union. "Thank God no one was hurt. I wonder who is trying to disrupt the anniversary of our accession to the EU," Sikorski wrote on X. "Maybe the same ones who scribbled Stars of David in Paris?" In November after the outbreak of the Gaza war, more than 200 paintings of the Star of David appeared on buildings around Paris. — Aljazeera

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Impact of heat on schools

ACROSS developed and developing countries, from the United States to Bangladesh, it has been found that higher summer temperatures is leaving schools and students in a bad shape compared to cooler temperatures. Studies indicate that the higher the temperature, there is a decrease in learning among the students, and their performance goes down in tests.

It has been found that the number of schooldays lost to heat is six to seven days compared to three to four days last decade. In Bangladesh, the schools were closed six to seven days last year while this year this could increase to three to four weeks. A study has found that American high school students performed badly in standardised tests in a year when there is higher temperature. According to Boston University economist and co-author of the study, Josh Goodman, there was a decrease in one per cent of learning when the heat increased 0.55 Degrees Celsius or 1 Degree Fahrenheit. And this disappeared in schools with air-conditioning.

About 40 per cent to 60 per cent of schools in the US have either fans or partial air-conditioning. The schools in lower-income districts without heat-insulating devices lagged behind those in higher-income where schools had the necessary facilities. The same contrast holds across the countries which are poor and exposed to extreme heat conditions and those with cooler climates. As global temperatures rise due to the effects of climate change, the impact on learning abilities of children in hot countries will be more. "Climate change will widen the learning gaps between hot and cool countries," says Goodman.

Heather Randell, a University of Minnesota sociologist, argues that an increase in heat would affect the crop yields in hot countries, and the children will have less to eat, and their growth would be stunted. The difference in learning capacities of children in hot and cool countries, or between the tropical and temperate latitudes, sounds far-fetched. But there is no denying the fact that increase in global temperatures leading to extreme heat events will have an impact on schools and learning in general.

It will become necessary for schools to remain closed for longer periods if the hot days in a year get extended. And national governments in Asia and Africa will have to take policy decisions to counter the impact of heat. According to reports from NGOs in Bangladesh, the longer schools remain closed, the social and economic impact on children will be greater. It is likely to lead to child labour and child marriages for girls.

The sociological impact of increase in global temperatures has to be reckoned and responses have to be articulated to provide schools and students with the appropriate physical and institutional setups. But this has to be part of the overall response to the climate change challenge. It cannot be done for each sector or segment separately. It has also been found that extreme heat events are occurring in Europe and in North America as well, and there is need for each country to respond to the heat crisis.

Climate change will have a critical impact across the globe. Those living in cooler climates cannot hope to escape it even as countries near the tropics face the heat literally. What is essential is to study the impact of rising global temperatures on all aspects of life across countries, and compile the statistical data which will help in formulating policies. If the world fails to contain the rise in temperature below the 1.5 Degrees Celsius level of pre-Industrial Revolution days, then emergency plans have to come into play. Adaptation to climate change requires a different set of policies. And the two sets of policies have to go hand in hand.

China's electric vehicles create power

BY most measures, the last thing China needs is more electric cars crowding a market with more losers than winners, driving down prices at the expense of profit and taking the fight for market share beyond China.

And that's just what it is getting. Automakers are expected to launch 110 EVs and plug-in hybrids in 2024, many at the Beijing auto show. Those new offerings, dominated by Chinese brands, will join the almost 400 "new energy" models already in China's showrooms, according to industry data.

By contrast, there were just over 50 EV models on sale in the United States last year.

But while there is a peril in China's overcapacity, there is also a power in the hyper-competition it has unleashed, analysts, suppliers and executives say. China's leading EV makers have found ways to slash vehicle development time, combining speed to market with new features and a pricing advantage rivals outside cannot match, according to Reuters.

"This is a technological revolution," said Wang Xun, founder and chairman of Shanghai-based auto design and engineering firm Launch Design. "And in this revolution, Chinese brands are at the forefront."

Analysts widely agree China's EV market, the world's largest, faces an eventual shakeout. Just not yet.

The top-selling 10 EVs – a list dominated by BYD and Tesla – have accounted for over half of sales in China so far this year. With capacity to build more battery-powered vehicles than the market can support, prices at home are tumbling and exports are rising. BYD, China's leading EV maker, has cut domestic prices on three leading models by more than 9% this year.

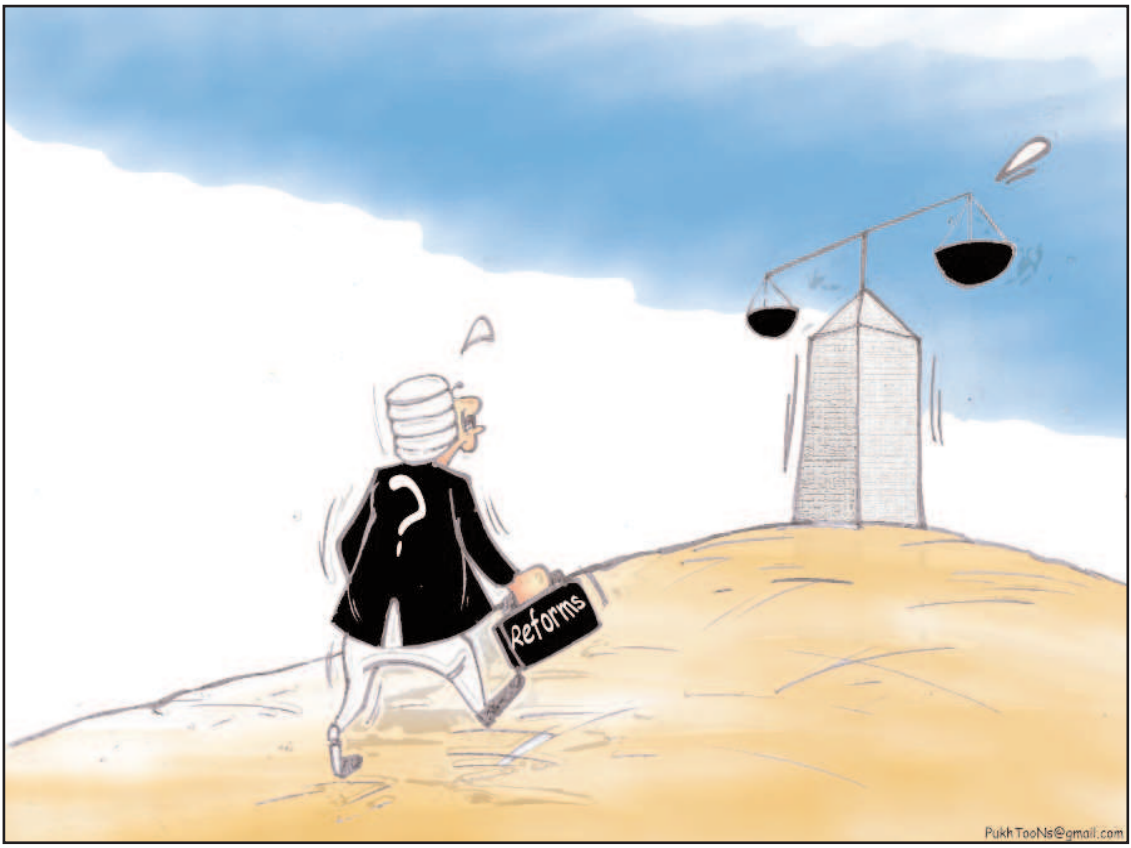
But new competitors are also stepping in, including smartphone makers Huawei and Xiaomi, who have struck partnerships with established automakers with spare capacity. State-backed companies are also rolling out new EVs to support a government mandate to build China's lead in networked cars.

"Things become cheaper quicker in China," said David Li, CEO of Hesai, a leading supplier of LIDAR remote sensing technology for self-driving features. "It's not because China is cheap. It's because China is fast," the Reuters report adds.

Hesai is rolling out a LIDAR unit that is about half the price of its most popular model, now used by Li Auto and Xiaomi. By cutting car development to 18 months from three years or more, Chinese EV makers take advantage of falling prices for technology like that, Li said. "It's a cheaper product because of speed and innovation," Li told Reuters. "I think that's part of it that a lot of people may not fully understand." In the past weeks, Huawei and Xiaomi have launched EVs with a blitz of publicity, just months after Apple killed its decade-long effort to launch the equivalent under its brand. Xiaomi created an online sensation with the launch of the SU7, an EV that looks so much like a Porsche it has spurred a nickname "Baoshimi", a mash-up of the two brand names in Chinese. Xiaomi is targeting 100,000 sales this year, a big debut for a new entrant.

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EU army may be unlikely but unity on defense a must

Khaled Abou Zahr

AN exhibition of Western military equipment captured from Ukrainian forces by Russia opened in Moscow on Wednesday. The month-long exhibition will feature some 30 tanks, armored vehicles and other weapons, said to have been donated to Ukraine by various countries. As news from the front has become more positive for Russia in recent months, the discussions around a common European defense have once again resurfaced. President Emmanuel Macron has taken the lead, seeing an opportunity to anchor France as the main driving force of this initiative. In response, analysts from mainly Anglo-Saxon think tanks have declared that the idea of a unique European army does not make sense for various reasons.

I would agree with them at this stage. The emergence of a single army remains challenging as long as the EU does not function as a confederation of states. A single common foreign policy and security vision that supersedes national ones is needed first. Politics comes before defense. And for this to happen, there are steps required that would cause major uproars domestically, especially on the question of the sovereignty of each country. In a time of economic fragility and high political polarization, this would be an inconceivable endeavor for any leader. The vehement reactions across Europe to the declarations made so far by Macron confirm this.

However, this does not mean that the EU should not try to make its defense stronger and more united. This also does not mean that all projects of mutualization should be cast aside. Quite the opposite, it is time to rise to the challenge.

A clear urgent step should be in the building of a stronger common industrial military capacity. The 27 EU states together spent 270 billion (\$289 billion) on defense in 2023, on par with China. Yet, on a purchasing power parity comparison, China's spending

dwarfs the EU's. The EU's budget is also significantly lower than the US' \$905 billion. Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Poland account for more than 70 percent of defense spending within the EU. These comparisons highlight the disparities in military spending within the EU and underscore the bloc's position relative to the global military powers.

Europeans are taking

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positive steps, such as the creation of a European defense industrial strategy. As part of this, the EU aims to acquire at least 40 percent of its defense equipment internally by 2030 — a move intended to reduce its reliance on imports and enhance security autonomy. One important element is EU artillery shell production capacity. Thierry Breton, the bloc's internal market commissioner, in March estimated that European industry would have the capacity to produce between 1.5 million and 1.7 million shells by the end of the year and would reach the milestone of 2 million during 2025. Moreover, the EU's first community financial tool created in the defense sec-

tor, the European Defence Fund, was established in 2017. It is endowed with an 8 billion budget for 2021-27, with a focus on innovation.

There is an urgent need to empower the European Defence Agency and develop a real European alliance. One might say that this creates useless layers of bureaucracy that should be avoided, especially as NATO already serves this

research projects. Furthermore, the issue of nuclear deterrence has taken center stage, particularly following the UK's departure from the EU, leaving France as the sole nuclear power within the bloc. Macron's call for a strategic dialogue on French nuclear capabilities underscores the evolving security landscape and the imperative for cohesive defense strategies. However, debates surrounding nuclear policy remain contentious, both domestically and within the EU, reflecting broader concerns about European vulnerabilities and the need to address emerging threats effectively.

Beyond hardware, one must also think of spirits. Renowned French military figure Gen. Francois Lecointre, esteemed for his tenure as chief of the defense staff and his current role as grand chancellor of the Order of the Legion of Honor, explained the realities of combat in his new autobiography, "Entre Guerres" (Between Wars). Within its pages, he advocates for a deeper societal understanding of military engagement, urging recognition of the sacrifices and complexities experienced by soldiers and their families.

Lecointre also criticizes

the substantial reduction of the French army's capabilities and emphasizes the moral disarmament of Europe. This reminds us that a strong defense is also about a united and strong-willed population. I would add to this list the necessity for great political acumen by European leaders in dealing with the current geopolitical crises; understanding when and how to diffuse conflicts when possible or when not ready for escalation. Moreover, with the EU's inability to have a real unified political voice and a single army, which can only take place within a confederation of states, leaders should be cautious of the risks of loss and the decisions of war and peace that can be created by a multitude of voices reacting first and thinking second.

The Middle East's '1989 moment'

Faisal J. Abbas

THERE was a hectic but fruitful few days in Riyadh this week when the World Economic Forum held a Special Meeting in the Kingdom for the first time. It was important not only because Saudi Arabia metaphorically "brought the mountain to Mohammed," and not only because of the A-list policymakers, thought leaders and business executives who were there — but also because of its timing. The forum took place a few days after the eighth anniversary of the launch of Vision 2030, and what those in attendance witnessed was a coming of age, a revelation of what the new Saudi Arabia stands for.

What they saw, heard and experienced was the emergence of a new force — a force for good, prosperity and inclusion. This force has now created, as described by one of my colleagues who attended a number of forum sessions both on and off the record, the Middle East's "1989 moment." That year was a tumultuous one, beginning with the collapse of com-

munist in eastern Europe, ending with the overthrow of dictatorship in Romania, and leading two years later to the implosion of the Soviet Union. It is fascinating that 35 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, we are witnessing an equally important moment — a fork in the road, where many are now going to have to choose which route to take.

As US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said last week at his meeting with GCC ministers: "There are really two paths forward for the region as a whole: one driven with division and destruction ... the other, greater integration, greater security, greater peace."

He could not have been more accurate, and there could not be a better time or another chance for stakeholders to make the right decision.

The US, despite being the world's superpower, has clearly made a choice. We have come along way from the hostile rhetoric that marked the beginning of the Biden administration to public reassurances last week that a Saudi-US

security pact was "very, very close." The past four years have also been an opportunity for both sides to reflect and see how multifaceted the relationship is, and could be. Apart from military deals, everything from space exploration to Saudi-American nuclear cooperation is up for grabs. This perhaps has been helped by repeated assurances from Saudi officials that our partners in the US will always be given priority, but also a US realization that the Kingdom has other options — and lots of them — for military, technology and business deals.

Interestingly, it seems more likely that a US-Saudi treaty might still proceed even without progress on the Saudi-Israeli front, which has a Palestinian aspect that must be respected.

Israel also has a choice to make. As New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman put it, the choice is between Riyadh and Rafah. The first, he writes "has a much bigger payoff at the end than the road to Rafah, which will be a

dead end in every sense of the term."

There were public reassurances by several Saudi officials at last week's forum that the Kingdom's offer to put its weight behind Israel's integration with the Arab and Muslim world was on the table. The ask? "A credible, irreversible path to a Palestinian state," as Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said.

In other words, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has a personal choice to make: one is to accept a two-state solution (although nobody said implementing that will be straightforward, and many details will need to be ironed out later) and permenantly end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The other is to be remembered for, and face the consequences of, being a war criminal. With so many countries around the world unilaterally recognizing Palestine, Netanyahu will only add to Israel's isolation if he doesn't accept the genuine offer to climb down from the tree he ascended since Oct. 7. His declaration this

How retail can regenerate historic districts

Fady Halim and Joe Rached

THE growth of GCC cities has been remarkable. Between 1970 and 2022, the GCC's urban population grew twelvefold, to 51.4 million, according to the World Bank. In 2022 alone, Saudi Arabia accounted for 69 per cent of total GCC urban growth. However, that growth has come at a cost: the decline of some historic areas.

These areas have suffered the loss of established local businesses, community life, social connections, and rich cultural assets that together defined their character. Their decline has made these districts less desirable for enterprises and residents alike. For example, after the oil boom and rapid industrialization, and as needs changed, many families chose to move into newly built accommodation and leave a renowned historic district.

Cities can avoid such outcomes. Regeneration programmes can preserve the old while fostering economic prosperity through the balanced and deft encouragement of retail. By applying the following five principles, retail can regenerate historic neighbourhoods.

First, discover the district's pattern of development in recent decades so that any new retail offerings align with its culture, commercial traditions, and values. An appreciation of the district's characteristics—its traditional trades and other distinctive elements—is vital for ensuring that the new retail offerings create opportunity while preserving the character of local communities. Some areas, for example, host well-known businesses and traditional crafts. Some have specific demographics, with longstanding commercial tenants (such as textile or spice merchants) and cater to particular groups of visitors (such as pilgrims).

Second, understand the architectural and physical context to turn the district into a desirable destination. The aim should be to preserve the district in its essence but with modern amenities, where people want to spend time and spend more. Regeneration programs can achieve that delicate balance by creating harmony among old and new assets. That involves using modern architectural concepts and development that are inspired by traditional approaches. These concepts should be sensitive to the history of a place without being crude replicas, and should blend with the surroundings.

Bahrain's Souq Al Qaysariya, for example, has preserved its historic pearl, spices, and tea trade, complementing it with offerings such as jewellery, perfume, and food and beverage retailers. Many elements make the district into a destination, including specially designed roofscapes, street furniture, and light-

ing. It should also be easy for people to visit and to park—which increases visitor numbers, how much they spend and how long they stay—but in a manner that does not disrupt the district's character. Toronto regenerated one area by closing the streets to traffic, which encouraged more visitors on foot who stayed longer, and by highlighting the district's Victorian-era architecture and atmosphere.

Third, be sensitive to local and national retailers' interests, given they often possess historical and cultural connections to the district. Establish a dialogue among retailers so that parties recognize the attraction and energy that international brands lend to a modern retail environment. For example, in regenerating Al Balad, the Jeddah Historic District in Saudi Arabia, participants actively engaged with the local community to focus on rehabilitating retail assets, bringing back merchants that had left, and re-energizing cultural clusters with the support of prominent Saudi retailers.

Fourth, support local retailers. One of the challenges of urban regeneration is that it can lead to gentrification and marginalize local businesses. Governments can prevent such counterproductive effects by providing support early on, such as through regulation that favors established local businesses. Other support mechanisms include grants, grace periods on lease payments, and revenue subsidies. Such forms of financial assistance are generally temporary, ending when the district has achieved economic stability and the number of visitors has grown.

Fifth, promote the experience. Beyond retail, feature events and activities that attract visitors and spark vitality—music, cultural events, and festivals, especially those that cater to a broad demographic mix. These do more than give local retailers and food and beverage outlets broader exposure. They celebrate the heritage of these districts, reviving an appreciation for the traditional, a core objective of regeneration. Schedule events year-round to ensure a steady flow of visitors, even during the hot summer months. What made the King's Cross redevelopment in London so successful was the careful selection of restaurants, shopping, art, and culture—and its proximity to a major transportation hub.

To succeed, the regeneration of a historical district must revive and refresh the commercial landscape, infusing it with a range of offerings and experiences that complement and celebrate heritage. Balance is key: regeneration programmes can use retail to mix the old and the new to promote growth and preserve tradition.

week, given that for over 40 years Tehran's declared position was to not even recognize Israel.

Confounding the many cynics who criticized the Saudi-Iranian detente of March 2023, that declaration was one of the benefits of the working relationship between Riyadh and Tehran. Nevertheless, Vision 2030 and the Revolution of 1979 are not compatible, and also create two paths for regional forces to choose from. The positive outcome of the Beijing detente is that, at least for now, it is a matter of "each to their own" rather than a permanent standoff between the two countries. Indeed, this was always the Kingdom's position: what changed was that Iran decided to make the choice to extend its hand and commit to non-aggression and respect for national sovereignty.

Will we see a fully integrated, prosperous Middle East? Will it become the "New Europe," as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman once said? Well, the vision is there — now it is just a matter of choices ... and consequences.

Active Clubs: A new far-right threat to democratic elections

ACROSS North America and Europe, the far-right Active Clubs movement is expanding at an unprecedented pace, presenting new threats to democratic elections and minorities.

With a network of decentralised cells in most states in the United States and European Union member countries, the Active Clubs movement has blended far-right extremism with mixed martial arts (MMA). By presenting a more palatable image to the public and combining its extremist ideology with exercise, fitness and MMA training, Active Clubs have widened their appeal to reach a much broader audience than traditional white supremacist groups whose members are often derided for being “keyboard warriors”.

Unlike these traditional hate groups which are mocked for existing mostly in online echo chambers, Active Clubs put real-world engagement at the very core of their group. Whether through kickboxing, weightlifting, hiking, or organising demonstrations, Active Clubs focus on taking action in the here and now. While the ideology of Active Clubs remains similar to the tired and hateful ideologies of traditional white nationalist organisations, two unique factors – decentralised organisational structures and personal growth – have set the Active Clubs movement apart from others and fuelled its rapid growth.

Launched in 2021, the movement now includes more than 104 known cells across the US, Canada, and Europe, according to a recent Counter Extremism Project report. The unprecedented growth of the movement poses serious public safety risks as the US and many democratic countries approach elections in 2024. With a history of engaging in political violence and intimidation, there is a significant risk that the network’s cells could serve as a violent militia and “brownshirt” organisation interfering in elections and political events across the US over the coming year.

To understand the growth and dangers of Active Clubs, we need to examine how the movement started. First launched in January 2021, the network was the second project started by Robert Rundo, a white American nationalist who spent time in Europe learning from other far-right groups and founded the

Rise Above Movement (RAM). After the arrest of Rundo and three other group leaders during the 2019 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, the hierarchically organised RAM began to disintegrate. Recognising the danger that well-placed arrests could pose to vertically structured organisations, Rundo adopted the model of leaderless resistance, first developed by the white nationalist writer Louis Beam in 1983.

With this lesson learned, Rundo structured the Active Clubs movement as a decentralised network where each cell functions independently, yet stays connected to others on encrypted messaging platforms such as Telegram and Rocket.Chat. This more durable decentralised network approach ensures that even if one branch or cell leader is arrested, the overall network remains intact.

Beyond this more resilient organisational structure, the second factor behind the dramatic growth of the Active Clubs movement is its blending of far-right ideologies with personal growth and physical fitness.

By promoting healthy pastimes like weightlifting, kickboxing, and even hiking, the group centres itself around positive, shared activities. Active Clubs enthusiastically encourage their members to live healthier lifestyles, by avoiding tobacco and drug use, training daily, and even going for hikes. For many new members, Active Clubs initially serve as a vehicle for self-improvement where they can train and exercise amongst like-minded individuals.

Alongside this personal growth, the group gradually introduces its members to the movement’s ideology as their involvement deepens. Putting physical training at the centre of the organisation serves as a powerful tool to help build the self-confidence of its members, many of whom are disenfranchised or isolated with few other options. Beyond developing their self-confidence by orientating the movement around shared training, the network also helps its members build a strong sense of camaraderie.

These powerful social and psychological factors have helped the group to not only reach a wider audience of disaffected young people than similar

organisations but also grow faster than any other far-right movement I have monitored.

Unlike most far-right extremist groups – which simply take time and funds from their members – Active Clubs are unique in claiming to provide some concrete social and psychological benefits to recruits. When these social and psychological benefits are combined with a sense of purpose and sacred values, they can become powerful catalysts for collective action that are likely to lead to further political violence and election interference.

Members of the Active Clubs movement have been involved in a wide range of political activity, including violent far-right rallies, political intimidation during campaign debates, and clashes with counter-protesters.

The Active Clubs openly praise their American founder Rundo, who was jailed in 2019 for inciting violent rallies in Virginia and California, and pursue the goals of his former organisation, RAM, within a more durable decentralised structure.

Active Clubs also maintain close affiliations with more traditional white nationalist and accelerationist groups like Patriot Front that have used violence in the past. In Canada, Active Clubs members are known to have simultaneously been members of designated terrorist groups, including the Atomwaffen Division.

The Active Clubs have recently also become more engaged in direct political interference. In late 2023, Active Clubs members in Franklin, Tennessee staged a show of force during a mayoral election debate, which disturbed some members of the public. While the Active Clubs involved claimed they were only providing protection for the candidate, their presence at debates, polling stations, and civic buildings can have a chilling effect, causing voters to feel unsafe and deterring them from attending events which are vital to the democratic system. In other instances, Active Clubs members have tried to disrupt LGBTQ fundraisers and Black Lives Matter demonstrations.

As the US hurtles towards turbulent elections later this year, there is a significant risk that Active Clubs could serve as a combat-ready militia or “brown-

shirts” organisation prepared to intimidate voters at polling stations, debates, and peaceful demonstrations. With individual Active Clubs branches spanning most US states, the network has a broad geographic footprint that could lead to voter intimidation and election disruptions across the country.

While some Active Clubs members view former President Donald as a false messiah who has failed to uproot the establishment, many others likely view his campaign as still representing their best chance at advancing some of their political goals. The increasingly sensationalist and violent rhetoric from Trump, who has promised to pardon January 6 insurrectionists and rioters if re-elected as president, has further increased the risk that far-right groups like Active Clubs will feel emboldened to take violent action in the run-up to the US elections.

As we approach major elections around the world in 2024, the risks posed by far-right extremist groups grow rapidly. To counter these threats in the short term, we must invest in trust and safety teams to ensure that extremists cannot exploit private platforms to organise, recruit, and spread hateful propaganda. We must also encourage law enforcement and the military to expand their plans to ensure their ranks remain free of extremist-aligned individuals.

However, in the longer term, we must do much more to address the underlying social, economic, and political conditions that drive individuals to join extremist groups like Active Clubs.

As generative artificial intelligence and greater specialisation leads to higher unemployment, additional funding for upskilling and retraining will be necessary to begin addressing these economic factors. However, any approach must also provide alternate sources of community and personal agency. Community sports, coding workshops, and entrepreneurship programmes would be a step in the right direction.

This is a slow and costly process, to be sure, but without taking steps to change these underlying social conditions, movements like Active Clubs will continue to grow and do significant damage to both the minorities they target and our democratic system as a whole.

Revitalized Maghreb union would benefit all member states

DEVELOPMENT **S** in the Maghreb last month have once again drawn attention to the Arab Maghreb Union, the ambitious plan to unite the western region of the Arab world.

The last meeting of the Arab Maghreb Union took place three decades ago, in 1994. Amid a variety of political and economic differences, the countries of the Maghreb — namely Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania — gave priority to their own national plans and international relations.

The Arab Maghreb Union today exists largely only on paper, with an office in Rabat and certain tertiary cooperation programs among member states. Regional leaders have periodically stated their intention to revive the union, but such attempts have not been successful.

Today, international attention is again focused on the prospects for the revival of the Arab Maghreb Union.

What began with the prospect of a fragmented new union ended with commitments to reconcile and revive the organization.

On April 22, Libyan Presidential Council President Mohammed Al-Menfi met with Tunisian President Kais Saied and Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune in Tunis to launch a series of tripartite meetings, to be held every three months, to discuss relevant issues in the Maghreb.

This was the result of a decision taken earlier last month, when the three leaders met on the sidelines of the seventh summit of the heads of state and government of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum in Algiers and agreed to hold such consultative meetings periodically. The absence of Morocco and Mauritania, the other two members of the Arab Maghreb Union, from both of these meetings was significant. Amid speculation of the emergence of an alternative to the Arab Maghreb Union, Libyan Presidential Council envoy Sami Al-Menfi on

Zaid M. Belbagi

April 24 landed in Rabat to deliver a handwritten letter to Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita. On the same day, Mauritania hosted Imad Al-Falah, another Libyan envoy. They both refused any attempt to establish a union excluding any Maghreb country. The Libyan ambassador in Rabat, Abu Bakr Ibrahim Al-Taweel, reiterated the same. And on April 25, Algerian Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf highlighted Algiers’ commitment to uniting the Maghreb and assured that it does not intend to exclude any member from the regional integration plans.

The Arab Maghreb Union has been collateral damage in the long-standing political rift between Morocco and Algeria.

The Maghreb, which is the Arabic name for Morocco, has always been a Moroccan preserve, with Rabat having been the political and religious fulcrum of the region since medieval times.

The differences between the two Maghrebi neighbors are rooted in post-independence border disputes and divergent international relations.

As the region faced increasing mayhem in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, from militancy in the Sahel to political uprisings in Tunisia and Libya, the desire to unite the Maghreb became a low priority. However, such unity could serve as a panacea for the region’s political turmoil and economic limitations.

A robust integration framework would lead to efficiency and growth in regional and international trade, while also creating prospects for collective security, measures against militancy and illicit trade, the free movement of people and diplomatic cooperation on the global stage.

The International Monetary Fund has noted that integration would make economic sense, as it would create a market of more than 100 million consumers and a regional gross domestic product of more than \$360 bil-

lion. This would certainly create strong incentives for foreign direct investment and knowledge transfer. Morocco plays a key role in this integration and the recent diplomatic efforts to ensure Rabat’s inclusion in Maghreb unity are a testament to its regional standing.

Morocco is well positioned to consolidate efforts toward bringing the Arab Maghreb Union back to life. Given its economic and political stability, robust trade infrastructure and solid diplomatic relations globally, it stands to both contribute and gain the most from economic integration and political cooperation in the Maghreb.

Moreover, Morocco benefits from an established presence within the Maghreb region. For instance, Moroccan banks Attijariwafa Bank and Banque Centrale Populaire are present in Tunisia, Mauritania and across Africa.

The Arab Maghreb Union was formed in Marrakech and sits in Rabat, so Morocco’s presence is integral to any attempt to revive the union and work toward regional unification.

The Maghreb remains the least economically integrated region in the world, despite its rich natural resources, geostrategic location and strong human capital. Intra-regional trade represents less than 5 percent of the member states’ total trade, even as the countries have individually improved their economic performance in recent years.

Therefore, the need to revive the Arab Maghreb Union is stronger than ever and this requires the presence and partnership of all member states.

Attempts to create fragmented alternatives to the Arab Maghreb Union will only further hamper regional economic integration by creating blocs on the basis of divergent political interests.

All founding members of the Arab Maghreb Union stand to gain from a collective effort to tap into the strategic potential of an integrated Maghreb.

Why South Africa’s opposition may struggle to unseat the ruling ANC

FOR the first time in 30 years, South Africa’s governing party faces an electoral crisis with expectations that its support will dramatically reduce and it may lose its parliamentary majority in this month’s election.

But even as the African National Congress (ANC) – which has been in power since the end of apartheid in 1994 – struggles to attract voters, it has one key advantage that could help it stay in power, analysts say.

A splintered, disorganised opposition.

With 70 political parties and 11 independent candidates contesting the May 29 national and provincial elections, the opposition is fragmented, according to Mcebisi Ndletyana, professor of political science at the University of Johannesburg.

He said both the ANC and the official opposition are at the risk of declining support.

The ANC received 57 percent of the vote in the last general elections held in 2019 but its support is expected to plummet given rising unemployment, a persisting power crisis and allegations of growing misgovernance.

According to a recent opinion poll by market research firm Ipsos, the ANC’s support now sits at 40.2 percent.

A series of opinion polls have also predicted that the ruling party may lose the majority needed to form a national government.

However, despite an expected decline in the ANC’s performance, analysts have also pointed at possible stagnation in support for its main rivals.

The same poll done by Ipsos shows marginal growth for three of the country’s top opposition parties – the Democratic Alliance (DA), Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

The ANC has fashioned itself as a centre-left party while the DA is right-leaning. The EFF is a left-wing party that promotes for wholesale nationalisation of land. On the other hand, the IFP has risen on the back of Zulu nationalism and leans to the right.

The Ipsos poll estimated that the DA, which is the ANC’s nearest rival, was at 21.9 percent – a slight increase in support since the 2019 vote.

The EFF and IFP showed similar stagnation, polling at 11.5 percent and 4.4 percent respectively – just above one percent-

Qaanitah Hunter

age point better than how they each fared in the last election.

“There is fragmentation of the opposition because even with the ANC losing support, the DA and the EFF are not showing significant growth,” Ndletyana explained, attributing it to a litany of new political entrants attracting pockets of support in the constituencies of established political parties.

“They are supposed to be consolidating but there is further fragmentation among the opposition,” he said.

At least 31 new political parties have registered to contest the upcoming elections, the country’s Electoral Commission (IEC) said.

Emeritus professor at the University of the Witwatersrand, Susan Booysen, said “the greatest irony” of the South African elections was that the decline in the ANC’s support was not leading to a massive increase in support for the top opposition parties.

“This is one of the riddles of South African politics,” she said. “There is a lot of splintering happening. This explains a bit of it. At the same time, much of the discontent with the ANC still goes back to voting for the ANC because there are no sufficient alternative parties.”

“Also, the ANC has delegitimised the opposition as a viable alternative.”

The ANC, as the main liberation movement that fought and helped end apartheid, has sought to downplay the role and relevance of the opposition in South Africa.

Booyesen said voters cannot imagine the opposition becoming a viable government nationally, before turning to Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci’s famous comment – made in the context of neoliberalism.

“The old is dying but the new is not ready to be born. It is a cliché but it speaks of the current reality in our political landscape,” she said.

Opposition coalition

Ndletyana said there was all indication that no single party would receive a majority and that a government would be formed through a coalition.

“The ANC will remain the largest party [after the elections] because its main rivals are not showing significant growth,” he added.

Ndletyana said he did not believe efforts to arrange a pre-election coalition led by the DA,

called the Multi-Party Charter (MPC) had real prospects of success.

“I don’t think they have a real chance of becoming the government,” he said.

The MPC is an 11-member party formation seeking to remove the ANC from power nationally and to block an ANC coalition deal with the leftist EFF.

Besides the DA, the MPC includes the IFP, the centre-right ActionSA, a breakaway of the DA, and the conservative Freedom Front plus – as well as a number of micro-parties.

These parties accounted for about 25 percent of the vote in the 2019 election. Several opinion polls suggest that support for the MPC, at its best case, hovers at between 35 percent and 37 percent this election – not enough to form a majority to unseat the ANC.

However, William Gumede, an associate professor at the Wits School of Governance at the University of the Witwatersrand and chair of the MPC, disagreed, saying it has never been more possible for the opposition to form a majority and unseat the ANC. “When we started the conversation about the Multi-Party Charter, we said the ANC’s majority would slip to below 50 percent. Now we are looking at the ANC slipping to 40 percent. The MPC has a real chance to fight,” he said.

The block of opposition parties aimed at unseating the ANC have agreed-upon principles which include upholding the South African Constitution, the rule of law and equality before the law. It also includes decentralising the power of government, creating a transparent government and zero tolerance towards corruption.

The MPC committed to efficient spending of public money by the government, an open market economy, as well as the promotion of nonracism.

“The Multi-Party Charter has communicated its policies and showed South Africans how it could be an alternative government,” said Gumede, who has negotiated between party leaders to form the pre-election pact.

On a provincial level, the MPC has its eyes set on winning KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, two of the largest provinces where they expect the ANC’s support to plummet. In those provinces, analysts say the opposition are more likely to form a

minority coalition.

Booyesen said while there was hope for the MPC, it did not hold the prospects of becoming an alternative to the ANC government as projected.

“It’s an initiative whose time has not come yet. Its success is based on the possibility that it can beat the ANC [but] they have not gathered enough parties or support to be a formidable opposition,” she said.

“In concept, it is very good but in practice, it has not pulled together the necessary support.”

Despite predictions of the ANC’s decline, it has remained bullish about its prospects given the disorganisation of opposition parties.

“Polls are polls. We know, as the ANC, how well we are going to do, and our people, in their hearts, know how well the ANC is going to do,” President Cyril Ramaphosa said on the sidelines of the election campaign on Sunday.

New threat

Among the new entrants to the political sphere is the uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) party led by former South African president Jacob Zuma. The Ipsos poll predicted this party may garner up to 8.4 percent in support.

The ANC is losing support to Zuma’s new political party mainly in his home province of KwaZulu-Natal.

Zuma has said he would not vote for the ANC for the first time in 30 years because the party has “lost its way”.

The MK, which is proposing more radical socialist policies, has relied on the star power of the former head of state to attract supporters ahead of the elections.

“The emergence of the MK Party has affected both the ANC and the EFF,” Booyesen noted, further adding that the full extent of the MK’s influence would be seen at the elections.

EFF leader Julius Malema, whose party is also losing support to the MK, tried to downplay recent opinion polls.

“Stand tall, leaders of the EFF, you can’t be intimidated by Ipsos. Ipsos didn’t say anything wrong, it just tells you where you need to work hard. Use that to motivate yourself,” he said to supporters on Sunday.

Both Booyesen and Gumede agreed that while the polls are not a final indicator of election results, they give a strong indication of how parties will perform.

“There are still many undecided voters who will decide to vote for in the days before the election,” Gumede said.

The role & impact of Int’l Criminal Court in pursuit of global justice

THE **Inte- Abdulaziz Abdullah Alhusainan** **rnational Criminal Court (ICC), established in 2002, stands as a pivotal institution in the global pursuit of justice for the most heinous crimes known to humanity: war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and the crime of aggression. Operating under the principle of complementarity, the ICC steps in when member states are either unwilling or unable to prosecute these crimes themselves, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable regardless of their nationality or the location of the crimes. The Court’s current caseload is a testament to the widespread impact of these crimes.**

Investigations span across continents, from the conflict-ridden regions of Ukraine and various African states like Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya, to complex situations in Venezuela, Myanmar, and the Philippines. Each investigation represents a meticulous process of gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses, and analyzing testimonies to build robust cases against alleged perpetrators. Within the courtroom, the ICC’s track record reflects its commitment to impartial justice. Since its inception, the

Court has handled 31 cases involving individuals accused of grave crimes. These cases often involve multiple suspects, and the Court has issued a total of 42 arrest warrants, signaling its determination to bring fugitives to justice. Notably, the ICC has detained 21 individuals who have appeared before the Court to face charges. However, challenges persist, with 17 suspects still at large, evading capture and trial. Additionally, the passing of seven accused individuals has resulted in dropped charges, highlighting the complexities of achieving accountability in the face of mortality. In rendering justice, the ICC has delivered 10 convictions and four acquittals. These verdicts, handed down by ICC judges, carry significant weight, signaling a global commitment to upholding the rule of law and ensuring accountability for the most egregious violations of human rights. It’s important to note that while some convictions were for crimes like witness tampering, the core convictions—five in total—were for war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, the pursuit of justice often intersects with political realities. The ICC’s jurisdictional reach and authority

have faced resistance from powerful nations like the United States, China, and Russia, who remain non-members. Concerns about potential politicization and selective prosecution have led these countries to maintain a skeptical stance toward the Court’s operations. In the case of Israel and the Palestinian Territories, the ICC’s involvement underscores the complexities of prosecuting crimes in territories where geopolitical tensions run high. Despite Israel’s non-membership status, the ICC has initiated investigations into alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This move has drawn both support and criticism from various quarters, reflecting the broader debate surrounding the ICC’s role in addressing conflicts and atrocities worldwide. Ultimately, the ICC stands as a beacon of hope for victims of the most egregious crimes, offering a pathway to justice and accountability in a world often plagued by impunity and injustice. Its ongoing efforts to prosecute perpetrators and deliver justice serve as a reminder of the international community’s collective commitment to upholding human rights and the rule of law, even in the face of formidable challenges.



Vast opportunities to promote Pak-Algeria trade in various sectors, says Atif

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that there are vast opportunities to promote mutual trade between Pakistan and Algeria in various fields.

This was stated by him during his meeting with the Ambassador of Algeria to Pakistan, Dr. Ibrahim Romani at the Federation office on Thursday.

Atif Ikram Sheikh said that the Ministry of Commerce's initiative on the 'look Africa Policy' was an important step towards deeper engagement with African countries. The best way to improve bilateral trade is to promote direct

links between the private sectors of the two countries. In June, the Pakistan-Algeria Economic Forum will be led by the Federation of Pakistan.

He said that the establishment of a joint business council will help increase economic cooperation in trade, development projects and technology exchange. Pakistan has an untapped export potential of USD 5 billion in Algeria which includes surgical instruments, textiles, vegetables and fruits, pharmaceutical products, copper, footwear, cutlery, aluminum, furniture, and mechanical equipment.

The FPCCI President said that investors from both countries should

explore joint ventures and investment opportunities in business sectors. Trade and investment opportunities can be explored through frequent delegation exchanges.

Algerian Ambassador Dr. Ibrahim Romani said that they were organizing the first Pakistan-Algeria Economic Forum in which they invite the business community of Pakistan to participate. Better relations and trade cooperation will be opened by opening new avenues of cooperation under the Africa Policy.

The Ambassador said that it was a good opportunity for Pakistan's business community to participate in the Economic Forum and explore new opportunities

to promote business with Algeria. The Chambers of Commerce of both countries should involve themselves to create more value for the local business community.

He said the MoU between the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry opens new avenues of cooperation will play an important role.

Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Coordinator Diplomatic Committee Ahmed Waheed, Vice President Zaki Ijaz, Ijaz Khokhar, Special Advisor Dr. Afshan Malik and others were also present on this occasion.



MULTAN: People busy in purchasing wheat from roadside vendor.

PCJCCI suggests enhancing solar capacity

LAHORE (APP): China's large-scale development of solar power coupled with continuous innovation and a complete industrial chain is driving down production costs and making new energy products more affordable worldwide.

This was said by Moazzam Ghurki, President of the Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI), during a think tank session held on Thursday at PCJCCI Secretariat.

He said this shift benefits the global community whose current solar capacity still falls short of quantities needed to achieve de-carbonization goals. Developing nations in particular require more advanced solar capacity to make electricity more accessible and cost-effective for both households and businesses. Pakistan has a potential of 40 GW of solar power and has set a target of achieving 20% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2025.

Fang Yulong, Senior Vice President PCJCCI, said that the advancement of China's solar industry played a pivotal role in ensuring a stable supply of solar products to address climate change worldwide, making solar power one of the most economical power sources for the vast majority of countries and regions globally.

Hamza Khalid, Vice President PCJCCI, added that China's abundant resources, innovative technology and extensive global relationships could make significant contributions. "We look forward to more fruitful collaborations with Chinese authorities and companies in addressing challenges linked to displacements arising from climate change".

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI, said that despite its vast potential for solar energy, Pakistan had only scratched the surface of its capabilities. The country is blessed with abundant sunshine, making it an ideal location for solar power generation.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had also played a crucial role in fostering solar energy cooperation between the two countries, he added.

Gold rates decrease by Rs 900/tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 900 and was sold at Rs 241,000 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs 241,900 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 771 to Rs 206,619 from Rs 207,390 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 189,400 from Rs 190,108, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.10 to Rs.2,620 whereas that of ten gram silver went down by Rs.8.58 to Rs2,246.22.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$8 to \$2,308 from \$2,316, the association reported.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 444 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Thursday, shedding 444.91 points, a negative change of 0.63 percent, closing at 70,657.64 points against 71,102.55 points the previous trading day.

A total of 436,993,041 shares valuing Rs 19,024 billion were traded during the day as compared to 560,552,783 shares valuing Rs 25.730 billion the last day.

Some 365 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 103 of them recorded gains and 234 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 28 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 30,103,286 shares at Rs 4.23 per share, WorldCall Telecom with

25,120,582 shares at Rs1.26 per share and Bank of Punjab with 20,168,992 shares at Rs4.90 per share.

Sapphire Fibres Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 56.42 per share price, closing at Rs 1,479.75, whereas the runner-up was Khyber Tobacco Company Limited with a Rs 20.25 rise in its per share price to Rs 290.29.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 717.85 per share closing at Rs 19,282.15, followed by Hallmrk Company Limited with Rs 86.15 decline to close at Rs 1,062.97.

Rupee gains 01 paise against US dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Thursday gained 01 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.30 against the previous day's closing

of Rs 278.31.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, stood at Rs 277.25 and Rs 280 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 15 paise and closed at Rs 298.11 against the last-day closing of Rs 297.96, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.78, whereas an increase of 48 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 348.51 compared to the last closing of Rs 348.99.

The Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal remained unchanged at Rs 75.77 and Rs 74.20 respectively.

69th BoDs meeting of KPOGCL organized

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On invitation of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq, the 69th meeting of Board of Directors (BoDs) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Oil and Gas Company Limited (KPO&GCL) held at the chamber house.

The meeting was chaired by Chairman of the KPO&GCL Board of Directors Khalid Majeed, according to a statement issued here on Thursday.

SCCI president and member of the KPO&GCL BODs Fuad Ishaq, and Secretary Energy and Power, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nisar

Ahmad, Muhammad Ishaq Saqi, Dr Tahir Khan, Muhammad Yahya, AS Finance Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faiz Alam, AS H&TAs Department, GoKP Naghmana, Chief Financial Officer Dilawar Khan, AOS HR Deptt KPOGCL Awais Shakeel, HOD SCM of the company Muhammad Fayyaz, HR Senior Officer Shoaib Durrani, HR Officer Mudhat and IT Officer Kamran Alam as members of the BoDs participated.

Fuad Ishaq in his opening remarks on the occasion welcomed the participants of the KPO&GCL BODs meeting and made announcement for formal initiation of proceeding of the meeting.

The meeting thoroughly deliberated on various points on the agenda and held detailed discussion before giving formal approval on various points.

In the beginning, Chairman of the BoDs Khalid Majeed thanked the SCCI president Fuad Ishaq for inviting to hold the board meeting at the chamber house and highly appreciated the move.

Khalid Majeed honoured the services of the chamber president Fuad Ishaq as member of the BoDs.

He also lauded efforts and services of other members of the board.

Fuad Ishaq in his closing remarks thanked members of the KPO&GCL for their active participation in the meeting.

Exports up by 9.10 % to \$25b in 10 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country witnessed an increase of 9.10 percent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Thursday.

The exports during July-April (2023-24) were recorded at \$25.280 billion against the exports of \$23.171 billion, according to latest PBS data.

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

Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year was recorded at \$19.514 billion against the deficit of \$23.535 billion last year, showing a decline of 17.09 percent.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country increased by 10.02 percent in April 2024 compared to the exports of the same month of last year. The exports during the month were recorded at \$2.349 billion as against the exports of \$2.135 billion in April 2023.

On the other hand, the imports during April 2024 were recorded at \$4.723

billion compared to the imports of \$2.981 billion in April 2023, showing an increase of 58.43 percent, according to the data.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country decreased by 8.67 percent when com-

pared to the exports of \$2.572 billion during March 2024.

The imports into the country also went down up by 3.08 percent when compared to the imports of \$4.873 billion in March 2024, PBS reported.

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COURT NOTICES

BUNER

In the Court of Abdul Haleem Civil Judge V/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit: No 40/1.Institution 22/2/2024. Date of hearing. 10/5/2024. Paty Khan VS Muammar. Notice to No 9/3. Mohamad Zada. 9/5.MstShoban d/o Laila Widow of Bahramad Khan resident of Koga tehsel Mandanr district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader

in the court at 8.00 am dated 10/5/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

KOHAT

In The Court of Fazal Gul. A.D.J-IV. Kohat. Appeal no. CA-52/13 Date of hearing. 25-05-2024. Titled:- Saeed Ullah Shah Vs Adnan Shah(etc) Notice against:- (9)Ikram Ullah Shah Sons of Pir Qamus Shah R/o Sector no. 6 KDA District Kohat presently r/o (now in Plattridge Farm Platt Lane Penryfordd Chester CH40HX U.K WhatsApp no. +447816429582) (Respondent) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a Appeal against you Respondent in which date of hearing 25-05-2024 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Respondent is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 25-05-2024. Otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law. Order Issued on. 25-04-2024 (Court of ADJ-IV Kohat).

Headline Inflation decelerates further to 17.3 per cent in April

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Consumer Price Index (CPI)-based inflation came down to 17.3 percent during the month of April 2023 as compared to 20.7 percent recorded during March 2023, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Thursday.

According to PBS data, the CPI based inflation during the same month of last year was recorded at 36.4%.

On month-on-month (MoM) basis, it decreased to 0.4% in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 1.7 in the previous month and an increase of 2.4% in April 2023.

According to data, CPI inflation Urban, increased to 19.4% on year-on-year (YoY) basis in April 2024 as compared to an increase

of 21.9% in the previous month and 33.5% in April 2023. On month-on-month basis, it decreased to 0.1% in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 1.4% in the previous month and an increase of 2.0% in April 2023.

CPI inflation Rural, increased to 14.5% on year-on-year basis in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 19.0% in the previous month and 40.7% in April 2023. On month-on-month basis, it decreased to 0.9% in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.1% in the previous month and an increase of 3.0% in April 2023.

The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) inflation on YoY increased to 21.6% in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 25.9% a

month earlier and 42.1% in April 2023. On MoM basis, it decreased by 0.7% in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.1% a month earlier and an increase of 2.7% in April 2023.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation on YoY basis increased to 13.9% in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 14.8% a month earlier and an increase of 33.4% in April 2023.

On MoM basis, it decreased by 0.7% in April 2024 as compare to an increase of 1.3% in the previous month and an increase of 0.1% in corresponding month of last year i.e. April 2023.

The urban core inflation, measured by non-food non-energy, increased to 13.1%

on (YoY) basis in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 12.8% in the previous month and 19.5% in April 2023. On (MoM) basis, it increased by 2.1% in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.1% in previous month, and an increase of 1.8% in corresponding month of last year i.e. April 2023.

The rural core inflation, measured by non-food non-energy increased to 19.3% on (YoY) basis in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 20.0% in the previous month and 24.9% in April 2023. On (MoM) basis, it increased by 2.0% in April 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.8% in previous month, and an increase of 2.7% in corresponding month of last year i.e. April 2023.

Yen slips after rallying on suspected intervention, stocks mixed

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): The yen edged back Thursday following another surge against the dollar that fuelled speculation Japanese authorities had intervened for a second time this week, after Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell warned interest rates would stay higher for longer.

Powell's remarks, however, were tempered by his assurance that borrowing costs would not likely be hiked again, soothing worries in some quarters that the bank's battle to bring inflation back to its two percent target would need to be stepped up.

While US traders were spooked by the prospect that rate cuts were still some time off, analysts said the Fed had been less hawkish than feared.

The Fed also said it would slow down the pace at which it shrinks its balance sheet -- having bought up vast amounts of bonds previously to keep rates low -- which eased upward pressure on Treasury yields.

The comments came after a string of data at the start of the year saw inflation come in above expect-

tations, while the economy and labour market remain in rude health.

"The statement and news conference should not come as a surprise to investors," said Tai Hui at JP Morgan Asset Management.

"Recent Fed speech has acknowledged the lack of progress on inflation and the desire to maintain the current level of policy rates for longer.

That said, it does seem clear the committee remains biased to cut rates, but any policy easing will be determined by how inflation develops over the next few months," he added.

"While inflation seems sticky, it's not 'sticking' at a level that is causing a surge in wages, eroding consumption, or lifting inflation expectations, comfortably putting stagflation fears to rest."

Soon after the announcement, the yen soared around three percent to 153.04 per dollar, raising suspicion that Japanese officials had stepped into forex markets. It was sitting above 156 Thursday in

Asia.

A rally on Monday -- after the yen hit a new 34-year low of 160.17 -- had led to similar speculation.

The government was tight-lipped on whether it had bought yen, though Masato Kanda, Japan's top currency official, told Bloomberg News intervention data would be disclosed at the end of the month.

Bloomberg analysis of central bank accounts suggested that Monday's move was likely an intervention by Tokyo worth around \$35.4 billion. "It would certainly appear to have the characteristics of an intervention," Nathan Thooft, of Manulife Investment Management, said.

"Repeated attempts certainly send a message to the market and while it may not fully hold, it should have some impact on preventing further meaningful weakness."

Traders will be keeping a nervous watch on developments on Friday and Monday, which are holidays in Japan that usually cause thin liquidity, while analysts said a strong US

jobs report could also send the dollar racing again.

Equity markets were mixed in Asia as investors returned from a midweek holiday that closed most of the region.

Hong Kong resumed its rally to rise for an eighth day, while Sydney, Wellington, Mumbai and Bangkok were also up.

However, Tokyo, Seoul, Singapore, Taipei, Manila and Jakarta fell.

London rose at the open, while Paris and Frankfurt were both down.

Oil bounced, having tumbled more than three percent Wednesday on data showing US stockpiles ballooned last week by the most since February.

The commodity has also come under pressure from hopes for a ceasefire in the Middle East conflict, with US top diplomat Antony Blinken urging Hamas to accept a Gaza truce plan.

The Islamist group has said it will respond "within a very short period" to a plan proposed by mediators to halt the fighting for 40 days and exchange dozens of hostages for many more Palestinian prisoners.

OECD lifts 2024 growth forecasts, driven by US

PARIS (AFP/APP): The OECD on Thursday raised its forecast for global growth in 2024, boosted by a dynamic recovery in the United States as the eurozone lags behind.

The Paris-based organisation said it now sees this year's global growth at 3.1 percent, up from its previous projection of 2.9 percent in February.

"Cautious optimism has begun to take hold in the global economy, despite modest growth and the persistent shadow of geopolitical risks," the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development said in its latest quarterly report.

But the report noted that "this recovery is unfolding differently across regions" and that "the mixed macro-economic landscape is expected to persist, with inflation and interest rates declining at differing paces,

and differing needs for fiscal consolidation."

The US economy is now expected to expand 2.6 percent in 2024, up from the 2.1 percent previously expected, and faster than last year's 2.5 percent.

Chinese growth remains even stronger, with the OECD raising its projection to 4.9 percent in 2024 compared to the 4.7 percent previously expected, thanks notably to an expansionary budgetary policy.

However, the OECD sees timid growth of just 0.7 percent in the eurozone, though that is up from the 0.6 percent previously expected. It anticipates a slight recovery to 1.5 percent in 2025, compared to the 1.3 percent expected in February, thanks to a recovery in domestic demand.

"A recovery in real household incomes, tight labour markets and reduc-

tions in policy interest rates are projected to help generate a gradual rebound," it said.

The OECD cut its 2024 growth forecast for Germany, Europe's largest economy, to 0.2 percent from 0.3 percent previously.

Conversely, the OECD raised its growth forecast for 2024 for France, increasing it to 0.7 percent from 0.6 percent, lifted by private consumption.

In Britain, the economy is seen growing 0.4 percent in 2024 and 1.0 percent in 2025, slower than what was expected in February, which the OECD blamed on persistent inflation.

Finally, the OECD warned that "high geopolitical tensions, particularly in the Middle East, could disrupt energy and financial markets, causing inflation to spike and growth to falter".



In brief

National Challenge Cup
ISLAMABAD (APP): A total of four matches were played on the second day of the National Challenge Cup 2023 final round here at the Jinnah Sports Complex. In the first match, WSTC and Pakistan Police played in a 1-1 draw. Mohib Ullah scored for WSTC and Qurban Ali scored for Pakistan Police. The second game saw SA Gardens defeating Pakistan Railway 5-3. Roger scored two goals, while Tauqeer, Murtaza and Umair scored apiece for SA Gardens. Abdul Rehman, Nabeel, and Muhammad Masood contributed one goal each for Pakistan Railways. In the third match, Wapda thrashed Otto Crane by 5-2. Shayek Dost and Ahmad Fahim helped his side scoring two goals each while Umar Hayat scored apiece. For Otto Cranes, Sagar Masih netted two goals. In the fourth match, PAF beat Asia Ghee Mills by 3-0. Samad Khan scored two goals while Fahis made one for PAF.

Celtics incinerate Heat to advance
LOS ANGELES (AFP/APP): The Boston Celtics crushed the Miami Heat 118-84 to complete an emphatic 4-1 series victory Wednesday and book their place in the second round of the NBA playoffs. The postseason top seeds, who were upset by Miami in last year's Eastern Conference finals, avenged that loss in spectacular fashion with a one-sided wire-to-wire rout at the TD Garden. Jaylen Brown and Derrick White scored 25 points apiece to lead Boston, who barely noticed the absence of the injured Kristaps Porzingis. The Celtics threw down the gauntlet in the first quarter, racking up a whopping 41 points to open up a commanding 18-point advantage. They extended that lead to 22 points by half-time, and kept up the pressure in the third quarter to lead 98-66 heading into the final frame. Boston head coach Joe Mazzulla could afford to rest his frontline players for the fourth with the game effectively won against an injury-hit Miami team missing Jimmy Butler and Jaime Jaquez Jr. Mazzulla said the Celtics had not been thinking about last year's series loss to Miami.

Ronnie casts doubt on UK appearances
LONDON (BBC): Ronnie O'Sullivan has cast doubt on whether he will play in the United Kingdom next season after his hopes of a record eighth world title in the modern era were dashed by Stuart Bingham. O'Sullivan was beaten 13-10 in the quarter-finals of the World Championship. 'The Rocket' also saw his hopes of becoming only the fourth player to win all three Triple Crown events in a single season end on Wednesday at the Crucible Theatre. "I am aware of my value, of my time and what I bring to the sport," said O'Sullivan. "As long as those needs are met I will keep playing." The 48-year-old recently signed a three-year ambassadorial agreement with Saudi Arabia, requiring him to playing in all World Snooker Tour events in the nation. As part of that deal he will also undertake coaching trips and set up an academy in the Middle East to help develop the game in the region. "There are only so many days I allow myself to be away from home," he added. "World Snooker is a commercial business and I decided I had to be commercial to enjoy being on the Tour.

Inter-Madaras, Persons with Different Abilities Games continue in full swing

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar claimed the badminton standing doubles title in the ongoing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Persons with Different Abilities Games and Inter-Madaras Games, simultaneous continued at different venues including Hayatabad Sports Complex, Peshawar Sports Complex, Tehmas Khan Football Ground and Islamia College Cricket Ground here on Thursday. In the final, Syed Fahad Shah and Asif Khan of Peshawar won the trophy by defeating Imran and Abid of Dera Ismail Khan 21-17, 19-21 and 21-18. Earlier in the semi-final, Abid and Imran defeated Islam Din and Asad of Khyber 21-11 and 21-19 while Syed Fahad and Asif Khan qualified for the final by defeating Abdul Wajid and Iqbal 21-16 and 21-18. In other matches of badminton standing doubles event, Dera Ismail Khan's Imran and Abid beat Karak Sajid and Abid 15-13 and 15-11, Peshawar's Syed Fahad and Imran beat Karak Anis and Saber Shah by 15-11 and 15-12. Dir Lower Usman and Kashif beat Javed Khan and Naveedullah of Peshawar by 15-11 and 15-13, while Khyber District Islam Din and Asad

defeated Mustafa and Mehardin of Swat by 15-9 and 15-12. According to the results, Tajmeena won the first place in women's wheelchair table tennis, Marwah Jannat came second. Both Tajmeena and Marwa played well and gave each other a tough fight. Marwa and Tajmeena for the first time playing and being part of the Games, played well and exhibited some good shorts which were largely enjoyed by the capacity crowd present on this occasion. In the athletic event Shama, who also got the fastest girls athlete award and won the 100m sprint, also took first position in discus throw, Gulshan won the second place. Karishma, a winner of the 100m wheel-chair race, raced up to the finish point with great efforts, Rana Gul won the second place. Abdullah Jan won the first place in the men's standing table tennis, Sajjad Raza second, Ahsan Danish first in wheelchair table tennis, Zabih second, Bilal first in wheelchair discus throw, Tahsin second, Ahsan and Sanaullah first in badminton wheelchair team event, Rafatullah and Arif took second place, Shakil took first place in 100m wheelchair race, Mashaal Khan took second place, Syed



Fahad and Asif took first place in badminton standing team event, Imran and Abid took second place, Peshawar took first place and Mardan took second place in basketball wheelchair. In women's archery, Hasina won first, Rana Gul won second, in male archery, Rahmatullah won first, Raheed Shireen won second, Javelin throw wheelchair man Shakil won first, Javed won second, shot put

three Games here on Thursday. In the first semi-final of the ongoing cricket event of the Madrasa team being played at Islamia College Ground. Swat defeated Hazara by 54 runs and reached the final. Swat won the toss and scored 113 runs for the loss of seven wickets, in which Atta-ul-Rehman scored 37 runs and Bilal 25 runs. Imam and Abdul Rauf dismissed two players. In response, the Hazara team

was dismissed by scoring 59 runs. Yousaf was the outstanding scorer with 15 runs. Bilal and Nauman dismissed four players from Swat. PSB Coaching Center in the first semi-final of the current volleyball in Peshawar, Swat defeated Dera Ismail Khan by 2-0 and reached the final. In the previous matches, Mardan beat Bannu 25-18 and 25-12, while Peshawar beat Kohat 25-22, 21-25, and lost 25-18. In the same way, in Tahamas Khan Football ground, Swat won the honor of playing in the final by defeating Peshawar by 3-2 in a thrilling match. Swat players showed their excellent performance by reaching all the three Games finals Cricket, Volleyball and Football. Swat shocked Peshawar by 3-2 in a thrilling match played at Tehmas Khan Football Ground wherein Peshawar took two goals leads at the end of the first session through Inamullah and Sabir Khan on the field attempt.

Swat on the other hand, going down by two goal deficit, managed their position and center striker Yasir netted a fine goal while Babar Ali, Sajjad Khan and Khair Ullah slammed in beautiful goals in the 56th 77th and 89th minute to make the tally 3-2. Thus qualified for the final.

Prime Minister Youth Talent Handball League begins



PESHAWAR (APP): Prime Minister Youth Program Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Handball Provincial League got underway under the aegis of Directorate of Sports University of Peshawar at University Campus ground on Thursday. Secretary Local Government, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dawood Khan was the chief guest on this occasion who formally inaugurated the League in which five teams from as many Regions including Bannu, Mardan, Hazara, Swat and Peshawar are taking part. Registrar University of Peshawar Dr. Yurid Ahsan

Zia, Director General Sports and President KP Handball Association Bahre Karam, Director Distance Education Dr. Noorzada, Ehsanullah from England, Gul Jee and Deputy Director of Youth Arshad Hussain were also present. The League will continue till May 5, in which two provincial teams will be selected for the national League. The National League will be played in Peshawar University in the same month. In the opening match, Mardan defeated Swat by 22 goals against 14. Secretary Muhammad Dawood

Khan said that the organization of the league is welcome, which will give opportunities to the youth to express their abilities. He said there is no dearth of talent but such talent should be given proper competition at the grassroots level besides events should be organized at the provincial and national levels. He said that such competitions should be held among educational institutions that will bring out world-class players. He said that the main purpose of educational institutions is character development of students.

Punjab, KP move in National Table Tennis League finals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have advanced in the finals of Prime Minister National Talent Hunt Table Tennis League here at the Rodham Hall of Pakistan Sports Complex to be played on Friday. Prime Minister Talent Hunt Youth Program Chief Rana Mashhood was expected to attend the closing ceremony on

Friday as chief guest. In the semifinals of the six-day event organized by the Higher Education Commission, Punjab A defeated Punjab B 3-0 to reach the final. In the match, Punjab A's Attal-Mennan defeated Sarhab Azam 3-11, 2-11, 7-11, Paras Azam defeated Zain Pervez 10-12, 2-11, 9-11, and Osama Nawaz defeated Shahryar 6-11, 8-11, 9-11. In the

other semi-final, KP A defeated KP B to qualify for the final. In the women's category, Punjab B defeated KP A 3-0. Saba Syed defeated Huriya Hameem 11-8, 7-11, 9-11, Ramsha Niaz defeated Alishba Hameem 8-11, 5-11, 7-11, and Shamaila Javed defeated Hiba Iqbal 6-11, 9-11, 8-11. In the other semi-final match, Punjab A defeated KP B 3-0.

Pakistan name 18-player squad for Ireland and England & Wales

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday announced its 18-player squad for the upcoming T20I series against Ireland (10-14 May) and England & Wales (22-30 May). The squad will be reduced to 15 players for next month's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 after the first T20I at Leeds on 22 May to meet the ICC's 24 May deadline. The men's national selection committee has recalled fast bowler Haris Rauf, along with all-rounders Hasan Ali and Salman Ali Agha, in the 18-player squad.

The two cricketers who did not make the cut from the original 17-player squad that faced New Zealand are wrist spinner Usama Mir and fast bowler Zaman Khan. Pakistan squad for Ireland and England & Wales is: Babar Azam (captain) Abrar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Usman Khan. Haris Rauf and wicketkeeper/batter Azam Khan were sidelined for the New Zealand T20Is due to injuries, while middle-order batter Mohammad Muhammad Irfan Khan and wicketkeeper/batter Mohammad Rizwan were rested from the two

T20Is in Lahore due to niggles.

The four cricketers underwent fitness assessments at the National Cricket Academy on Tuesday afternoon, showing significant improvement. This progress has provided confidence and encouragement to the PCB Medical Panel and the team management regarding their potential availability during the seven T20Is.

Salman Ali Agha has established himself as a versatile cricketer, proficient in aggressive middle-order batting and off-spin bowling. His inclusion bolsters Pakistan's spin department alongside Abrar Ahmed, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim and Shadab Khan.

Hasan Ali's selection is attributed to his extensive experience, having featured in 50 T20Is and excelling in bilateral series and ICC Events. His impressive performance in the HBL Pakistan Super League 2024, where he claimed 14 wickets, further underlined his credentials. Currently representing Warwickshire in the English County Championship, Hasan adds depth to Pakistan's bowling arsenal.

"Crafting this squad was a challenging task due to the outstanding talent available. After thorough deliberation and considering various cricketing aspects, we have finalised these 18 players.

"The squad encompasses a robust top-order featuring Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Rizwan,

Saim Ayub, and Usman Khan; an effective middle-order with Azam Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed and Mohammad Muhammad Irfan Khan; versatile all-rounders in Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan and Salman Ali Agha; a pace battery led by Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali and Shaheen Shah Afridi; and the spin prowess of Abrar Ahmed.

"We understand Usama and Zaman will be disappointed and they should be as they must be looking ahead to the tours of Ireland and England. They are quality cricketers and have long careers ahead of them. They need to continue to focus on their cricket so that they are available, if required." The team is scheduled to depart for Dublin on 7 May following a three-day training camp in Lahore from 4-6 May.

Schedule of matches: 10 May – v Ireland, 1st T20I, Dublin 12 May – v Ireland, 2nd T20, Dublin 14 May – v Ireland, 3rd T20I, Dublin 22 May – v England, 1st T20I, Leeds 25 May – v England, 2nd T20I, Birmingham 28 May – v England 3rd T20I, Cardiff 30 May – v England, 4th T20I, The Oval

Pakistan hockey team reach Malaysia for Azlan Shah Tournament

ISLAMABAD (APP): The national hockey team has reached Malaysia to feature in the Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament commencing May 4. The Pakistan national hockey team departed from Islamabad International Airport on Thursday. The team, led by Ammad Shakeel Butt and Defender Abu Bakar to be his deputy, underwent a rigorous two-week training camp at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium to prepare for the competition.

Pakistan's campaign in the tournament would commence with a match against hosts Malaysia on May 4, followed by encounters with South

Korea on May 5, Japan on May 7, Canada on May 8, and New Zealand on May 10. The final of the Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament would be held on May 11.

The team comprises experienced players, including two goalkeepers — Abdullah and Muneeb-ur-Rehman, while it includes six defenders — Usama Bashir, Athisham, Mohammad Abdullah, Sufiyan, Abu Bakar, and captain Shakeel Butt. Midfielders Salman Razzaq, Arshad Liaqat, Moin Shakeel, Zakriya Hayat, Murtaza Yaqoob, and Ghazanfar Ali have also been selected.

Forwards Abdul Rehman, Hanan,

Rana Waheed, and Ejaz Ahmed complete the squad.

Meanwhile, seven players have been selected as standbys, including Akmal Hussain, Aqeel Ahmed, Arbaz, Hammad Anjum, Abdul Rehman Jr., Abdul Manan, and Rومان.

The Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament is a premier international hockey competition, and Pakistan's participation in the Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament is a testament to the country's rich hockey heritage and talent. The team's performance in the tournament would be closely watched by hockey fans across the country.

Alcaraz crashes, Sinner hobbles out of Madrid

MADRID (AFP/APP): Second-seeded Carlos Alcaraz saw his title defence and 14-match winning streak in Madrid come to an end at the hands of Andrey Rublev in the quarter-finals on Wednesday while top-seeded Jannik Sinner withdrew from the tournament citing a right hip injury.

Rublev upset home favourite Alcaraz 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 to reach the semi-finals. The seventh-seeded Rublev had lost his last five matches against top-three opposition and was 0-1 head-to-head against Alcaraz coming into the contest.

He was also on a four-match losing streak heading into the Madrid Open. All that seemed like a distant memory in the quarter-finals against Alcaraz as Rublev maximised on his powerful brand of tennis to shock the Spanish world number three and reach the semi-finals at a seventh different Masters 1000 tournament, from a full set of nine.

Alcaraz missed the clay-court tournaments in Monte Carlo and Barcelona last month due to a forearm injury and needed a third-set tiebreak to squeeze past last year's

finalist Jan-Lennard Struff in the fourth round on Tuesday.

He couldn't hold off an inspired Rublev though, his quest to become the first man to win three consecutive titles in Madrid coming to a crashing halt. "I think the key was that I think it was one of my first matches that I was completely calm all the match. I didn't say one word, even if I was losing," said Rublev, who now owns at least one victory against each of the current world's top 10.

Alcaraz played a convincing first set, breaking serve in the fifth game en route to a 41-minute lead. But Rublev brought his A-game to take the next two sets and finished the match in just under two hours, firing 30 winners along the way. He will face Taylor Fritz in the semi-finals after the American clinched a 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 win over Francisco Cerundolo.

Alcaraz says it has been a positive week in Madrid overall but admits he is still thinking about his forearm, whether it is painful or not.

"Today probably I felt more in the forearm than yesterday's match. Playing three hours yesterday, I knew

that I'm going to feel something or I'm going to think about it even more." The two-time Grand Slam champion acknowledged he has to be patient with regards to his recovery, adding: "I'm going to go to Rome. I'm going to work these days to be close to 100 percent or in a good way to play Rome, but I'm going to decide these days." Sinner was due to face Felix Auger-Aliassime in the quarter-finals on Thursday but revealed he has been battling through a hip issue this week in the Spanish capital.

"My hip has been bothering me this week and has slowly been getting more painful. Taking the advice from the doctors we decided it's best to not play further and make it worse," wrote Sinner in a statement on social media. The Italian has won 28 of 30 matches played so far this season, which has yielded him three titles at the Australian Open, Rotterdam and Miami. Sinner is due to play on home ground at the Italian Open in Rome next week before heading for an assault on the French Open, the season's second major, which starts in Paris on May 26.



In brief

IRSA releases 128,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 128,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 222,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1461.42 feet and was 47.42 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 39,100 cusecs and 5,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1160.20 feet, which was 109.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 75,500 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 77,200, 62,000, 50,400 and 16,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 74,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 24,100 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF recovers 224 kg Ice

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) has seized the largest consignment of meth Ice in the country's history which was being smuggled abroad, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 224 kg Ice which was being smuggled to Belgium under the guise of exporting soap stones from Afghanistan. The drugs were first smuggled through Torkham, Afghanistan to Karachi for their intended destination in Belgium. Meth-amphetamine Ice was tactfully concealed in the roof and doors of five containers. ANF seized all the containers being used for smuggling at Karachi port. Three suspects who sent the container, two of whom are from Afghanistan, were also arrested. The arrested suspects were trying to escape from Torkham border to Afghanistan, he said adding, ANF is committed to combating drug trafficking and protecting the world from the harmful effects of drugs.

11 gamblers arrested over cock fighting

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 11 gamblers on cock fights and recovered 14 mobile phones, stake money Rs 37,550, four vehicles, four motorcycles, five chickens and other items from their possession during a crackdown here on Thursday, informed a police spokesman. According to the details, Taxila Police held 11 gamblers identified as Zeeshan, Qasim, Kamran, Arslan, Sher Ahmed, Adeel, Wajid, Fahad, Hasan, Asad and Muhammad Adeel. Police have registered a case against all the accused and further investigation is in progress. Superintendent of Police, Potohar, Nasir Nawaz appreciated the performance of the police team adding that gambling was the root of other evils and action against such elements would be continued.

Two injured in road accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): Two people were injured in road accident when a car and van collided at Indus highway, Karak on Thursday. According to a private news channel, the collision occurred due to high speed. A rescue team reached the accident spot and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital.



ISLAMABAD: SPO Nabila Yasmin briefs the students of Pakistan Sweet Home during seminar on "Road Safety Awareness" organized by National Highways and Motorway Police.

'Government accelerating its transformation target towards digital economy'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Thursday said that the government is trying to realize the opportunities presented by digital technologies in creating new jobs, expanding to new markets, driving innovation, and developing new economic sectors.

Talking to a Private news channel, she said that the present government is accelerating its transformation targets to the digital economy by focusing on empowering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and tech startups.

The government is committed to digital transformation and steps are underway in this regard, she added.

She stressed that a digital future will only be key to redefining societies, enabling growth and development, enhancing education and industry, and building new capacity for accelerating the economy.

"Digital technologies have great potential for achieving the political, economic, and social empowerment of young women and men", she added. "Digitalization has become the priority of the economic sectors, she said, adding, our special focus is to empower SMEs and technology startups as well as stronger cyber security".

She said we have been working to build financial inclusion through partnerships with relevant authorities to provide bet-

ter access to financial services to all levels of society.

Telecommunications, technology, and financial services are the sectors that need to adopt digital transformation, she explained, adding, however, that the government is encouraging digital transformation in various sectors to boost global competitiveness.

To reap the benefits of technology, we are identifying the challenges and exploring new opportunities, she added. Replying to a question, she urged users of social media to avoid covering unverified news stories and videos for journalism purposes and stressed the need to use it only for positive activities as responsible citizens.

Education ministry organises 7-day teachers training workshop

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, under the dynamic leadership of Secretary Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmad Wani, continuing its unwavering commitment to enhancing the quality of education in Pakistan, organized a seven-day teacher training program in Islamabad.

National Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen Wa Khatamun Nabiiyyin Authority (NRKNA) organized the workshop, yesterday, which was also attended by more than 200 teachers from government schools in Islamabad.

The workshop is an important effort of NRKNA to highlight modern topics to promote holistic education among students. However, sessions on entrepreneurship were also conducted by experts from the Rupani Foundation.

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) education, is conducted by experienced professionals

at LearnOBots and aimed at equipping teachers with innovative tools and strategies. Mr. Mahmood Ahmed, Chairman CEF informed the participants about the character education model introduced in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Meanwhile, Director NRKNA, Mr. Sohail Bin Aziz informed us about the historic initiative of character education which is going to be launched soon.

He also conducted a session on the teaching method of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to equip teachers with teaching skills in the light of his biography.

Highlighting the importance of character education in shaping moral and responsible citizens, NRKNA Chairman Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Nadeem informed the participants about Pakistan's first "Character Education" curriculum.

Emphasizing the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) this important initiative is an attempt

to inculcate moral values and virtues in the students, which can lead to a more prosperous and high-value society. During the closing session, Secretary Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmad Wani appreciated the efforts of all the stakeholders involved in organizing the program.

He affirmed the commitment of the Ministry to give more autonomy to teachers to raise the standard of education and prioritize the welfare of students and pledged to continue support for such initiatives.

As the nation moves towards improving educational initiatives, such steps are seen as a ray of hope that will help the next generations dream of a brighter future.

The attendees were awarded certificates of participation by Mr. Mohiuddin Ahmad Wani, Secretary, Chairman Mr. Khurshid Ahmad Nadeem, Director General Mr. Zafar Mahmood Malik, and Mr. Sabukh Syed.

Railways earn Rs 66 bln in nine months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has achieved an unprecedented earning of Rs 66 billion in the first nine months of the current financial year 2023-24, despite facing a financial crisis due to floods in the monsoon season.

"The department is expecting to generate revenues up to Rs 80 billion by the end of this financial year through the consistent efforts and hard work of the Railway workers," official sources in the Ministry told APP.

They said that during the first nine months of the last financial year (2022-23), the department earned around Rs 39 billion, a historic increase in revenue during the same period of the current financial year (2023-24).

According to the data, they said that out of the revenue of Rs 66 billion, revenue was derived from passenger and freight trains while other sectors of the department also contributed to the total revenue.

At present, they said that Pakistan Railways is operating around 96 passenger trains, up from the previous year

when 86 trains were running. Similarly, during the previous year, on average it operated 3.75 freight trains while the number reached seven freight trains this year. The sources said the department emphasized that the issue of delay in payment of salaries to employees has now been resolved and things will be more streamlined, once work on the Mainline-I (ML-I) project kicks off.

To a question, they said that Pakistan Railways has beefed up precautionary measures to reduce passenger train accidents and only six minor accidents with no causality took place on the entire railway network in the country during the last three months.

The drastic decrease in accidents has been witnessed due to the efforts being undertaken to reduce trespassing at unmanned level crossings and unauthorized locations, they added.

"Our staff is continuously monitoring the railway tracks across the country and conducting thorough inspection of the trains as the safety of the passengers is the top priority of the department," the sources said.

First virtual women police station inaugurated

ISLAMABAD (APP): A new virtual women's police station was inaugurated in Punjab, aiming to assist women without them needing to physically visit a police station.

According to a private news channel, the in-charge of the Virtual Women Police station, Aqsa Fayaz, said, "Women can report problems anonymously, and trained IT graduates are there to assist." It's connected to the Punjab Safe Cities Authority and offers various ways for women to seek help, including through a dedicated hotline, a safety app, and a video call feature.

Moreover, emergency panic buttons had been installed across Lahore for immediate help. Complaint mechanisms were also in place, allowing anonymous reporting. The Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the service and also launched free Wi-Fi at over 50 locations in Lahore.

Mustafa Shah urges global action for cultural heritage protection

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah has said that legislative bodies have critical role in safeguarding and promoting cultural heritage.

"Legislatures enact robust legal frameworks that not only preserve cultural heritage but also address critical aspects such as conservation methodologies, adequate funding mechanisms, and stringent penalties for any acts of damage or destruction," he made these remarks in his address at the Sixth World Forum On Intercultural Dialogue in Baku, Azerbaijan, centered on the theme "The Role and Best Practices of the Legislature in the Protection of Cultural Heritage", said a news release received here on Thursday.

Opening his speech with heartfelt accolades to the organizers and the government of Azerbaijan for organizing successful event, he emphasized the profound significance of fostering mutual understanding among diverse cultures as a cornerstone in preserving our collective cultural heritage. The Speaker while highlighting the intrinsic value of cultural heritage, noted that the myriad threats faced by cultural heritage in

today's interconnected world require urgent need for proactive and concerted measures to ensure its protection and longevity. Ghulam Mustafa emphasized the imperative of fostering collaborative partnerships with stakeholders from governmental agencies, cultural institutions, local communities, and international organizations. "This collaborative ethos is fundamental in developing comprehensive strategies that holistically address the multifaceted challenges facing cultural heritage preservation," he added.

Citing Pakistan's rich tapestry of cultural heritage, ranging from ancient civilizations to vibrant regional cultures, he lauded the nation's legislative strides interacting key legal frameworks such as the Antiquities Act of 1975, Pakistan Environmental Protection Act of 1997, and various provincial ordinances aimed at safeguarding heritage sites and regulating archaeological endeavors. In advocating for best practices, he called for the adoption of cutting-edge technologies for documentation, conservation, and promotion of cultural heritage, while also stressing the importance of inclusivity and diversity in these preservation efforts.

CDA accelerates efforts to address water shortage ahead of summer

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Water Management Wing of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has intensified its efforts on several projects to mitigate water shortages in the federal capital before the onset of the summer season.

"The authority has instructed the relevant departments to expedite all repair and maintenance work, addressing issues such as leakages and replacing old and rotted pipes at the Simly Water Filtration Plant and Main Distribution Line," an official told APP.

He said that timely repairs and maintenance by the Water Supply Wing had not only saved eight lakh gallons of water per day but also improved water pressure in the pipelines.

Similarly, addressing complaints related to leakages from old and deteriorated pipes in water supply lines across different sectors of the federal capital would

enhance water availability for the residents, he said.

The official said that water levels in dams like Khanpur Dam had decreased over time due to insufficient rainfall in the federal capital. Consequently, the Water Supply Department was working tirelessly around the clock to bridge the water shortage gap before the summer season, ensuring adequate water supply to citizens, he added. To a question, the official said the authority was going to install four new tube wells in Sector F-10, F-11, G-10, and G-11 to further facilitate the residents.

The initiative aimed to address potential water shortages reserves in Khanpur Dam decline, he added. He said the tender had already been published in various newspapers to expedite measures aimed at controlling water shortages before the arrival of the summer season.

HEC announces Moroccan scholarships for students

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Moroccan Agency of International Cooperation (AMCI) has announced scholarships for Pakistani/AJK students through Higher Education Commission (HEC) to study Undergraduate, Master's and PhD at Moroccan Public Institutions of Higher Education. The official sources said, "All applicants are required to provide the valid HAT or USAT test score. Those applicants who do not have the valid HAT/USAT test score, please visit the Education Testing Council website for more information."

"However, nomination criteria is based on HAT test score for Masters/PhD programs and USAT test score for Bachelors. HEC reserves the right to change or modify the nomination criteria," the sources added.

According to the details, a minimum of 12 years of education (FSC/A-level) Degree required for undergraduate program, with maximum age of 23 years. While, a minimum of 16 years of education in relevant fields of study for Master's program. However, a minimum of 18 years of education in the relevant field of study for admission in PhD program in respective Moroccan University. Applicants must fulfill other requirements set by the relevant university in Morocco.

"The Moroccan Government shall only consider applications in following programs for Undergraduate, Master, and PhD, i.e. Medical Studies, Paramedical

Science, Commercial and Management Science, Engineering and Technological Science, Agronomic and Veterinary Science and Architecture," the sources said. The sources further informed, "French being the primary language in the majority of training establishments in Morocco, in particular in the scientific technical and economic sectors, the candidate who will be admitted to the said institution, will have to continue refresher courses in the French language in appropriate center for this purpose during the academic year 2024/2025 (Alliance Francaise, Center Culture Francals, etc.) in the country of origin."

At the end of the linguistic upgrading programme, the students retained in the "university training" quota, admitted to the end of linguistic training tests, will be oriented, according to the scientific quality of their files and according to the order merit, towards training courses.

The "Arabic Language and Literature" and "Islamic Studies" courses are taught in Arabic. Candidates for these courses must be proficient in this language. The option "Legal Science" is taught by choice (Arabic or French).

The students were asked to apply online at: <https://scholarship.hec.gov.pk>. After registering and filling your profile, please select Moroccan Government Scholarship Program".

After submission of the application, get its printed copy to be signed by applicant. The deadline to submit

the online application on HEC portal is May 10, 2024.

It is the sole responsibility of student(s) applying for any professional degree (Medical, Engineering, Nursing, Architecture, Law, Veterinary Medicine etc.) to first get confirmed its accreditation from the respective Councils i.e. Pakistan Medical and Dental council (PMDC), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), Pakistan Council for Architects and Town Planners (PCATP), Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council (PVMC), Pakistan Technology Council etc.

Perspective applicants are not required to submit any document (hard copies) to HEC at this stage of the application process. Only shortlisted candidates will be required to submit the following documents. To avoid any inconvenience later on, perspective applicants are directed to prepare an application dossier as per details i.e. copy of signed application form of HEC, attested copies of all educational documents, copy of CNIC, candidate's letter of motivation, documents to certify outstanding educational performances and candidate's involvement in extracurricular and volunteering activities and letter of recommendation to emphasize candidate's qualities.

For doctoral students, dissertation/thesis prepared for obtaining the Master's degree and the doctoral thesis proposal.



ISLAMABAD: Students participating in Arts & Painting Competition under the theme "Keeping Humanity Alive" in connection with World Red Cross and Red Crescent Week Celebration at Cüzten's Club, F-9 Park.

Minister meets ambassador

KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, the Country's Acting Minister of National Defense, met with Ilham Mammadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan, at the Azerbaijani embassy in Kabul. The meeting emphasized the deep-rooted friendship and shared interests between the two nations. During the discussion, Minister Mujahid expressed his pride in the enduring bond between the people of Afghanistan and Azerbaijan.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Shawwal 24, 1445 — Friday, May 03, 2024

Jafari won award

KABUL (Khaama Press): Shahdukht Jafari, the inventor and Afghanistan's first female medical physicist has won the "Dynamics" Prize for 2024 in Britain and has been recognized as the country's innovator of the year. Ms Jafari expressed her delight in receiving this award in a Facebook post on Wednesday, May 1st. According to the Platinum website, four others have also reached the final stage of receiving this award, alongside Ms. Jafari.

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

‘Job restrictions on women damage Afghan economy’

KABUL (TOLONews): The women's section of the United Nations reports that imposing restrictions on women's employment in non-governmental organizations has negative effects on Afghanistan's economy. The report states that currently, 18 percent of women work from their homes, whereas this figure reached 24 percent in September 2023. The report further notes: "18% of the women staff of surveyed organizations are working from home, a reduction of 6 percentage points compared to September when partners reported 24% of women staff were working from home." Arya Karimi, an educator, said: "When a woman has her own economic independence, she can solve all her life's problems, as we see that in most

families, the male presence is nil, and it is these women and young ladies who are the breadwinners for their families." Moreover, a number of women are demanding the Islamic Emirate to provide job opportunities. Maryam Ghazal, 24, has been unemployed for two years now. She says she used to work at a private institution, but had to quit her job due to the restrictions imposed on women's employment in non-governmental organizations. Ghazal stated, "By providing jobs and roles for Afghan girls and women, some of their economic problems can be alleviated, and those who are the breadwinners of their households can be assisted." Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economy considers

women's work essential for social development and economic growth, adding that women are currently employed in sectors where they are needed. Abdul Rahman Habib, spokesperson for the Ministry of Economy, said: "To reduce economic issues, increase national revenues, and foster economic growth, women play a crucial role. Currently, thousands of women are employed across various sectors including education, healthcare, banking, small enterprises, and trade in both the private and public sectors. Previously, a United Nations development program report had stated that the restrictions on women's employment had caused up to one billion dollars in damage to Afghanistan's economy.

Rina Amiri condemn attack in Herat

KABUL (Khaama Press): Rina Amiri, the Special Representative for Women's Affairs in Afghanistan, condemned the recent attack on Shia Muslims in Herat province. Ms. Amiri wrote on her X account on Thursday, May 2nd, that this violent act reminds us of the vulnerable communities' exposure to harassment and torture. The Islamic State (ISIS) group claimed responsibility for the attack on a Shia mosque in Herat late on Tuesday. The Taliban's Interior Ministry said that in an armed attack on Monday night at the Imam Zamani mosque in Mohammadi town, at least six worshippers, including a woman and a child, were killed. This incident underscores the ongoing threat of extremist violence targeting religious minorities in Afghanistan. The attack on Shia Muslims adds to the already dire security situation in the country, posing significant challenges to peace and stability efforts.

Furthermore, such attacks deepen communal tensions and exacerbate divisions within Afghan society, hindering efforts towards reconciliation and national unity. The Taliban regime has failed to secure Afghan communities. It faces mounting pressure to address the root causes of extremism and violence, ensuring the protection of all citizens' rights and freedoms.

EU contributes 15 million in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Rafaela Iodice, the European Union official in Afghanistan, says the EU has contributed 15 million euros to combat climate change and assist vulnerable women in Afghanistan. She stated this on Thursday, May 2nd, in a message posted on her social media platform from X, mentioning that Afghanistan is the most vulnerable country to climate change. According to Iodice, Peteris Ustubs, Head of Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, and Pacific Division of the European Union, signed the document for this aid during his trip to Afghanistan. The EU official in Afghanistan emphasized that this aid will be utilized to combat climate change and natural disasters in the country. The European Union had previously warned that the consequences of climate change in Afghanistan would increase poverty and the need for food.

Aziz discusses trade issues while on visit to Iran

KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Commerce and Industry of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Nooruddin Azizi arrived in Iran's Sistan and Baluchistan Province on Thursday for a meeting on facilitating the process of economic cooperation between the two countries. The ministry's spokesman Abdulsalam Javadkhandzadā said Thursday the minister discussed the development of trade and transit relations between Iran and Afghanistan – but with the focus on the province of Sistan and Baluchistan. Aziz also discussed the need to strengthen processes for goods through Chabahar port and emphasized the need to resolve issues relating to this trade route. According to Javadk-



handzadā officials of the two countries discussed the strengthening of commercial and economic cooperation, while Azizi requested that costs be lowered for goods and for land to be

made available in Chabahar to Afghan businessmen and for railway facilities to be provided. Both sides agreed that in order to develop trade between the two countries

and to strengthen transit through Chabahar, a joint technical committee would be established on a provincial level and that issues will be followed up by the central committee.

Thalassemia treatment center opens in Jalalabad city

JALALABAD CITY (TOLONews): A thalassemia treatment center has opened in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, with financial support from a charitable organization, costing \$30,000. Islamuddin Shinwari, the head of the sponsoring organization, states that at this center, approximately twenty people receive blood transfusions every two hours. This medical center, which has 15 beds, can accommodate about 20 patients daily. Shinwari commented, "We perform all necessary tests. We provide the

patients' blood, and all services here are free." Aminullah Sharif, the head of Nangarhar's Public Health Department, said, "If we do not establish centers for them, their numbers will increase day by day. Therefore, we are striving to create treatment centers for their care." Moreover, many individuals suffering from thalassemia have expressed their satisfaction with the opening of this center and are calling on other organizations to establish similar treatment facilities. Mohammad, a patient, said, "Due to repeated

blood transfusions, our livers have become enlarged, our body's iron levels have increased, and our skulls have expanded." Navidullah, another patient, said, "When we come to the public health center, sometimes there is no blood available, so our request to the youth is to donate blood for us, and we ask traders to establish such centers for us." Homayoun, 47, a driver whose two daughters and two sons suffer from thalassemia, faces severe economic challenges and struggles to provide for his family's expenses; however,

he is compelled to procure blood for his children every month. Homayoun, a caregiver, said, "On Eid days, all children ask their parents for new clothes and shoes, but my children ask me for blood. Only God knows the pain I endure." According to the Nangarhar Public Health Department, there are currently about 1,700 individuals in the province suffering from thalassemia. Officials from the department say they are making efforts to address the challenges faced by patients by constructing more treatment centers.

Daesh attack in Herat not indicator of strength

KABUL (TOLONews): Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, told TOLONews that Monday's attack on a Shia mosque in the Guzara district of Herat does not signify the strengthening of Daesh in Afghanistan. The spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate described the attack as a crime and said that efforts to find the perpetrators of this event are ongoing. Daesh claimed responsibility for the attack on Monday on a Shia mosque in the Guzara district of Herat. Mujahid said: "The recent crime by Daesh in Herat province is not an achievement for them and does not show their strength. It is a pure crime that has been committed and could occur in most countries. The security forces are aware of clues to this crime and, God willing, will bring the perpetrators to justice." At the same time, Thomas West, the US special representative for Afghanistan, and Naseer Ahmad Faiq, Chargé



d'Afaires of the permanent mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations, condemned the attack. West called the attack a terrorist event and expressed sympathy with the families of the victims. Thomas West on X said: "The United States strongly condemns the terrorist attack that killed innocent worshippers at a mosque in Herat last night. Perpetrators must be held accountable, and our thoughts are with those who lost loved ones." Naseer Ahmad Faiq on X said: "The targeted attacks against the Shiite communities of Afghanistan

and the shedding of the blood of children and innocent people inside mosques are highly condemnable." "Experience has proven that in 45 years, foreigners have provided these weapons and equipment, meaning these so-called Muslims have become soldiers for foreigners, including Britain, America, and regional countries," said Yousuf Amin Zazai, a military analyst. In the attack on Monday evening on worshippers at a Shia mosque in Guzara district of Herat, five people including a woman and a child were killed and three others were injured.

Agricultural product exhibition started



KABUL (TOLONews): The Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock held the 30th agricultural product exhibition in Kabul. Officials of the Islamic Emirate at the opening of the exhibition said that they are striving to support farmers, provide alternative livelihood services, manage the country's water resources, mechanize agriculture, and market agricultural products. At the exhibition, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, deputy prime minister for economic affairs of the Islamic Emirate, said: "Agriculture and livestock farming are important for the economic sector, constitute a major part of exports, play a valuable role in reducing poverty, and create job opportunities." The prime minister, in a message read by his repre-

sentative Abdul Sattar Saeed, said: "The agriculture and livestock sector in Afghanistan is considered an important sector in economic development. For this purpose, the Islamic Emirate is committed to creating the necessary facilities for the country's farmers and livestock owners." Meanwhile, the political and administrative deputies of the Prime Minister's Office also emphasized support for investors in Afghanistan's agricultural sector. Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Political Deputy for the Prime Minister's Office, said: "It is our collective responsibility to pay attention to gardening and livestock farming in the country. Afghanistan needs agricultural development and we must find suitable markets for our agricultural

products." Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, the deputy PM for administrative affairs, who was another speaker at this event, said: "We continue our efforts in marketing our agricultural products." Officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock also said that the purpose of holding this exhibition is to support the produce of farmers. The Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, Sadr Azam Osmani, said: "Projects in the agriculture sector such as the Qush Tepa Canal and similar ones have been inaugurated before, and we are moving towards self-sufficiency." The exhibition will last for four days, and various agricultural products from across Afghanistan are displayed in 263 booths.

Officials: Foreign countries hinder Afghanistan's academic progress

KABUL (TOLONews): Lotfullah Khairkhwa, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, states that some foreign countries are creating obstacles to the scientific development of the country. Khairkhwa, during a ceremony honoring an Afghan surgeon residing in Germany at Paktia University, stated that the Islamic Emirate is committed to scientific advancement in the country and emphasizes that it will not allow any foreign obstacles in this regard. The Deputy Minister of Higher Education said at the event: "As an official of the Ministry of Higher Education, I promise you that we will not waste any opportunity for progress based on our available resources and will not

allow anyone to create obstacles in this path." Bismillah Shiva, an Afghan surgeon residing in Germany at Paktia University, has been awarded the 'Leonardo Schweiber' prize for 2024 by the German Surgeons Association. Shiva says he is striving to standardize medicine in the country to unite doctors and scientific personalities living abroad. Bismillah Shiva stated, "Many of our academic staff are abroad, and we can form a cohesive group outside the country to utilize their knowledge to enhance the capacity of our youth." Meanwhile, a number of students at Paktia University are asking the Islamic Emirate to prevent the exodus of scientific per-



sonnel from the country and facilitate the return of those who are abroad. Hijrat Kamal, a student, said: "They should provide facilities so that they do not leave their country, as Afghan students and professors need their knowledge." Another student, Abdul Rahman, said: "We hope

they will return to the country and share their practical experiences with us." According to the Deputy Minister of Higher Education, after recent developments, 350 scientific staff have left the country; however, as a result of the efforts of this ministry, 70 of them have returned to the country.

Neglecting climate change in Afghanistan will be catastrophic: IEA

KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan stands among the nations that continue to face devastating consequences of climate change, but despite this the country has had to endure blatant injustice on the part of the international community regarding this critical issue. After the return to power of the Islamic Emirate, the international community not only imposed various sanctions, but approached the issue of climate change in Afghanistan from a political perspective. Consequently, with the suspension of 32 environmental and climate change projects, restricting Afghanistan's access to pledged financial resources, and the exclusion of Afghanistan from regional and international meetings and conferences on environmental and climate issues, there has been blatant injustice against the people of Afghanistan. In an article published by the Islamic Emirate's official al Emarah on Thursday, the Islamic Emirate stated that as the Earth's temperature con-

tinues to rise, climate change poses a threat to all facets of human existence. Pointing out that countries lacking in resources, including Afghanistan, face heightened vulnerability to the perils of climate change, as they lack the requisite means and infrastructure to effectively mitigate and manage its effects. According to information from Afghanistan's National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), temperatures in the southern regions of the country have increased by 2.4 degrees Celsius over the past century, Hindu Kush regions by 1 degree Celsius, central and northern highlands by 1.6 to 1.7 degrees Celsius, and eastern regions of Afghanistan by 0.6 degrees Celsius. This has created numerous problems in urban and rural areas of Afghanistan, including increased poverty, migration, recurring droughts, floods, rising temperatures, destruction of farms and forests, food shortages, livestock deaths, and the emergence of various diseases. "These can be identified

as the undesirable consequences and impacts of climate change in Afghanistan," the report read. The continuation of this situation has severely affected not only the water, agriculture, livestock, forests, and grasslands sectors but also significantly impacted the social and economic lives of the people of Afghanistan, as well as health, energy, biodiversity, and ecosystems, al Emarah reported. Despite the challenges and existing problems, officials at NEPA have made necessary efforts to manage the issue of climate change in Afghanistan utilizing available resources. Over the past three years, practical steps have been taken regarding drafting, revising, and amending laws, policies, regulations, and work plans, as well as project design. Revision of environmental laws, national environmental policy, regulations on ozone-depleting substances, approval of the KIGALI Amendment to the Montreal Protocol 2020, and other related

documents can be highlighted as prominent actions in the field of climate change mitigation. Other steps have also been taken, including the prioritization of climate-compatible water and watershed projects, the restoration of degraded ecosystems, sustainable management plans for Nuristan National Park, sustainable forest and land management projects, and combating land degradation and biodiversity loss through enhancing sustainable food systems in Afghanistan. The Islamic Emirate, under its environmental protection policy for Afghanistan, has placed climate change management at the forefront of its work priorities and has initiated efforts to mitigate the situation with the resources at hand. With ensuring security nationwide, the Islamic Emirate has provided a conducive environment for implementing projects in various sectors across Afghanistan. As climate change is an overarching issue, tackling the challenges and risks it

poses requires joint efforts from all governments and collaboration among all stakeholders. In light of this, the international community, nations, and pertinent organizations ought to prioritize environmental and climate change matters in Afghanistan. They should take practical and genuine steps by resuming suspended environmental and climate change projects, facilitating access to pledged financial resources, and creating opportunities for active Afghan participation in regional and international forums and conferences, al Emarah reported. "Moreover, throughout this period, the people of Afghanistan have been directly impacted by the consequences of climate change, enduring significant financial and human losses. "Therefore, the global community and pertinent organizations must extricate the environmental issue and climate change in Afghanistan from political spheres, conceiving it instead as a human dilemma," the report read.

Reserved seats oath plea PHC summons Gandapur, KP speaker

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Waqar Ahmad summoned Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly's speaker in Contempt of Court (COC) plea in failure of administering oath from elected members on reserved seats.

The court issued notices to the CM and the speaker after hearing the filed petition. The counsel highlighted that despite a detailed verdict and a fourteen-day deadline, the oath has not been administered to the elected members on reserved seats.

Justice S.M. Atiq Shah

inquired why the oath had not been administered despite the detailed verdict. Consequently, the PHC has summoned the KP CM and the provincial assembly speaker within a week, directing them to respond to the notices.

Meanwhile, PHC stopped arrest of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur while ordered Punjab Police along with other agencies for submission of record of cases registered against him. PHC dispose of the plea while directed the Chief Minister to approach the Lahore High Court for obtaining details of the cases.

The court observed that the Chief Minister is the chief executive of the province and cannot be

arrested in any case. The court also directed the Punjab government to be informed of the court's decision and to ensure that the Chief Minister is not harassed. The counsel Ali Azeem Afridi advocate, advocate general Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Faisal Ottomankhel and National Accountability Bureau (NAD) Additional Deputy Prosecutor General Muhammad Ali appeared before PHC.

Additionally, PHC hear Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Mian Aslam Iqbal, who is the opposition leader in the Punjab Assembly plea while directed the Punjab police to stop harassing him and ordered to inform the Punjab government about the court's decision.

PTI issues white paper on 'rigging' in Feb 8 polls

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has issued a white paper on alleged rigging in the February 8 general elections, demanding the formation of the judicial commission to probe the "snatching of the 180 seats".

"We won the 180 seats in the [February 8] elections. Our seats were given to other parties through Form 47," said PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar while addressing a press conference alongside other party leaders in Islamabad on Thursday. The PTI chief said they had filed a petition in the Supreme Court against the alleged rigging. "But the plea has not been fixed for hearing as yet," he lamented.

"We are issuing a 234-page white paper to bring it to the notice of the people

as to how their mandate was stolen," Barrister Gohar said. The PTI-backed independent candidates won the most National Assembly seats in the February 8 elections followed by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

However, the PML-N with the support of the other parties including the PPP formed a coalition government in the Centre and later became the single largest party in the lower house of the parliament following the allocation of the reserved seats. The Imran Khan-founded party lost the right to the reserved seats as its members contested elections as independent candidates.

Referring to the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to declare the party's intra-party polls

as invalid, the PTI chief, in today's presser, said his party was forced to contest the general elections without its iconic 'bat' electoral symbol. "Our victory was turned into defeat by [manipulating] election results in the Form 47," he claimed. The PTI chief said the white paper is based on the reports of international organisations, foreign media and newspapers.

He also called for carrying out the electoral reforms to eliminate rigging in the polls once and for all. Speaking on the occasion, PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub said the ECP was granted billions of rupees to hold free and fair elections in the country. "We demand the chief election commissioner to step down," he said accusing the polls organising body of failing to hold transparent elections in the country.

Pak-US Navies conduct drills

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The bilateral exercise of Pakistan and US Navies 'Inspired Union 2024' was held at Karachi with an aim to enhance relations and interoperability between PN and USN through mutual exchange of professional experience and expertise in maritime domain.

The three-day exercise was participate by officers and personnel of United States Marine Corps, Coast Guards, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Diving, Legal, Naval Construction Force, Civil Affairs and Medical teams.

Multiple discussions and practical evolutions on professional topics of mutual interest were conducted during the exercise. Commander CTF-52, also called on Commander Pakistan Fleet and Commander Coast. During these interactions, matters of mutual interest in maritime domain were discussed. Conduct of Exercise Inspired Union was a regular feature between Pakistan Navy and US Navy.

Omar reappointed Secy ECP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has reappointed Omar Hamid Khan as its secretary for the period of two-year term.

According to a notification issued here on Thursday, retired BS-22 officer of the Secretariat Group, Omar Hamid Khan had been reemployed as Secretary for a two-year term in the public interest, in accordance with Rules 8 & 11 of the Election Commission (Officers and Servants) Rules, 1989.

The development comes after the incumbent secretary, Asif Hussain, who was appointed in January of this year, resigned due to health issues. The notification regarding Hussain's resignation stated that the officer tendered the resignation 'on account of poor health condition. Hussain assumed the additional responsibility of secretary (BS-22) following Omar Hamid Khan's resignation in January this year due to health reasons.

Earthquake jolts parts of Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: An earthquake of low intensity jolted different areas of Karachi on Thursday but no causality or property damage was reported.

According to details, tremors measuring 2.3 on Richter scale were felt in Kothore, Gadap and other areas of the metropolis. People of the areas where the quake was felt rushed out of their homes and other buildings in panic reciting verses from Holy Quran but no causality or property damage was reported. The epicentre of quake was stated to be 38 kilometer North-East of Malir at depth of 84 kilometers.

Highways in Balochistan blocked

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Major highways in Balochistan remained blocked for the 15th consecutive day on Thursday as the All Balochistan Transport Alliance continued its protest against the government measures. The alliance is protesting the decision to set up security check posts and impose Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on transporters in view of their grievances over the move.

Major highways, including NA-40 Quetta-Taftan, NA-25 Quetta-Karachi, NA-65 Quetta-Jacobabad, and NA-85 Quetta-Mekran were affected by the blockade, causing disruptions to vehicular traffic. The government's decision to enhance security measures follows an incident on April 12, 2024, where unidentified gunmen killed nine individuals in the Sultran Charae area of Noshki.

Efforts to resolve the standoff have been made with a delegation of provincial ministers and MPAs, led by Minister for Home Mir Ziaullah Langove and Minister for Agriculture Haji Ali Madad Jattak, engaging in talks with the All Balochistan Transport Alliance.



LOS ANGELES: Students of University of California clashing with supporters of Israel during a protest in favour of Palestinians.

Turkiye's Erdogan criticizes US crackdown on college protests

ANKARA (Reuters): Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan waded into the debate over US college campus protests on Thursday, saying authorities were displaying "cruelty" in clamping down on pro-Palestinian students and academics. Demonstrations have spread on campuses across the United States over Israel's conduct of the war in Gaza, prompting police crackdowns and arrests at some venues such as Columbia University in New York.

"Conscientious students and academics including anti-Zionist Jews at some prestigious American universities are protesting the massacre (in Gaza)," Erdogan told an event in Ankara. "These people are being subjected to violence, cruelty, suffering, and even torture for saying the massacre has to stop," he said, adding that university staff were being "sacked and lynched" for supporting the Palestinians.

Turkiye, a NATO ally of the United States, has sharply criticized Israel's assault on Gaza and what it calls the unconditional support it receives from Western countries. The US is a top supplier of military aid to Israel and has shielded the country from critical United Nations votes.

"The limits of Western democracy are drawn by Israel's interests," Erdogan said. "Whatever infringes on Israel's interests is anti-democratic, antisemitic for them." More than 34,000 people have been killed in Gaza during Israel's nearly seven-month military offensive, Palestinian health officials say, after Hamas militants killed some 1,200 people and took 253 hostages during an Oct. 7 assault on southern Israel, according to Israeli tallies.

Meanwhile, Israel's president slammed US universities for campus unrest over Israel's war in Gaza, saying these institutions were "contaminated by hatred and anti-Semitism." Isaac Herzog said in a special broadcast that he was issuing an urgent message of support to Jewish com-

Rebuilding bombed Gaza homes may take 80 years, UN says

GENEVA: Rebuilding Gaza's shattered homes will take at least until 2040 but could drag on for many decades, according to a UN report released on Thursday. Nearly seven months of Israeli bombardment have caused billions of dollars in damage, leaving many of the crowded strip's high-rise concrete buildings reduced to heaps, with a UN official referring to a "moonscape" of destruction.

Palestinian data shows that about 80,000 homes have been destroyed in a conflict triggered by Hamas fighters' deadly attacks on southern Israel on Oct. 7. Israeli strikes have killed tens of thousands of Palestinians. In a best-case scenario in which construction materials are delivered five times as fast as in the last Gaza crisis in 2021, rebuilding destroyed homes could be done by 2040, a building assessment said. But the UN Development Programme assessment notes that Gaza would need "approximately 80 years to restore all the fully destroyed housing units" under a scenario assuming the pace of reconstruction follows the trend of several previous Gaza conflicts. A separate report based on satellite images analyzed by the United Nations showed that 85.8 percent of schools in Gaza had suffered some level of damage since Oct. 7. Over 70 percent of schools will require major or full reconstruction, the UN statement added. The UNDP assessment makes a series of projections on the war's socioeconomic impact based on the duration of the current conflict, projecting decades of suffering. "Unprecedented levels of human losses, capital destruction, and the steep rise in poverty in such a short period of time will precipitate a serious development crisis that jeopardizes the future of generations to come," said UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner in a statement. In a scenario where the war lasts nine months, poverty is set to increase from 38.8 percent of Gaza's population at the end of 2023 to 60.7 percent, dragging a large portion of the middle class below the poverty line, the report said. — Arab News

munities amid a "dramatic resurgence in anti-Semitism and following the hostilities and intimidation against Jewish students on campuses across the US in particular."

"We see prominent academic institutions, halls of history, culture, and education contaminated by hatred and anti-Semitism fueled by arrogance and ignorance," he said. "We watch in horror as the atrocities of October 7th against Israel are celebrated and justified."

His comments came as hundreds of police and protesters were in a tense stand-off at the University of California, Los Angeles and unrest over Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza continued to spread in campuses across the United States. Demonstrators have gathered in at least 30 US universities since last

month, often erecting tent encampments to protest the soaring death toll in the Gaza Strip. Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed at least 34,596 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

It comes in response to Hamas's unprecedented attack on Israel on October 7, which resulted in the deaths of 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures. The militants also took about 250 hostages, 129 of whom remain in Gaza, including 34 presumed dead, Israel says. The protests against the war have posed a challenge to US university administrators trying to balance free speech rights with allegations of criminal activity, anti-Semitism and hate speech.

US accuses Russia of using chemical arms in Ukraine war

WASHINGTON: The United States has accused Russia of breaching the global ban on chemical weapons by using the choking agent chloropicrin against Ukrainian soldiers and deploying riot control agents "as a method of warfare" in Ukraine. "The use of such chemicals is not an isolated incident, and is probably driven by Russian forces' desire to dislodge Ukrainian forces from fortified positions and achieve tactical gains on the battlefield," the US Department of State said in a statement on Wednesday that also announced new sanctions against entities linked to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Chloropicrin, a nearly colourless oily liquid which causes severe irritation to the eyes, skin and lungs, was used in large quantities during World War I, according to the US's National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety. While it continues to be used as an agricultural pesticide, its use in war is banned under the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Russia has said it no longer possesses a military chemical arsenal, but the country faces pressure for more transparency over its alleged use of toxic chemicals.

On Thursday, Russia denied the US accusation. "As always, such announcements are absolutely unfounded and are not supported by anything. Russia has been and remains committed to its obligations under international law in this area," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters. In addition to chloropicrin, Russian forces have used grenades loaded with CS and CN gasses, the Reuters news agency reported earlier this month, citing the Ukrainian military. It said that at least 500 Ukrainian soldiers had been treated for exposure to toxic substances and one died after suffocating on tear gas.

Gyundoz Mamedov, the deputy prosecutor general in Ukraine until 2021, posted on social media on April 24 that the Russian army had used tear gas against Ukrainian forces at least 900 times over the previous six months, with more than 1,400 incidents since it began its full-scale invasion in February 2022. While civilians can usually escape such gasses during protests, soldiers confined to trenches without gas masks are forced to either flee under enemy fire or risk suffocation. The State Department said Moscow's use of chloropicrin and "ongoing disregard" for

the CWC "comes from the same playbook as its operations to poison [Alexey] Navalny and Sergei and Yulia Skripal with Novichok nerve agents."

Navalny, who died suddenly in an Arctic prison colony in February, was poisoned with Novichok in 2020. Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military intelligence agent given asylum in the United Kingdom, survived an assassination attempt in 2018 that also almost killed his daughter. A British police officer who investigated the case also became severely ill while Dawn Sturgess, a woman who was inadvertently given the discarded bottle that contained the poison, died four months later after spraying herself with the liquid thinking it was a perfume. The British government concluded that the Russian state was "almost certainly" behind the attack. Russia denied involvement in both the Skripal and Navalny poisonings.

The US statement said it was sanctioning three Russian state entities linked to Moscow's chemical and biological weapons programmes, including a specialised military unit that facilitated the use of chloropicrin against Ukrainian troops. Four Russian companies that support the three entities were also sanctioned, it added. The sanctions freeze any US assets belonging to the targeted entities and generally prohibit Americans from doing business with them. Separately, the US Treasury imposed sanctions on three entities and two individuals involved in purchasing items for Russian military institutes involved in the country's chemical and biological weapons programmes.

The sanctions were among a number of new measures targeting Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. The CWC bans the production and use of chemical weapons. It also requires the 193 countries that have ratified the convention, which include Russia and the US, to destroy any stocks of banned chemicals. Russia and Ukraine have accused each other of breaching the treaty in Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) meetings. In 2022, the organisation expressed concern about reports that Russia has used chemical weapons in its assault on the port of Mariupol, but it says it has not been formally asked to open any investigation into the use of prohibited substances in Ukraine. — Aljazeera

Woman driver booked for misbehaving with cops

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A case has been registered against a woman driver for misbehaving and hurling abuses at Motorway police personnel near Kallar Kahar.

A video of two women misbehaving with the cops went viral on social media on Wednesday. In the viral video, the two women were seen filming Motorway police personnel, misbehaving and hurling abuses at the cops. The case has been registered against the woman driver at the complaint of the Motorway police sub-inspector.

The FIR stated that the woman started 'threatening' the cops after she was stopped for driving her vehicle at a speed of 80 kilometers per hour. The woman rather than showing documents, raised allegations of harassing at the Motorway cops, the FIR stated and added that the woman interfered in the State's affairs by filming the cops in uniform without their consent. A video of two women misbehaving and hurling abuses at Motorway police personnel went viral on social media. In the viral video, the two women can be seen filming Motorway police personnel, misbehaving and hurling abuses at the cops.

The women were heard alleging that the Motorway personnel hurt one of the women while trying to "snatch" her mobile phone as she was making the cops' video. Furthermore, one of the women alleged that the Motorway cop demanded a bribe from them.



KARACHI: Supporters of JUI-F holding a protest against alleged rigging in general elections, and show solidarity with Palestinian people during Million March.

IHC reserves verdict on Bushra Bibi's plea

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday reserved its verdict on the petition filed by Bushra Bibi, wife of former prime minister and ex-PTI chairman Imran Khan, seeking her shifting from her Bani Gala residence in Islamabad, now declared a sub-jail, to Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi.

During the hearing, the state counsel said that Bushra had been shifted to

Bani Gala because there were threats to her life at the Adiala Jail. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb remarked that in his opinion the government had made up its mind to detain the former first lady at Bani Gala before her conviction. "Do you think that the notification issued for the purpose was drafted in a minute?" he asked.

"For God's sake, sometimes you say you cannot produce her in the court because of threats and some-

times you say the jail is not safe for her." "The question is whether you are safe?" the judge questioned.

Bushra's lawyer Advocate Usman Riaz Gill argued that his client had been convicted in Toshakhana and Iddat cases without giving her a fair trial. "Bushra was not present in the courtroom at the time of pronouncement of verdicts," he said, and added, "In the light of the court's decision, my client had to be detained at Adiala, and not in Bani Gala."