

### Two TTP terrorists F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) on Thursday killed two terrorists affiliated with the banned outfit Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) during an operation in Lakki Marwat district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Law enforcement personnel conducted an intelligence-based operation in Lakki Marwat during which the terrorists opened fire.



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# Bring May 9 planners, executioners to justice

## Army to support sustainable economic development

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), presided over the 83rd Formation Commanders Conference at GHQ, attended by Corps Commanders, Principal Staff Officers, and all Formation Commanders of Pakistan Army.

The forum offered Fatiha and paid tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhadas, including officers and men of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies, and citizens of Pakistan who laid their lives for the country's safety, security, and sovereignty.

The forum was briefed on the dynamics of the geo-strategic environment, emerging challenges to national security, and the Army's strategy to counter multi-domain threats. The participants were also briefed on technological innovations to modernize the Army and optimize logistic support to field formations, in line with fast-evolving operational environment.



The forum expressed serious concerns over continued cross-border violations from Afghanistan and terrorism being orchestrated using Afghan soil, noting that Pakistan's adversaries were using Afghanistan to target Security Forces and innocent civilians inside Pakistan. The forum acknowledged the priceless sacrifices of the people of Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) in the war against terrorism and underscored the importance of uplifting the NMDs to decisively defeat terrorism.

The forum also underlined the need for socio-economic development in Balochistan to counter externally propagated narratives of exclu-

sion, exploited by foreign-sponsored proxies to lead Balochistan's youth away from peace and progress.

Reviewing the prevailing situation on the Eastern Border and the latest round of extra-judicial murders in IIOJK, the forum expressed complete solidarity with the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for the inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in UNSC Resolutions. The forum showed concern over the treatment of minorities, especially Muslims, in India and noted the growing fascism being perpetrated to achieve vested political ends. The

(Continued on Back Page)

## Pak launches second satellite

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission successfully launched the second satellite PakSat MM1 from Xichang Satellite Launch Center in China on Thursday.

The satellite PakSat MM1 has been conceived keeping in view the growing needs of the country in the broad spectrum of communication and connectivity. Based on advanced communication technologies, PakSat MM1 will play a pivotal role in the socio-economic uplift of the country and will prove to be a stepping stone in the transformation of the country into Digital Pakistan. The satellite will be available for its services by August this year, as per schedule.

As Pakistan launched its second communication satellite PakSat MM1, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated the entire nation hoping that it would help provide the fastest internet facility throughout the country.

"I am particularly excited about the potential impact of PakSat MM1 on internet connectivity across Pakistan. With its state-of-the-art communication technology, this satellite promises to revolutionize our digital landscape and provide the fastest internet facility throughout the country," the prime minister said in a statement. Felicitating the nation on the "momentous occasion", he said that the achievement marked a significant advancement in Pakistan's space and communication capabilities, and he was proud of the national accomplishment.

The prime minister said that PakSat MM1 would not only enhance the lives of Pakistani citizens but also contribute to the promotion of economic activities, e-commerce, and e-governance. PM Shehbaz said that the launch of PakSat MM1 from China's Xichang Satellite Launch Centre was a testament to the strong collaboration and partnership between the two countries.

"It is through such cooperative endeavours that we can propel our nation forward and harness the power of technology for the benefit of our people," He said that the positioning of PakSat MM1 in a geostationary orbit 36,000 kilometers above earth was an impressive feat that showcased the nation's scientific and technological prowess.

He lauded the dedication and hard work of the talented individuals at the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) and all those involved in the mission. Calling the collective efforts and determination the driving forces of Pakistan's progress, the prime minister said the PakSat MM1 launch was a testament to the nation's potential and the bright future that lies ahead.

## Pakistan, Azerbaijan aim to fully utilise potential of ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Thursday reaffirmed their commitment to enhance cooperation across multiple sectors, including trade, investment, energy and connectivity, aiming to fully utilise the potential of their friendly ties.

During a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister [and Foreign Minister] Ishaq Dar and Azeri Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov, bilateral ties and cooperation as well as international matters were discussed. In a joint press conference, Ishaq Dar accentuated the intention of both countries to strengthen cooperation in trade, investment, connectivity, energy and defence sectors.

He highlighted efforts to boost bilateral investment, particularly in the energy sector, with a focus on the role of the joint working group on energy. Dar also mentioned the mutual desire to promote parliamentary and cultural

exchanges, fostering business-to-business and academic linkages, along with enhancing cooperation in renewable energy. He extended Pakistan's support for Azerbaijan's hosting of the COP29 meeting.

The discussions also included the prevailing situation in Gaza, with both sides calling for an immediate cessation of Israeli hostilities and the establishment of an independent Palestine state with Quds Al Sharif as its capital. Dar expressed gratitude for Azerbaijan's consistent support on the Kashmir issue, reaffirming Pakistan's support for Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov stated that the meeting aimed to strengthen cooperation and strategic partnership to elevate the bilateral relationship. He emphasised the untapped potential for economic and trade cooperation, stressing the need for joint economic projects in

various sectors. Bayramov invited Pakistan's business community to explore opportunities in Azerbaijan, highlighting existing connectivity through direct flights and tourism.

He appreciated Pakistan's stance on the Karabakh conflict and reiterated Azerbaijan's principled position on the Kashmir issue. Both ministers also addressed climate change concerns, with Azerbaijan pledging support for developing countries like Pakistan in adaptation efforts.

Dar highlighted Pakistan's challenges in the aftermath of floods and emphasised the country's strategic location for regional connectivity. The leaders concluded their discussions with a strong commitment to further strengthen bilateral strategic relations and broaden cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, energy, defence, education, climate action and regional connectivity.

## Israeli airstrike on Rafah kills 12 more Palestinians

JERUSALEM (Reuters): Israeli forces killed at least 12 Palestinians in a dawn airstrike on Rafah in southern Gaza on Thursday and fighting raged in several other areas of the coastal enclave, Gaza medics said.

Israel pressed on with its offensive on Rafah a day after saying its forces had taken control of a buffer zone along the nearby border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, giving it effective authority over Gaza's entire land frontier. It said the buffer zone's capture had cut off a route used by the Palestinian Islamist militant group Hamas to smuggle arms into Gaza during more than seven months of war, which has laid waste to much of the territory and raised fears of famine. Gaza medical sources said the 12 Palestinians, whom it said were civilians, had been killed and an unspecified number of others wounded in an Israeli airstrike as they tried to recover the body of a civilian in the center of Rafah.

Another Palestinian civilian was killed in an airstrike on Al-Shati refugee camp west of Gaza City in the north of the densely populated enclave, the medics said. Israel reported clashes in southern, central and northern Gaza but did not immediately comment on the reported deaths in Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians took refuge earlier in the war.

Israel has kept up raids on Rafah despite an order by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the top UN court, to halt its attacks.

Israeli forces say they are trying to root out Hamas fighters and rescue hostages being held there, and the ICJ also called for the release of hostages held in Gaza by Hamas. More than 36,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's air and land war in Gaza, with 53 of those killed in the past 24 hours, the Hamas-run enclave's health ministry said.

Israel launched its offensive after Hamas fighters crossed from Gaza into southern Israel on Oct. 7 last year, killed 1,200 people and abducted more than 250, according to Israeli tallies. The Israeli military said a soldier had been killed in fighting in northern Gaza, bringing to 292 Israel's combat losses since its first Gaza ground incursion on Oct. 20.

In an overnight call with US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant underlined the continuing importance of Israeli operations in the Rafah area "due to concrete information regarding hostages held there." "Minister Gallant detailed IDF activities in the Rafah area where 20 terror tunnels have been identified," the Israeli Defense Ministry said in a statement on the overnight call.

The Israeli military also said in a statement that tunnels used by Hamas for smuggling and moving fighters underground had been discovered during the latest raids, as well as large amounts of arms and explosives. The Israeli statements did not say where the smuggling tunnels ran from. An

Israeli official said on May 15 there were 50 tunnels connecting Rafah to the Sinai in Egypt, and voiced concern that Hamas could use them to smuggle senior operatives or hostages into Egyptian territory. Egypt on Wednesday denied the existence of any such tunnels.

The United States, Israel's closest ally, reiterated its opposition to a major ground offensive in Rafah on Tuesday but said it did not believe such an operation was under way. The US has, with Egypt and Qatar, been involved in efforts to mediate indirect talks between Israel and Hamas on arranging a ceasefire and the release of the remaining hostages. Those talks have stalled, with both sides blaming the other for the lack of progress.

As the war drags on, malnutrition has become widespread in Gaza as aid deliveries have slowed to a trickle, and the United Nations has warned of incipient famine. Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), also called for an end to what he said were Israeli attacks on UNRWA staff and buildings in Gaza.

In article for the New York Times, he said Israeli officials were "delegitimizing UNRWA by effectively characterizing it as a terrorist organization," and he described a "dangerous precedent of routine targeting of UN staff and premises." His comments followed allegations by Israel in January that 12 of UNRWA's 13,000 staff in Gaza took part in the Oct. 7 attack on Israel.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

## Areas falling in loss-making feeders to face power outages

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Energy Minister Awais Leghari has stated that areas that fall in the loss-making feeders would continue to face power outages amid sizzling weather with temperatures rising above 50°C in some areas of Sindh. His statement came as sporadic protests continue in various parts of the country against unannounced loadshedding amid scorching heat.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Thursday, Leghari said he directed the power distribution companies (Discos) to improve their overall performance and minimise loadshedding duration. The energy minister also instructed the distribution companies to present details of the demand and supply of electricity on a daily basis before the public.

He said the management of power distribution companies will be replaced with competent personnel. Blaming the high-loss feeders, technical faults and electricity theft as a major reason for power outages, the energy minister said a system was being revamped gradually to overcome loadshedding. He said there is a shortfall of 4,232 megawatts in the country and high-loss feeders were not in a position to bear this shortfall. Leghari said that there are 150 loss-making feeders in Punjab, 700 in Sindh, 350 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and around 80 in Balochistan, which will be overhauled.

He said there is an ample capacity for electricity generation available in the country and vowed to fulfil the demand for electricity during this summer and the upcoming year. The energy minister also reiterated that the federal government was discontinuing the solar net metering policy and added that any decision in this regard would be made with the consultation of all stakeholders. Speaking on the occasion, State Minister for Power Ali Pervaiz Malik urged people to identify power theft as their cooperation is inevitable to overcome loadshedding.

## FIA to probe Khan's X post

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The FIA Cyber Wing on Thursday decided to conduct an inquiry into the uploading of a propaganda video featuring Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the official X account of PTI founder Imran Khan.

According to FIA sources, on May 26, a propaganda video was tweeted in the name of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the official X handle of PTI's founder. The official account was used to upload this video, it said.

Sources said the FIA Cyber Wing would discuss the matter with four PTI members: the PTI founder, Barrister Gohar, opposition leader Omar Ayub, and Raof Hasan. The FIA team will determine whether the video was tweeted by the PTI founder himself or anyone else with his consent.

# PM condemns Israel's brutality

## — calls for global intervention to stop Palestinians' bloodshed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemned the recent Israeli attacks on unarmed Palestinians in Rafah area of Gaza, urging the international community to intervene to get stopped the worst barbaric inhuman acts.

"I, on behalf of the government and the people of Pakistan, demand that the international community should play its due role to ensure that the people of Palestine and Indian Occupied Kashmir are granted their rightful freedoms and basic human rights," the prime minister said in a televised address.

He said due to the unprovoked and worst bombardment by the Israeli forces across Gaza, including Rafah, over 36,000 Palestinians, including thousands of children, had been martyred so far. "After the lapse of eight months, Israel's thirst for blood is still unquenched as it is now bombarding the cramped camps of Palestinians displaced from across Gaza in Rafah (bordering Egypt)," he added.

The prime minister said Israel had showed blatant disregard for international law, without caring for the International Court of Justice's ruling and the United Nations Security Council's resolutions. Not a single global power could prevail on Israel to get stopped bloodshed of Palestinians, he regretted. PM Shehbaz said, "I am thankful to the Muslim countries that have raised voices at different interna-

## KP Governor meets PM, Acting President

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday. The issues confronting KP and the political situation of the country came under discussion at a meeting between Kundi and the prime minister. KP governor praised PM Shehbaz for introducing pro-investment policies due to which a growing number of foreigners were investing money in the country. Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema and Adviser to the PM on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah were also present on the occasion. Meanwhile, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi called on Acting President Yousuf Raza Gilani in Islamabad today and felicitated him on the success of his son Ali Qasim Gilani in the recent by-election. The Governor expressed good wishes for the Acting President and his son.

tional forums including the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the UN Security Council against the Israeli aggression."

The Saudi Crown Prince, and the rulers of the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait and other countries were persistently voicing their support for the hapless Palestinians, he added. The prime minister also expressed gratitude to the European countries including Spain, Norway and Ireland for recognizing the State of Palestine in the wake of Israel's atrocious military aggression.

Their bold and principled decision would hopefully encourage other countries to follow suit in recognizing the statehood of Palestine, he added. PM Shehbaz Sharif prayed to Allah Almighty to bring an end to the brutal oppression of the Palestinian people and bless them with an independent State of

Palestine where they could live in a free atmosphere. He reiterated Pakistan's resolve to continue extending moral, political and diplomatic support to the Palestinian people till the establishment of the independent Palestine state.

**MQM delegation calls on PM:** A Pakistan Qaumi Movement (MQM) delegation led by Minister for Education and Professional Training Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and discussed with him matters pertaining to the Federal Budget 2024-25.

The MQM delegation presented their proposals regarding the budget to the prime minister. PM Shehbaz appreciated the party's input for the budget. He acknowledged the significance of Karachi - the country's largest city and economic hub, and assured that the government was

(Continued on Back Page)

# NAB amend hearing: Imran shares ordeal with SC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday resumed hearing on the National Accountability (NAB) Ordinance 1999 amendment case. Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa heads the five-member bench which also includes Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi.

Imran Khan, the incarcerated founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), joined the proceedings via video link from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail. His request seeking personal appearance in the case is pending with the apex court. The former prime minister finally got an opportunity to interact with Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa and informed him about difficulties he had been facing in seeking legal assistance about the case. He said he was kept in solitary confinement and had no facility to prepare himself for the case.

The court had, during the previous hearing on May 17, issued orders for presenting the PTI founder through video link on the next hearing scheduled for

May 30. During the previous hearing, the PTI founder did not get an opportunity to advance arguments. Like the hearing of May 17, Thursday's hearing was not live streamed either. The court adjourned the case (a date will be announced later). During the previous hearing, CJP Isa remarked that if ordinances were to be introduced, then parliament should be dissolved.

"Through ordinances, the will of one person is imposed on the entire nation. Isn't this against democracy? Shouldn't the president of the country provide detailed justifications along with the ordinances," he stated. At the outset of the proceedings, senior lawyer Khawaja Haris appeared before the court, informing that he would assist with the matter. Advancing his arguments, federal government's lawyer Makhdoom Ali Khan told the bench that the NAB amendment case was sub judice before the Islamabad High Court.

CJP Isa inquired how this case became admissible in the Supreme Court while being under hearing in the high court. CJP Isa remarked that it was quite astonishing that the NAB

amendments case went on for 53 hearings. Continuing his arguments, lawyer Makhdoom Ali Khan mentioned that in the follow up to 2022 ordinance, amendments were made in 2023, but the court struck down the 2022 amendments in its decision.

At this, the chief justice remarked, "So, you're raising technical objections," to which lawyer Makhdoom Ali responded, "These technical objections also exist." Justice Isa stated that "We will ask the PTI founder about these questions. Please take note of these points, PTI founder." While making this remark, the chief justice smiled subtly, and upon seeing this, the PTI founder also smiled covering his face with his hand.

Lawyer Makhdoom Ali Khan stated that the PTI founder could have changed the law during his stint as the prime minister, but instead, ordinances were introduced. "The matter of NAB amendments was a parliamentary dispute which was brought to the Supreme Court through collusion. This was a national issue which was brought to the Supreme Court," the lawyer went on to say.





LAHORE: Labourers enjoying nap under the shade of trees in a local park during hot weather in Provincial Capital. —APP Photo

# Universities to function as technology and knowledge incubators: CM Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah stated that universities should function as "technology and knowledge incubators," where innovative ideas are discussed, and future leaders are nurtured.

This he said while speaking at the 4th Convocation of the DHA Suffa University at DHA Golf & Country Club on Thursday evening.

DHA Suffa University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saeed Minhas, Chairman HEC Sindh Dr Tariq Rafi, Dr Abdul Bari and others also spoke on the accession.

He said that it was satisfying for him to see DHA Suffa University come a long way since it started in the year 2012. Undoubtedly, the University has taken rapid strides in a very short period and continues to progress at an unrelenting pace.

Murad Shah congratulated the University's Vice Chancellor, senior management, and worthy faculty members for their efforts in shaping the futures of young graduates.

Your vision has been a beacon of guidance and has infused determination among students, he said and

added that DHA Suffa was well on its way to becoming a globally recognized institution for higher education and research, which would extend the frontiers of knowledge and contribute significantly to nation-building.

Murad Shah said that he appreciated DHA Karachi's role in providing quality education from Playgroup to Postgraduate level, including PhDs in Engineering, Computer and Management Sciences. "DHA Karachi has always given due emphasis to the uplift of quality education and made it accessible to the Pakistani youth. Undoubtedly, the progress and economic prosperity of any nation rests in the hands of its academia," he said.

Universities are meant to serve as 'Technology' and 'Knowledge Incubators', where innovative ideas are debated, and future minds are shaped to lead the nation, the CM said and added it was a matter of immense pride for him to see DHA Karachi mindful of this reality and its academic flagship. DHA Suffa University, is focusing on "Be the Job Providers Instead of Job Seekers",

# Peshawar Business School has merged with Institute of Professional Studies

**E.P Report**

PESHAWAR: There is good news for every student in PBS and IPS. This is to notify all teachers, students, and staff members that the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) and the Peshawar Business School (PBS) have merged, and going forward, both organisations will work collaboratively. Additionally, from tomorrow at IPS, PBS students will attend classes with their concerned teachers. The PBS staff will carry out their responsibilities from the IPS. As a result, starting today, Alhamdulillah all PBS students have transferred to IPS successfully, and both IPS and PBS will operate from IPS's premises.

# Senator Sherry calls for urgent Climate Action at conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday emphasized the need for immediate and genuine action to address climate change.

She was speaking as the chief guest at the "Road to Climate Resilient Pakistan: Reducing Our Carbon Footprint" conference, hosted by Islamic Relief Pakistan and the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF).

Sherry Rehman said, "Climate is one conversation that must connect from local to global because climate knows no barriers when it changes. It can impact people and communities anywhere in the world. We have just

seen a cyclone hit Bangladesh, and floods in Brazil and Afghanistan. Pakistan, too, is in the middle of a debilitating, scorching heatwave.

She cited that Mohenjo Daro was recorded as the planet's hottest place with 53 degrees centigrade, reminding the world that such temperatures don't support human life.

Speaking about Pakistan's transition to renewable energy, Sherry remarked, "Pakistan's transition from fossil fuels is quite doable. We have a large amount of solar capacity and a huge amount of wind capacity, particularly all the way through the Sindh coastal areas. Part of the problem

**بیان حلقہ بشکلی فہرست و اثارشان**

محکمہ الیاس ولد خان، دلی سندھ پولیس، ڈاک خانہ یونیورسٹی، ایجنسی پشاور کاہوں۔ درذیت چانچی جس دوش  
حاس فہرست و اثارشان کے مطابق ان کا ہو کر سن عافی کی والدہ حنفی بی بی خیر خان صاحبہ خان دلی کی وفات صومر  
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# Rs9.66bn allocated for tourism industry in new KP budget: Chanzeb

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Zahid Chanzeb, Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture and Archeology, has revealed that in the provincial budget of the new financial year, a huge chunk of Rs. 9.66 billion has been allocated for promotion of tourism industry in the province and this amount is 25 % more than the past few years.

This fact is proof of the interest of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur in the development of tourism according to the vision of the founder PTI Imran Khan, he added. During an informal conversation with some media representatives in Peshawar, he

clarified that tourism is the only sector in which the more investment there is, the many more revenue incurs of it and foreign exchange reserves are increased there by.

He said that in the previous four to five years, Pakistan has earned almost 20 billion dollars of foreign exchange annually in the tourism sector alone, which is four percent of the overall national growth rate (GDP), while during the last days of Eid, 2 to 3 million tourists visited the serene areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that brought the government an income of up to four billion rupees.

Therefore, he asserted that he gives the clear

assurance to the Chief Minister and the people of the province that firstly, the transparent and fair use of this Rs. 9.66 billion allocated amount for the tourism industry in the provincial budget will be ensured while double of triple income would be accrued of it as compared to the amounts spent from other schemes to be completed. He said the province will have many times more financial and economic benefits of promoting tourism in the province.

Also, tourism services are sure to have a positive impact on the living conditions of locals as well, he maintained. Zahid Chanzeb said that a total of Rs 8382.873 million

have been allocated for 60 tourism projects in the new budget, including Rs 7945.865 million for 42 ongoing schemes while Rs 437.008 million for 18 new schemes have been set aside to give boost to this cash earning industry in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that our provincial government believed in continuity of development and policy, therefore more attention is being given to the completion of ongoing schemes, while the new projects consisted of many mega schemes, which include the development of new tourist spots and increase in facilities for tourists in addition to the improvement of road infrastructure, he concluded.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry presiding over a meeting regarding electricity load management in the province.

## Khyber Pakhtunkhwa U-23 Games Khushal Riaz-led Peshawar lifts Squash Championship trophy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Directorate General of Sports, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has organised the Under-23 Games on provincial level both for men and women. Teams from Peshawar, Hazara, Swat, Kohat, Mardan, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan regions participated in various games.

The under 23 Squash matches were held at Hayatabad Squash Complex Peshawar. A team of coaches of Directorate General of Sports comprising of Mumawar Zaman, Tahir Iqbal, and Muhammad Adil Faqir supervised the trials for the selection of a five member Squash squad of Peshawar region. Khushal Riaz Khan, Fawad Hussain, Fahad Sharif, Jawad Ali Khan, and Muhammad Azhan Khalil were selected to represent Peshawar While Senior Squash Coach of Directorate General of Sports Tahit Iqbal was appointed as coach of Peshawar Region team.

The team of Peshawar region was invincible in



these squash competitions from the very start as qualified for the final by winning their first match against the Mardan region and the second round match against Kohat region. In the final, Peshawar faced Hazara Region, in the final, Khushal Riaz Khan of Peshawar Region defeated Wajihullah of Hazara and Azan Khalil of Peshawar defeated

Shamalan Gul and thus Peshawar Region won the Squash Championship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Under-23 Games.

The Peshawar region team was given a cash prize of one lakh rupees along with the winner's trophy.

On this occasion, Khushal Riaz Khan, the captain of the winning team of Peshawar region, while talking to the

media, praised the role of Directorate General of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Squash Association, District Sports Officer Ms Gul Rukh and coaches for the promotion of Squash in the province. He said that the squash players will return Pakistan's lost glory in the world of squash with more hard work and dedication.

## PHC adjourns hearing against appointment of Pro VC AWKUM

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Waqar Ahmad adjourned the hearing on petition against appointment of Pro Vice Chancellor of Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan (AWKUM) till 12th June 12 as well as allowed the university to become a party in the case, on Thursday.

During the hearing, the petitioner named Dr. Zahoor's counsel, Barrister Saqib Raza argued that according to

the law, the most senior professor should be appointed as the Pro Vice Chancellor, and there are existing rules in this regard.

However, the summary sent to the Chancellor (Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) ignored Dr. Zahoor, who is a senior professor, and recommended the appointment of a professor who stands at 18th number on the seniority list.

AWKUM lawyer Mansoor Tariq argued that the university was not made a party to the case, despite being affected by the petition. The

court accepted the university's request to become a party to the case.

The university's counsel also stated that the current Pro Vice Chancellor was appointed on a temporary basis due to staff gaps and redressal of administrative issues.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Waqar Ahmad adjourned further hearing till 12th June while observed that the petitioner may file Contempt of Court plea if he considers that court's orders are violated in this regard.

## CM busy in political point scoring: PPP leader

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader and Former Councilor Gulberg Khalid Khan Yousafzai has expressed his disappointment over the continuous suspension of Sui Gas supply for the past few months. He has criticized Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and his cabinet members for not addressing the issue and instead, indulging in political point-scoring.

In a press statement,

Khalid Khan Yousafzai said that the Sui Gas supply has been completely suspended in most areas of Peshawar, including Gulberg, since last December, causing severe hardships for the consumers.

He added that the people were expecting the newly elected government to resolve the issue according to their demands, but unfortunately, the Chief Minister and his cabinet members have started repeating the same mis-

takes made by their predecessors, Pervaz Khattak and Mahmood Khan, from 2013 to 2023.

PPP worker also mentioned that apart from the Sui Gas suspension, prolonged power outages and low voltage are also causing problems for the citizens of Peshawar. He urged Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur to take immediate action in this regard and direct the relevant authorities to ensure uninterrupted Sui Gas and electricity facilities without any delay.

## Warrant issued for human trafficker

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Judicial Magistrate Peshawar issued arrest warrant for arrest of human trafficker, on Thursday.

According to prosecution, Muhammad Waqar a resident of Gambat Mohalla, Buki Khel, Mardan had taken lakhs of rupees from the complainant Muhammad Ayaz resident of Charsadda, for provision of Saudi Arabian visa.

The complainant filed a case against Muhammad Waqar at the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Mardan police station. After the case was registered, legal action was initiated against the accused.

FIA Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Mardan issued an arrest warrant against the accused under section 204 and directed the relevant officers to arrest him as per Judicial Magistrate's orders.

It is worth noting that after the case was registered, the local court has also started the process of declaring the accused, Muhammad Waqar, a proclaimed offender.

## ANP meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): The constitutional committee of Awami National Party here Thursday met at Bacha Khan Markaz to discuss various proposals to amend party constitution.

## Pakistan Air Force: Guardians of the skies in the face of adversity



Izmi Herlani

AS I returned to my hometown, the picturesque forests of Sakesar welcomed me with a sight that stirred both awe and concern - a massive fire raging through the lush greenery that had once defined this serene landscape. The tranquility of the mountains was shattered by the fierce flames, threatening to engulf everything in their path. However, amidst this chaos, a beacon of hope emerged in the form of Pakistan Air Force helicopters soaring through

the skies, their rotors slicing through the smoke-filled air as they embarked on a mission of valor and determination.

The legacy of the PAF as the first responder in times of national crisis shone brightly as the MI-17 and Augusta-139 helicopters took to the skies, their blades cutting through the turbulent winds of Sakesar's challenging terrain. Day and night, these aerial sentinels tirelessly carried out firefighting missions, their pilots displaying unwavering dedication and professionalism in the face of adversity.

The roar of their engines echoed through the mountains, a symphony of courage and resilience that resonated with all who witnessed their valiant efforts. Amidst the chaos and destruction, the PAF's Unmanned Aerial Vehicles also played a crucial role in the firefighting operation, their keen eyes spotting and monitoring the fire with surgical precision.

With their assistance, the firefighting efforts were guided with unparalleled accuracy, ensuring that every drop of water and every strategic maneuver was executed with meticulous care and efficiency.

The collaboration between the PAF and the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) further underscored the unity and strength of purpose in the face of adversity. Together, they stood as a formidable force against the ravaging flames, their coordinated efforts a testament to the power of unity in times of crisis. As the flames threatened to consume the very heart of Sakesar, PAF rose to the occasion, their helicopters weaving through the smoke-filled skies like guardian angels, their mission clear - to protect and preserve the invaluable national assets that lay in the path of destruction. With unwavering resolve and unparalleled skill, the

PAF pilots maneuvered through the treacherous terrain, their actions a testament to the ethos of the PAF - "Second to None".

In the aftermath of the firefighting operation, as the smoke cleared and the embers smoldered, a sense of gratitude and admiration filled the hearts of all who witnessed the PAF's heroic efforts. The forests of Sakesar, once engulfed in flames, now stand as a symbol of resilience and hope, a testament to the unwavering spirit of the Pakistani people and the indomitable courage of the PAF.

As I looked up at the clear skies, now free from the pall of smoke that had once darkened them, I couldn't help but feel a sense of pride and gratitude towards the Pakistan Air Force. In the face of adversity, they had emerged as true guardians of the skies, their legacy of service and sacrifice shining brightly in the hearts of all who had witnessed their heroic deeds.



PESHAWAR: A person washing his rickshaw in a local stream at Charsadda Road. — APP photo

## Chemotherapy for breast soon to be included in health card: Qasim

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important function on breast cancer services was organized at Khyber Teaching Hospital in which Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah and MNA Arbab Sher Ali attended as special guests.

Chairman Board of Governor Dr. Umar Ayub Khan, MD Prof. Dr. Mohammad Ayaz Khan, Chairman General Surgery Prof. Dr. Mah Munir Khan, Assistant Prof. Dr. Irum Sabir and other faculty members participated in the management of Khyber Teaching Hospital.

In the event, Assistant Professor of Cancer Unit, Dr. Irum Sabir, presented a comprehensive report on the treatment of cancer patients, which highlighted the data of

breast cancer patients so far and the problems faced.

She said that in the year 2022, 6206, year 2023, 8733 and 3989 breast cancer patients were treated in 2024. She added that breast care services at Khyber Teaching Hospital are exceptional, and we are very proud of our achievements since 2019.

Our dedicated team, led by Prof. Dr. Mah Munir Khan, Dr. Irum Sabir, Asst. Assistant Professor Dr. Muhammad Tariq, Assistant Professor Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad Shah, Professor Dr. Hina Gul, Dr. Mahmood Akhtar Khattak, and Dr. Kulsoom Nawab are highly skilled healthcare professionals.

Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah said in his speech that cancer is a serious health problem that we have to fight together. Unfortunately, one in eight

women are at risk of developing cancer. We all have to work together to meet this challenge and more improvements are needed.

"I am happy to announce that chemotherapy will soon be included in the health card program to facilitate access to cancer treatment," he added. And more mammogram machines will also be provided to the hospital.

The health minister said that our effort is to improve the efficiency of the health sector by adopting modern technology.

Gamma Knife will be introduced soon in Khyber Teaching Hospital and the process of setting up cath lab will be expedited.

During the ceremony, Chairman BOG Dr. Umar Ayub Khan highlighted the hospital's recent achievements, including the estab-



lishment of 80 modular beds and state-of-the-art tables for orthopedic surgeries.

He expressed pride in the successful discussion of 25-

30 cases of breast sarcoma in each meeting and appreciated the excellent efforts of Prof. Mah Munir and her team.

The Chairperson of the

Department of General Surgery, Prof. Dr. Mah Munir took the opportunity to highlight the outstanding achievements of the Breast Care Unit.

She said that it is noteworthy that the unit has conducted the busiest and most extensive breast cancer awareness campaign in October every year.

Additionally, the unit is proud to have established a one-stop breast care clinic in the province and to be recognized for the FCPS in Breast Surgery, a distinction that ranks it fourth in the country.

In the ceremony, Medical Director Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Khan highlighted the unique distinction of Khyber Teaching Hospital and said that it is the only hospital that offers the facilities of sub-specialty departments and on behalf of the hospital administration, Dr. Irum Sabir and her emphasized the unwavering support provided to the team and assured to continue this support in the future as well.





## In brief

### 3 miners belong to Shangla killed

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: A coal miner belong to Shangla district has been killed mine collapse at Dukki area of Balochistan, on Thursday. The miner identified as Muhammad Hasib who lost his life in a mine collapse. This is the third such incident in two days in which three miners from Shangla lost their lives. Meanwhile, two motorcycle riders named Ayub Khan and Aman Ali were shot dead by unknown individuals at late night while returning home from their fields after harvesting wheat. Aman Ali had recently gotten married just 13 days ago. The incident has caused widespread mourning in the area. Police registered First Information Report and started search operation, but so far, no progress has been made in to arrest the murderers.

### Non-custom paid items seized

F.P. Report

KARAK: Police recovered of non-customs paid items worth lakhs during crackdown against smuggled items under the government policy. As a result, on the instructions of District Police Officer, SHO city police station along with police force, while checking at old toll plaza during the blockade, seized non-custom items worth lakhs from a passenger vehicle. The recovered goods include twenty-four bags of various plastic shoppers and one cotton of precious perfumes and perfumes. The city police referred the recovered non-customs paid goods to the customs authorities after completing legal proceedings.

### APJEA rejects 10% increase

F.P. Report

BUNER: All Pakistan Judicial Employees Association (APJEA) Buner chapter protested at district court against the 10% increase in salaries and pensions of the employees in the Budget 2024-25 by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government. APJEA president Buner Ahmed Gul termed the 10 percent increase in salaries as compared unprecedented inflation as a heartless and cruel decision of the government. He said that in these circumstances, this increase is like cumin in the camel's mouth. APJEA out rightly rejected the meager increase and demands an increase in salaries and pension commensurate with inflation. The participants were carried placards with slogans against the budget and in favor of their demands. The participants also raised slogans against the government and its recently presented budget.

### APCA stages protest

F.P. Report

LARKANA: All Pakistan Clerk Association (APCA) demanded 200% increase in salaries as well as increased medical allowance by 15000 and house rent. The confusion should be eliminated by giving time scale to the employees, giving group insurance and making the salaries of local government employees online. On the spot, Rafiq Ahmad Jatoi, Muhammad Farooq Jalbani, who showed a strong conscience, Muhammad Bakhsh Kanbar, according to the details, the clerks and employees of different units of Apka district Larkana, wearing black bands on their arms and holding black flags, gathered together to protest peacefully, which took out a peaceful protest rally on different roads in the city.

## DPO liberates 10 police stations from landlords

Saqib Mushtaq

LODHAN: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) liberated ten police stations of Lodhran district from local landlords. SSP Kamran Mumtaz, after assuming charge as the DPO first visited all the police stations, checked the records and inquired about the problems of the accused detained in the police stations.

Located in the southern part of Pakistan's largest province, Punjab, Lodhran district is of great political and business importance because Pakistan's well-known business tycoon and the axis of national politics, Jahangir Khan Tareen, also belongs to this district.

According to the new census, the population of Lodhran district is around 2.2 million and seeks refuge from the police and local landlords and politicians use the administrative powers of the DPO to appoint corrupt and incompetent SHO's of their choice. This is where injustice originates.

Local residents including representatives of all communities of thought are facing false cases initiated by police, serious accused are being released from the courts due to weak prosecution, robbery, theft, extortion, drug selling, open Iranian petrol are available everywhere for sale, criminal activities of corrupt SHO's, sex and rape of female constables in police stations, impossibility of registering cases without bribery, high recovery of stolen goods and under-reporting of recovery.



Investigation officers are not available in police stations, thousands of challans are going uncompleted, people are facing unnecessary legal battles, SHO's are more interested in property business than providing justice, CCTV of police stations, according to the footage, Lodhran police are patronizing usurers and tout mafias.

The most dangerous dictator is that every police station employee from constable to SHO is a special informer of local landlords and politicians who are district police officers. Considering every movement as their duty, they are passing it on.

Now this whole situation is faced by the newly appointed District Police Officer SSP Kamran Mumtaz, who on the basis of his ability, has earlier ensured the timely delivery of justice and the rule of law in other districts as well and the people of Lodhran are also waiting for justice.

The Civil Society of Lodhran District, local Traders, Lawyers and Media are standing with SSP Kamran Mumtaz to uphold the rule of law and deliver timely justice so

that the oppressors can be supported by blocking the path of the oppressors. Around 14,000 cases are registered in ten police stations of Lodhran district every year, while the district-wide literacy rate is declining.

The local politics is completely dependent on the police station politics and for speaking against the local landlords and capitalists, the police have been making sure to register false cases to indoctrinate them into servitude so as to get kudos from their political masters.

DPO is considered as one of the most capable, honest and dutiful officers of the Police Service of Pakistan PSP. He is a senior grade 19 officer and Lodhran district has got grade 19 DPO after almost nine years. Earlier Gohar Mushtaq Bhutta has improved the reputation of Lodhran police with his professional skills from 2013 to 2015. However, in the intervening nine years, competent and honest officers of the Police Service of Pakistan have been appointed, whose services are as clear as day, but they were SPs of grade 18.

## MNA to protest against dropping uplift projects

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Member National Assembly Muhammad Bashir Khan announced to hold protests against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for its move to drop the University of Dir and other projects in its annual development programme for this year.

Talking to local journalists at Timergara the MNA said the previous provincial government led by Mahmood Khan had imposed section 4 on 216 kanal of land for the establishment of the Dir University. He said the incumbent government had dropped the project in its budget. He said the KP government had also shelved the Panjkora Lift Right bank canal project worth Rs 8 billion.

The lawmaker admitted that the Timergara Gravity Scheme for water supply, Timergara Sports' Complex, Girls' Degree College Talash and several other projects had also been dropped by the government. He said the KP government had failed to complete the Kalpani Talash bypass road and Timergara Medical College projects despite the passage of eight years. He demanded the KP government to include all the previous development

projects of Lower Dir in its ADP. He threatened to bring workers onto the roads if the government did not accept the demand.

**LG members demanded protection from stray dogs:** Villagers led by local village council chairman Sheena in Samarbagh tehsil Wahidullah Mishwani complained that stray dogs have made life of local residents especially children and students miserable while the tehsil municipal administration was doing nothing to rid the people of it.

Talking to journalists at Samarbagh they said that the number of stray and mad dogs in the area was increasing with the passage of time. "So far 15 children have been bitten by stray dogs in the area", Wahidullah Mishwani said, adding that local hospitals were short of the anti-rabies vaccines (ARV) causing difficulty to the affected people.

The VC chairman said that ARV was available only at the district headquarters hospital Timergara which was situated far away from the area. He demanded of the Samarbagh assistant commissioner, tehsil chairman Saeed Ahmad, MNA Bashir Khan, MPA Ubaidur Rehman and tehsil municipal officer to take notice of the matter and resolve it within a week. The villagers

threatened to block the main Munda Samarbagh road if the authorities failed to overcome the issue.

**DC visits public library on students' complaints:** Taking notice of the students' complaint, deputy commissioner Wasil Khan along with district youth officer Shehzad Tariq and tehsil municipal officer Qadeer Naseer visited the Timergara Public Library. The DC inspected various sections of the library and gathered information from the students about the available facilities and problems.

The Assistant Director of the library Ihtishamul Haq briefed the visiting team. The Deputy Commissioner directed the electricians to repair all the damaged fans within a couple of days. He said the administration would pay all the expenses. He also directed the TMO to repair the water cooler and also install water filtration equipment.

He asked the TMO to ensure a separate connection of drinking water for the library. The DC said that a letter regarding the lower voltage of electricity would be sent to the Peshawar Electric Supply Company for necessary action. The students thanked the Deputy Commissioner for taking immediate action on the complaints.

## Religious scholar killed in firing

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A prominent religious scholar Sheikh Inamullah Madani was killed while his elder brother Sheikh Abdul Aziz aka Qari Bahadar was critically injured when unknown attackers opened indiscriminate fire on them at Barghanda area of Maidan here on Thursday morning, residents and police said. They said that both the clerics were going to offer the Fajr prayer in a nearby mosque when the incident occurred.

Locals shifted them in injured condition to the DHQ hospital Timergara but Sheikh Inam succumbed to injuries and died on the way. The clerics belonged to the Ahl-Hadiths faction. The attackers escaped from the scene. The Lal Qila police registered a case and started investigations. According to locals the victims had no enmity with anyone. They told this scribe that they had migrated to the area from Dir Kohistan several years ago. Sheikh Inam has also served at the University of Medina KSA for some time.

Meanwhile a youth identified as Tafseerullah 22 son of Umar Wahid, resident of Balokar, was shot dead by unknown person at Barawal in Upper Dir. The deceased had stayed at the house of Rokhan son of Khalilur Rehman. The victim was shot dead near the house of his host. The body was shifted to the Category D hospital Barawal. The Barawl police registered a case and started further investigations.

**Stray dogs:** Villagers led by local village council chairman Sheena in Samarbagh tehsil Wahidullah Mishwani complained that stray dogs have made life of local residents especially children and students miserable while the tehsil municipal administration was doing nothing to rid the people of it. Talking to journalists at Samarbagh they said that the number of stray and mad dogs in the area was increasing with the passage of time.

"So far 15 children have been bitten by stray dogs in the area", Wahidullah Mishwani said, adding that local hospitals were short of the anti-rabies vaccines (ARV) causing difficulty to the affected people. The VC chairman said that ARV was available only at the district headquarters hospital Timergara which was situated far away from the area.

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**Library visit:** Taking notice of the students' complaint, deputy commissioner Wasil Khan along with district youth officer Shehzad Tariq and tehsil municipal officer Qadeer Naseer visited the Timergara Public Library here the other day.

## VC meets HEC chief for redressal of issues at KKKU, KUST

F.P. Report

KARAK: In a significant development for Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKU) Karak and Kohat University of Science & Technology Kohat (KUST), Prof Dr Muhammad Naseer Ud Din, Vice Chancellor of the universities held a pivotal meeting with Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, on Thursday.

The focus of the meeting was to address the financial challenges faced by the universities and explore avenues for extended support. Accompanied by Treasurers Mr. Zafar and Hafiz Ismail Khan and other officials, Prof Dr Muhammad Naseer Ud Din engaged in constructive dialogue with Chairman HEC, discussing the financial matters that impede the university's progress.

The outcome of the



meeting was highly promising, as Chairman HEC Dr Mukhtar Ahmad expressed his principled agreement to provide maximum support to KUST and Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak. This commitment marks a significant milestone in the universities' journey towards academic excellence and sustainable growth.

Expressing his satisfaction in the leadership of Chairman HEC, Prof Dr Muhammad Naseer Ud Din conveyed his optimism for the universities' future. He

anticipated a comprehensive financial backing from HEC Islamabad.

He extended gratitude to the Chairman HEC for his favourable consideration of the universities' concerns, highlighting his commitment to address challenges faced by KUST & Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak. The assurance of financial support from HEC Islamabad will open new avenues for Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak and KUST empowering these to pursue their academic progress.

## Registration of FIRs against power thieves ordered

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Deputy Commissioner ordered to deal with iron hands those who take electricity connection from government educational institutions and issued instructions to the concerned authorities that in case of taking electricity connection from schools a case should be registered against the concerned headmaster and school watchman.

He was addressing the meeting of Education Monitoring Authority chaired by him. District Monitoring Officer Education and officers of Education Department participated in the meeting. The District Monitoring Officer gave a briefing on the performance of the Education Department. Deputy Commissioner Mardan made a detailed review of the performance of the officers of the education department and issued necessary instructions to the DEO male and female

to improve the provision of facilities in schools.

Deputy Commissioner Fayaz Khan Sherpao gave instructions to the officers of the education department to prepare recommendations for the implementation of the forced retirement policy of officials who are negligent in their official duties. In this regard, implementation of zero tolerance policy will be ensured in the light of the orders of the provincial government.

**SP briefs media on operations:** Superintendent of Police Investigation said that false claims are a tragedy which is the biggest obstacle in achieving justice. He was giving a media briefing in his office. SP Investigation said to be responsible and careful while filing the report as the first step in every case is proper registration of FIR.

He said that last year 96 cases of murder and 76 cases of attempted murder were registered in which 70

percent of the cases were false claims. He said that the trend of false claims has to be remedied as the police keep supporting the FIR during the investigation and the accused get acquitted by taking advantage of the false claims.

SP Investigation Arshad Khan said that registering a false case is also a crime to prevent this practice special training will be given to the investigative staff and police station managers.

Cooperate with and play your part in bringing the real accused/accused to justice and also cooperate with the police in securing the martyrdom at the crime scene.

On the one hand, this will reduce the crime rate and on the other hand, by punishing the real accused/accused the victim will be able to get justice. On the basis of lack of evidence the courts confirm their guarantees and the whole case goes in favor of the opponents, and the victim does not get justice.

## Fruit market owners blame admn for failure in setup of Agri Park

F.P. Report

WANA: The owners of Wana Fruit Market accused the administration and high officials for negligence and failure to implement the Wana Agri Park project, which was launched four years ago with a substantial investment of Rs 4 billion.

In separate statements issued by Haji Usman and Haji Lal Muhammad, representatives of the two groups of fruit market owners, condemned the district administration and high officials for the park's failure. They alleged that the government had signed a written agreement with the market owners three years ago, promis-

ing to transfer all fruit markets to the Wana Agri Park, but the administration failed to honor its commitment.

Haji Usman stated that the administration's breach of agreement had resulted in significant losses for the market owners, and despite the passage of four years, no concrete steps had been taken to implement the project. Haji Lal Muhammad, representing the opposing group, accused the current government of discriminatory treatment towards the fruit market owners. He claimed that the government's policies had caused substantial losses to the market owners over the past four

years and held the administration responsible for the failure of the Wana Agri Park.

Both groups have demanded immediate government action to transfer all fruit markets to the Wana Agri Park and implement the project as agreed. They warned that they would not permit the park to operate until all markets are transferred.

Meanwhile, the residents of Lower Waziristan have demanded the District Police Officer (DPO) to take immediate action against the growing menace of tinted windows on vehicles in the district.

## Mangos-a best source of nutrition to fight heatstroke highly vulnerable to climate change

MARDAN (APP): Ali Hazrat, a 45-year-old progressive mangoes grower was extremely worried after dropping of production of the most nutritious fruit useful in fight against heatstroke, has been declared highly vulnerable to climate change by the experts.

Plucking mangoes from his 10 acres orchards at Lund Khwar here, Ali Hazrat has repeatedly asked the co-labourers and sons to hurry up to complete the placed orders before the sunset. The demands of mangoes were soared in local markets of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to its numerous qualities and usefulness in fight against heatstroke in hot weather conditions.

A graduate of Agriculture University Peshawar, Ali Hazrat said that mango flowering was very sensitive to high temperature mostly caused by the climate change and global warming, which are adversely affecting its production in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "If mango flowering is prevented by temperature stress, mango trees cannot produce fruits, resultantly of substantial economic loss to its farmers."

He said that reduction in mango production had been wit-

nessed for a third consecutive year due to flooding, torrential rains and rise of mercury in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As result, the prices of "King of Fruits" has been increased this year compare to 2023 and demanded for interest free loans to mango growers and introduction of climate change adoptable varieties to bolster mangoes exports.

Professor Dr Zilakat Malik, former Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar said that climate change has adversely affected the mango production in Pakistan in recent years and pro mangoes policies and climate change adoptable varieties were need of the hours for which agriculture research institutions should take a lead role. He said a target of 100,000 metric tons of mango exports has been set for this year against 125,000 metric tons last year by All Pakistan Fruits and Vegetables Associations with exports expected to start from next month with a focus on GULF, China, America, Türkiye, Japan, Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

He said Pakistan produces around 1.8 million metric tons of mangoes per year of which 70

percent are collected from Punjab province, 29 percent in Sindh and about one percent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Dr Malik claimed that the production of mango in Punjab was ranged about 35-40 percent, while in Sindh about 20 percent, fearing that the total production is likely to be reduced by 0.6 million metric tons, this year due to climate change.

Chausa, Sindhri, Langra, Dasehri, Anwar Ratool, Saroli, Samar Bahisht, Toota Pari, Fajri, Neelum, Alphanso, Almas, Sanwal, Surkha and Sunera mangos produced in Sindh and Punjab were always a preferred choice of buyers owing to its excellent nutrition value, mineral, vitamins and sweetness. Chausa is one of the world's top mango variety because of low in calories and high in fibre besides sufficient number of carbonydrates, calcium, iron and proteins, which was imperative for physical and mental growth of a person.

Being the second largest fruit crop of Pakistan, mangos were produced in abundance in Mirpur Khas, Thatta, Hyderabad, Thata, Bahawalpur, Multan, Muzafarghar, Rahimyar Khan, Peshawar, Mardan, DI Khan from

where it was being exported to the local and international markets. He said that Pakistan could earn foreign exchange of over \$90 million, adding that the sector, including mango processing, packaging and warehousing, was an over Rs100 billion industry that provided employment to millions of people.

Besides boosting immune and digestive system of people especially senior citizens and children during summer, the doctors have advised people to include mangos in their diet to avoid heatstroke during summer. Dr Riaz Khan, senior medical and children specialist Govt Hospital Pabbi Nowshera, told APP that mango was one of best source in fruits to protect people's from severe heatstroke and improve their immune and digestion system.

"Once mango's juice is mixed with water and sugar is immensely helpful to cool down body's temperature and prevent negative effects on digestive system primarily from overheating especially in warmed areas," he said. While terming mangos extremely important for all those people who get exhausted while working in hot weather especially police-

men and labourers, he advised them to consume mangos in sufficient quantity to keep body's temperature cool and make kidneys' healthy.

"Vitamins C and A are found in abundance in mangos, which keeps a person's immune system strong and stable, counter overheating and prevention of breast, leukemia and prostate cancers," he explained. Dr Riaz said mangos were very important for senior citizens and children as it help lower cholesterol level because of high fibre, minerals and vitamins required regularly for people. To keep heart and kidney's strong, he advised people to use mangoes juices during summer besides avoiding beverages and unnecessary exposures to avoid heatstroke.

He said our mangoes are superior in terms of quality, sweetness, aromatic, yellow skinned and softness than other countries and that is why are being liked in world over including Asia, Middle East, Europe and Central Asia. Dr Riaz advised people to make mangos part of their diet and provide it to their children due its enormous benefits for humans.

The experts underscored the

need of making serious efforts at federal and provincial levels to protect mangoes sector from the adverse effects of climate change, particularly through research studies enabling the orchards of mangoes and other fruits to develop sufficient endurance to sustain against tough weather conditions. Research-based solutions must be found urgently to address the issue of climate change, otherwise mango production and exports will likely to drop further in years to come in the country.

The experts called on agricultural research Instituted including Pakistan Agriculture Resesrch Council (PARC) Islamabad to take a lead role on research on mango on priority basis to help farmers deal with the effects of climate change and global warming. To increase the production and export of mangoes, he said that it is imperative to develop new varieties of mangoes that are compatible with the climatic changes. The experts said prevention of diseases and supply of suitable agricultural pesticides are also needed to minimize the effects of climate change on mangoes production in Pakistan.





## Brazil's president withdraws envoy to Israel

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP): Brazil withdrew its ambassador to Israel after months of tensions between the two countries over the war in Gaza, the latest repercussion from a South American nation over Israel's military campaign in the Palestinian territory.

The move was announced in Brazil's official gazette. Israel's foreign ministry said no official message has yet been received from the Brazilian government on the matter. However, following the media reports, the Brazilian chargé d'affaires was summoned to appear at the ministry on Thursday for a meeting. Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has been a frequent critic of Israel's offensive in Gaza, which he compared to the Holocaust earlier this year. That led Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz to summon the Brazilian ambassador, Frederico Meyer, to the national Holocaust museum in Jerusalem for a public reprimand.

At the time, Lula called Meyer home. However, action represented an escalation and a diplomatic downgrade, with the Brazilian Embassy in Israel still in place but without an ambassador in the post. According to an official at Brazil's foreign ministry, removal comes in response to Meyer's humiliation by Israel's top diplomat. The official, who has knowledge of the situation, spoke on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorized to speak publicly. "Any appointment of a new Brazilian ambassador to

Israel will be announced in due course in a press release. For the time being, the Brazilian Embassy in Tel Aviv continues to function under the leadership of the chargé d'affaires," Brazil's foreign ministry said. Meyer has been transferred to Geneva and will join Brazil's permanent mission to the United Nations and other international organizations.

A pro-Israel group in the country, the Israeli Confederation of Brazil, said on social media that it "regretted" the move. "The Brazilian government's unilateral measure moves us away from the Brazilian diplomatic tradition of balance and seeking dialogue and prevents Brazil from exercising its desired role as mediator and protagonist in the Middle East," it said. The war in Gaza, now in its eighth month, began when the Palestinian militant Hamas group burst into southern Israel in a surprise attack on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 civilians and taking around 250 hostage.

Israel's offensive in response to that attack has killed at least 36,096 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between fighters and civilians in its count. Israel says it has killed 15,000 militants. In February, Brazil's Lula said that "what is happening in the Gaza Strip and to the Palestinian people hasn't been seen in any other moment in history. Actually, it did when Hitler decided to kill the Jews." Danielle Ayres, an international relations professor at the Federal University of

Santa Catarina in southern Brazil, said action was "symbolic" and that by stopping short of severing diplomatic ties, Lula indicated he wants to maintain relations while strengthening the Brazilian government's position of "vehemently criticizing the way Israel is responding" to the Oct. 7 attack.

Separately, Brazil's foreign ministry welcomed this week's formal recognition of a Palestinian state by Ireland, Norway and Spain. Brazil recognized a Palestinian state in 2010. Coordinated effort by the three Western European nations added to international pressure on Israel, which condemned the diplomatic move. "By urging all other countries that have not yet done so to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state, Brazil reaffirms its defense of the two-state solution, with an independent and viable state of Palestine living side by side with Israel, in peace and security," the ministry said in a statement.

Israel says its war in Gaza is a defensive action triggered by Hamas' unprecedented assault and rejects any comparisons of its offensive to the Holocaust. Earlier this month, Colombia broke diplomatic relations with Israel. Colombia's President Gustavo Petro had previously suspended purchases of weapons from Israel and had also compared Israel's actions in Gaza to those of Nazi Germany. Also in the region, Bolivia and Belize have also severed diplomatic relations with Israel over the Israel-Hamas war.

## Outrage as Nigeria changes national anthem

ABUJA (AP): Nigeria adopted a new national anthem after lawmakers passed a law that replaced the current one with a version dropped nearly a half-century ago, sparking widespread criticism about how the law was hastily passed without much public input.

President Bola Tinubu's assent to the law comes a day after it was approved by both chambers of Nigeria's National Assembly, which is dominated by the governing party. The federal lawmakers introduced and passed the bill in less than a week, an unusually fast process for important bills that usually take weeks or months to be considered. The "Arise, O Compatriots" anthem being replaced had been in use since 1978, when it was introduced by the military government. The anthem was composed at a time when the country was reeling from a deadly civil war and calls on Nigerians to "serve our fatherland with love and strength" and not to let "the labor of our heroes past (to be) in vain."

The new version that takes immediate effect was first introduced in 1960 when Nigeria gained independence from Britain before it was dropped by the military. Titled "Nigeria We Hail Thee," it was written by Lillian Jean Williams, a British expatriate who was living in Nigeria at the time. The new anthem was played publicly for the first time at a legislative session attended by Tinubu, who marked his one year in office as president.

Many Nigerians, however, took to social media to say they won't be singing the new national anthem, among them Oby Ezekwesili, a former education minister and presidential aspirant who said that the new law shows that the country's political class doesn't care about the public interest. "In a 21st Century Nigeria, the country's political class found a colonial National Anthem that has pejorative words like 'Native Land' and 'Tribes' to be admirable enough to foist on our Citizens without their consent," Ezekwesili posted on X.

Supporters of the new anthem, however, argued it was wrong for the country to have adopted an anthem introduced by the military. "Anthems are ideological recitations that help the people to be more focused. It was a very sad development for the military to have changed the anthem," public affairs analyst Frank Tietie said.

## German court will try a politician

BERLIN (AP): A prominent member of the far-right Alternative for Germany party who was fined for knowingly using a Nazi slogan in a speech will go on trial again next month for allegedly using the slogan a second time, a court said.

The state court in Halle scheduled the proceedings for June 24 and 26 against Björn Höcke, who plans to run for the governor's job in the eastern state of Thuringia in a state election in September. The charge of using symbols of an unconstitutional organization can carry a fine or up to three years in prison. On May 14, the same court convicted Höcke of that charge and imposed a fine of 13,000 euros (\$14,100). The first case centered on a speech in Merseburg in May 2021 in which Höcke used the phrase "Everything for Germany!" Judges agreed with prosecutors' argument that he was aware of its origin as a slogan of the Nazis' SA stormtroopers. Höcke, a former history teacher, has said that he's innocent and argued that it was an "everyday saying." His lawyers are appealing against the verdict. The second count against Höcke was added to his first trial shortly before it opened, but judges then decided to try it separately because his defense team had recently changed.



RAJASTAN: Commuters cover their faces with scarves to protect themselves from the harsh heat in Bikaner.

## Flood-battered farmers in Brazil wade through lost harvests

ELDORADO DO SUL, Brazil (Reuters): After three days of ferocious rains, Edite de Almeida and her husband fled their flooded home in early May and let loose their humble dairy herd on higher ground. Nearby, the waters rose above her head and within a day they were lapping at the roofs of houses.

Record-breaking floods in southern Brazil, the result of weather patterns intensified by climate change, have only started to recede after displacing half a million people in the state of Rio Grande do Sul and killing more than 160. The full extent of the losses is still coming into focus, especially in rural areas where farmers like Almeida and her family produce much of Brazil's rice, wheat and dairy.

Of her 60 egg-laying hens, just eight survived. Their cows have nowhere to graze in the flooded landscape. "I'm not mourning. I'm grateful, because there are many who lost far more than us," Almeida said. "I'm grateful we survived and I mourn for those who lost family." "Now the priority is to save the animals. The calves are still nursing," she added. Her husband Joao Engelmann has made a daily trek by foot, tractor and boat to bring the herd whatever food he can find. He returns sopping wet each night after wading with friends through their farms, helping to haul away perished livestock and tend to the survivors. One neighbor found a

dead hog in his bedroom. All around, fields of rice and vegetables have been washed away. Theirs were among the nearly 6,500 family farms flooded by this month's torrential downpours, according to analysis of satellite data by consultancy Terra Analytics. The floods have rattled agricultural markets as they disrupted soy harvesting, washed out silos, snared farm exports and killed over 400,000 chickens. The government is lining up rice imports to blunt the impact on national inflation figures. The washed out farms and roads around the state capital Porto Alegre have contributed to food and water shortages in the area, adding to the crisis disrupting the lives of more than 2 million people. Parts of the state saw more than 700 mm (28 inches) of rain so far this month, national weather service INMET reported - more than London's average rainfall in a year. As the floodwaters began to retreat in recent weeks, Almeida got a first glimpse of her ravaged home, with the walls stained, appliances wrecked and belongings coated in mud. "I can't think about the future. That belongs to God," Almeida said. "I don't expect to have again what I had before. We're starting over," she added, grimacing through tears. Almeida and Engelmann know what it means to start from nothing.

They met in the 1980s at one of the first encampments of the Landless

Workers' Movement in central Rio Grande do Sul, where the movement - the largest of its kind in Latin America - got its start, occupying rural properties to demand land reform. They married and had their first children in that camp, called Cruz Alta, before the state government gave them permission to settle in Eldorado do Sul, about 70 km (45 miles) west of Porto Alegre. They are among 30 families in the settlement who produced enough rice, vegetables, milk, eggs and pork to make a living, build and furnish homes and send their children to university. The floods have left all of that hanging in the balance. Almeida, Engelmann and their daughter are sleeping on a truck bed in a neighbor's warehouse, improvising a domestic routine as they put their lives back together. "I've been through all this in the encampments - the challenges to cook, to sleep. I learned to live that way. But I didn't think I'd be doing it again," Almeida said. One of her closest friends, Inacio Hoffmann, 60, was just four months into retirement when the floods tore through his farm, killing 13 of 22 dairy cows. "It's so bleak to haul off and bury these creatures that we took care of every day," said Hoffmann. He is weighing whether to leave it all behind and try a new life elsewhere. Almeida said her family is determined to stick it out. "We've come from nothing. We've returned to nothing. Now we start again."

## Authorities investigating suspects behind deadly unrest

PARIS (AP): The French prosecutor in New Caledonia said authorities have opened an investigation into unrest that has left seven people dead and significant destruction in the Pacific archipelago with decades of tensions between those seeking independence and those loyal to France.

The violence flared on May 13 in response to attempts to amend the French Constitution and change voting lists in New Caledonia. France declared a state of emergency in its Pacific territory on May 15 and rushed hundreds of troop reinforcements to help police quell the revolt that included shootings, clashes, looting and arson. "We are interested in those who pull the strings, who have led the planning and have committed these abuses in New Caledonia," prosecutor Yves Dupas said in an interview with broadcaster France Info. He added that investigators are interested in anyone on the island "whatever their level of involvement or responsibility" in the unrest, whether they are "perpetrators or their sponsors."

He said officials were looking into charges of criminal association, criminal acts and misdemeanors. Authorities are also investigating those suspected of violence against civilians caught up in the unrest, Dupas said. He said that several New Caledonia police officers are in custody.

The seven people killed in shootings included four from the Indigenous Kanak community and two gendarmes, Dupas said. One of the gendarmes was killed when a weapon discharged accidentally, according to the French Interior Ministry. The prosecutor said he was unaware if any of those killed in the unrest are related to the former French soccer player Christian Karembeu, who said that he was "in mourning" because two members of his family were fatally shot during recent violence. Karembeu, who is Kanak and had moved to mainland France as a teenager, was asked in an interview with France's Europe 1 broadcaster if his relatives were targeted in recent violence.

The 1998 World Cup winner with France said, "It's true that, yes, it's an assassination and we hope that there will be inquiries and investigations into these murders."

Dupas said that four people from the Kanak community were among civilian victims. "It's possible, but I cannot confirm it, that some are relatives of Christian Karembeu." He also said that his office has so far not received any criminal complaints from civilian victims' families. Since May 12, 442 people have been detained in New Caledonia, Dupas said. Of those, 90 have been referred to court, he said. Detainees who had been held at the French penitentiary compound in New Caledonia's capital, Nouméa, known as Camp Est, were transferred to the detention center in Koné in the archipelago's north and others were sent to facilities in mainland France, Dupas said.

French President Emmanuel Macron decided to lift the state of emergency in New Caledonia to

help facilitate dialogue between local parties and French authorities for the future of the archipelago with a population of 270,000 and restore peace. Pro-independence parties and Kanak leaders urged Macron to withdraw the electoral reform bill if France wants to "end the crisis." Opponents fear the voting legislation will benefit pro-France politicians in New Caledonia and further marginalize the Indigenous Kanaks who have long pushed to be free of French rule, amid sharp economic disparities. New Caledonia became French in 1853 under Emperor Napoleon III, Napoleon's nephew and heir. It became an overseas territory after World War II, with French citizenship granted to all Kanaks in 1957. People of European, mostly French, descent in New Caledonia, which has long served as France's prison colony and now has a French military base, distinguish between descendants of colonizers and descendants of the many prisoners sent to the territory by force.

## Remains of Bulgaria's King return home

SOFIZ (AFP): The remains of Ferdinand Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, the first king of Bulgaria following five centuries of Ottoman rule, were repatriated from Germany to be interred in a family mausoleum, 76 years after his death.

"The due homage will be paid to a head of state... who, despite contradictory interpretations of certain moments of his reign, gave much to... the modernisation of our country," said his grandson, the 86-year-old former exiled child king Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, who returned to Bulgaria in 2000. The coffin bearing Ferdinand's remains was transported back to Bulgaria from the German town of Coburg on a military plane.

A funeral procession then brought it to the Vrana Palace on Sofia's outskirts, where it was welcomed by Simeon Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, his wife Margarita, two of their sons Kyril and Konstantin-Assen, daughter Kalina and other members of the royal family. Members of the national guard carried the coffin,

draped in the old flag of the kingdom of Bulgaria, inside the palace's central hall for a funeral service attended by officials. Ordinary Bulgarians could also pay their last respects to the former monarch.

Mihail Petkov, 50, a great-grandson of one of Ferdinand's officers, brought his teenage son to "this historic event", in memory of "the man who built modern Bulgaria". Yana Vassileva, a 70-year-old historian, was moved to tears and knelt as the funeral procession filed by. "Ferdinand is one of Bulgaria's great kings. It's a pity that his merits are overlooked in school curricula," she lamented. Neither interim Prime Minister Dimitar Glavchev nor President Rumen Radev attended the ceremony. For historian Petar Stoyanovich, a researcher of Ferdinand, "this return signifies, even if belatedly, a responsibility towards history". In 1908, Prince Ferdinand Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, who had reigned from 1887, proclaimed Bulgaria's independence

and became its king. The country had been a vassal of the Ottoman Empire until its liberation in 1878. Ferdinand reigned for 31 years but left a controversial legacy after two painful losses in the Second Balkan War of 1913 and World War I, in which Bulgaria was allied with Germany, led to his abdication in 1918. But during the 25 peaceful years that preceded the wars "Bulgaria was transformed into a European state" by modernising its army, urban planning, education and agriculture, Stoyanovich said. After his abdication, Ferdinand could never return to Bulgaria and lived at the family home in Coburg, Bavaria, until his death at the age of 87 in 1948. His mortal remains were kept in a coffin next to his parent's sarcophagi in the crypt of the Saint Augustin church, awaiting repatriation to Bulgaria, which was his last wish. He will be laid to rest in a family crypt at the Vrana Palace that he had once built at a private ceremony Thursday.

## Violence clouds last day of campaigning for polls

MEXICO CITY (AP): Mexico held the last day of campaigning before Sunday's nationwide election, but the closing rallies were darkened by attacks on candidates and the country's persistently high homicide rate.

Opposition candidate Xóchitl Gálvez started her last campaign rallies on the outskirts of Mexico City, and she focused her ire on President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's "hugs not bullets" policy of not confronting the drug cartels. Gálvez is facing the candidate of López Obrador's Morena party, former Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum. Sheinbaum, who leads in the race, has promised to continue all of López Obrador's policies.

"Are we going to continue with hugs, or are we going to apply the law to criminals?" Gálvez asked a cheering crowd. "Mexico wants peace, wants tranquility," López Obrador has withdrawn funding for police forces and directed it to the quasi-military

National Guard, which critics say lacks the professional and investigative abilities needed to fight the drug gangs. Gálvez promised to return the funding to police forces and guarantee them wages of at least \$1,200 per month. Gálvez also pledged to reconcile a country that has been highly polarized by the outgoing president's rhetoric, saying "enough division, enough hatred ... we are all Mexicans." Sheinbaum held her final rally in Mexico City's vast, colonial-era central square. She delivered a strongly nationalistic speech to a large crowd.

"Mexico is respected in the world, it is a reference point," Sheinbaum said, claiming that López Obrador's government "has returned to us the pride of being Mexicans." "Mexico has changed, and for the better," she said. On the violence issue, Sheinbaum vowed to continue López Obrador's policy of offering apprenticeships to encourage youths not to join drug cartels.

"We will deepen the strategy of peace and security, and the progress that has been made," she said. "This is not an iron fist" policy, Sheinbaum said. "This is justice." While López Obrador has increased the country's minimum wage and increased government benefit programs, he has been unable to significantly reduce the historically high homicide rate, which currently runs at more than 30,000 killings per year nationwide. That gang-fueled violence has also cast a shadow over the campaigns. A mayoral candidate in the violent southern state of Guerrero was shot to death in the town of Coyuca de Benítez. Gov. Evelyn Salgado identified the dead candidate as Alfredo Cabrera, but gave no further details on his killing. Local media reported he was shot in the head at his closing campaign event. A mayoral candidate in the western state of Jalisco was shot multiple times by intruders in his campaign offices.



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# NATO should push talks, not weapons

FRANCE and Germany said on Tuesday that Ukraine should be allowed to use their weapons against targets inside Russia.

In a joint news conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron said that Ukraine would be permitted to use weapons supplied by France against military bases inside Russia from which Ukraine is being attacked.

His comments were echoed by the German leader, who said that Ukraine was allowed to defend itself so long as it complied with international law.

Which may sound well and good. But in fact it indicates that these countries and others want to use Ukraine to fight Russia so they don't have to bear the direct consequences themselves. That means that they are not seeking a negotiated end to the conflict.

This paints an alarmingly gloomier picture for the Ukraine conflict as instead of there being any signs of the conflict abating after dragging on for more than two years, the war at the heart of Europe now presents the formidable prospect that NATO is getting itself directly involved. That doesn't bode well for anybody.

Admittedly, Ukraine has become Europe's number one headache, putting it in a Catch-22 situation: despite the unprecedented Western unity and support behind the European country, Kyiv has made little progress on the battlefield.

Now, with many Europeans struggling with the cost of living crisis triggered by the conflict, European leaders are finding it ever more difficult to gain public support for the continued support of Kyiv, which is being increasingly viewed as an entreaty to nationalism to divert attention from their failures to deal with the problems at home.

But the bid for more visible Ukrainian progress in the conflict risks the direct involvement of NATO countries. Since they act on an all-for-one principle, that is a recipe for World War III given how far removed the United States is from the fight zone and how gung-ho inclined its leadership of the organization is.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has already warned of a global conflict if Kyiv is allowed to use weapons supplied by Western countries to strike inside Russia. The prospect of a direct conflict between NATO and Russia would be catastrophic, with unfathomable consequences for the world.

It has been clear from the start, that the US has sought to use Ukraine to drag Russia into a debilitating war of attrition. The war has not only consolidated unity of purpose within NATO but also strengthened the US grip on the organization that would otherwise have diminished to its demise.

It is no exaggeration to say that the US is the real maker and instigator of the Ukraine crisis, and the lighter of the fuse. With its endless pursuit of selfish interests, the US-led NATO has pushed rounds of eastward expansion, eroding the buffer zone between Russia and a resurgently belligerent NATO, harming Russia's security interests.

To consolidate the US' hegemony, Washington has every intention of prolonging the conflict as it calculates that serves several purposes, including weakening Russia and forcing Europe to further rely on it on security matters. Not to mention that US arms manufacturers and the broader US economy — and thus the vote-seekers in Washington — have benefited hugely from the Ukraine conflict. Each time the US Congress passes a bill to provide staggering amounts of military aid to Kyiv it is a cold-blooded lives-for-power exchange.

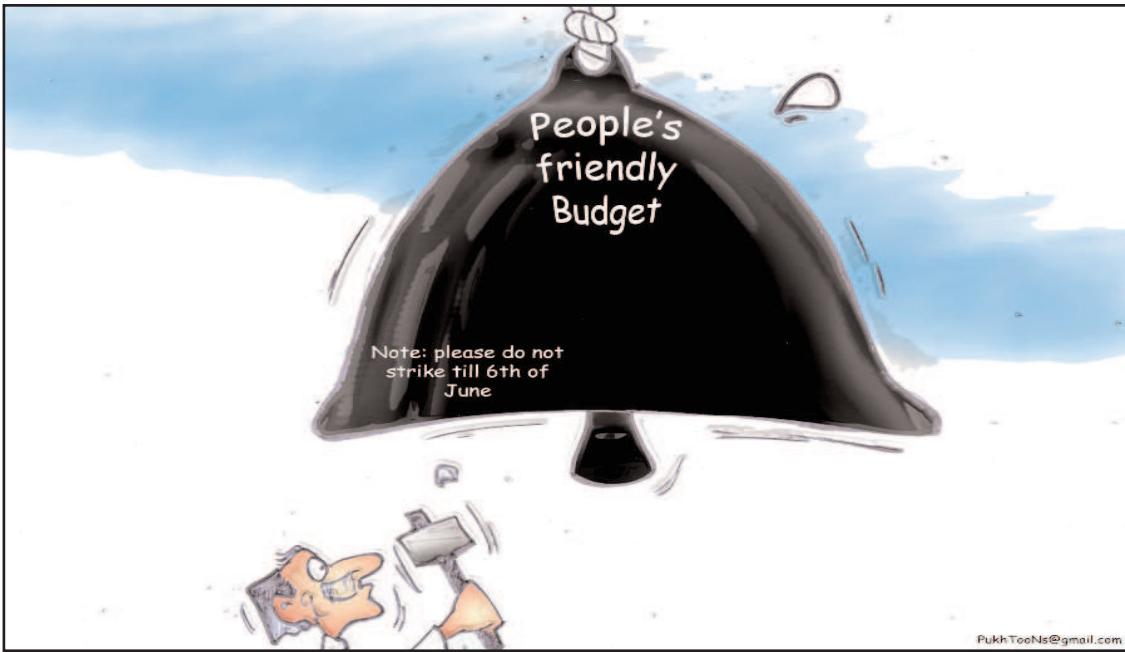
It is now evident to all that until Russia is exhausted by the conflict, the US will have no appetite to end the crisis, or stop taking advantage of it. This explains why the US has never showed an iota of interest in joining efforts to get Kyiv and Moscow to the negotiating table.

The other NATO members must not get trapped on the same wavelength as Washington lest it lead them by the nose. In which case, they would only find themselves embroiled in a worse mess than the one they are in now.

A negotiated end to the conflict and a new security architecture for Europe are what are needed, not an escalation of the crisis.

## Important Notice

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# The implications of the riots in New Caledonia for the very future of France

Khaled Abou Zahr

THE crisis in France's Pacific territory of New Caledonia is calming down. Despite seeming like a clash between pro-independence activists and the centralized authority in Paris, as has happened in the past, this time the tone has been different and is a broader sign of France's changing position on the global scene.

Nor can we dissociate it from the changes that are happening in Africa, where France is losing ground, or from events in French Mayotte, in the Indian Ocean, where French sovereignty is also being challenged.

All of these events resonate in similar ways, forcing France to make strategic decisions about the very meaning of sovereignty, and its capacity to operate a single, independent foreign policy and maintain control over international territories in the face of a new global balance of power.

This time the trigger for unrest in the Pacific territory was a vote in Paris on reforms that would expand the electorate in New Caledonia to include about 25,000 people who have lived on the archipelago for at least 10 years. This was a "casus belli" for supporters of independence, who say it will further marginalize the indigenous Kanak people. This leads one to wonder how a territory can offer two levels of voting rights, and why the indigenous population has historically felt marginalized?

To consider these questions we need to understand the history of New Caledonia. In 1774, British explorer James Cook became one of the first Europeans to sight it. The French established a colony there about 80 years later, and made it a penal colony in 1864. In an attempt to rehabilitate prisoners, colonial administrators offered to provide them with land there when their sentence was served. France also sent political prisoners into exile there, including Algerian and Indochinese rebels, and 4,700 Communards (members and supporters of the short-lived 1871 Paris Commune formed in the wake of the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War) between 1872 and 1880.

The French colonial project involved allocating land for colonists or freed prisoners to use for farming, often at the expense of the native Kanaks, who were dispossessed through measures such as the 1887 Code of

Indigenat, which stripped them of their fundamental rights.

Their situation became even worse in 1897 with the creation of Kanak reserves, which restricted their movement. The expropriation of the Kanaks by the French and the deportation of convicts were interconnected events that built 19th-century New Caledonian society on a foundation of racism and discrimination.

In the post-colonial era, New Caledonia remained a part of France, unlike Algeria. But the unrest last week echoed the turbulent events in the territory during the 1980s, which began with the election of Francois Mitterrand as president in 1981. New Caledonia's Independence Front then aligned itself with the Socialist Party, as its aspirations for autonomy grew.

In 1983, during negotiations at Nainville-les-Roches, the Independence Front asked for a referendum on self-determination for the Kanaks. A year later, dissatisfied with the new status that was proposed and the handling of land issues, the Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front, which by then had replaced the Independence Front, boycotted territorial elections. They blocked roads and established a "Provisional Government of Kanaky," further causing tensions to rise.

Between 1985 to 1987, the situation continued to deteriorate, with armed clashes, the declaration of a state of emergency and the formation of radical militias. In 1987, an independence referendum took place but was largely boycotted by the Kanaks, resulting in an overwhelming vote to remain within the French Republic.

The violence peaked in 1988 with the Ouvéa cave crisis, in which radical independence supporters captured and held 27 gendarmes hostage. The subsequent military assault during "Operation Victor" resulted in the deaths of 19 independence fighters and two soldiers. In response to the violence, the Matignon Agreements were signed in 1988. These provided for a 10-year transitional period and a referendum on self-determination. Assassinations and unrest continued to sour the process, however, and in 1998 the Noumea Accord was signed. This recognized the ills of colonization and established a significant degree of autonomy for New Caledonia. It provided for

the gradual transfer of powers, the promotion of Kanak culture, and the introduction of a specific New Caledonian citizenship. Tensions between communities persisted but efforts to promote reconciliation and economic development gradually helped to ease the situation.

Beginning in 2000, New Caledonia experienced a period of relative economic prosperity, marked by major infrastructure projects, including the construction of factories, the expansion of La Tontouta airport, and the building of facilities for the 2011 Pacific Games.

However, this period was also marked by strikes and protests over economic and social issues, including wage disputes and demonstrations about the high cost of living. The next important political development was a referendum in 2018 on independence for New Caledonia, organized within the framework of the Noumea Accord, in which 56.4 percent of voters rejected independence. A second referendum in 2020 confirmed the trend, with 53.26 percent of people voting to remain part of the French Republic.

The result of a third referendum, in 2021, was that 96 percent of people rejected independence. This reflected that fact that certain pro-independence organizations boycotted the vote. This third referendum concluded the period covered by the Noumea Accord, and marked the start of a transitional phase to define a new status for the archipelago, ultimately leading to the most recent events.

It is also necessary to be aware of how important the territory's nickel reserves are as a strategic resource for the economies of France and New Caledonia.

Indeed, New Caledonia contains 20 to 30 percent of the world's nickel reserves and produces 8 percent of refined nickel. It therefore relies heavily on the mineral, which accounts for 90 percent of exports and one in four jobs, to drive its economy. Global nickel prices halved between 2013 and 2024 as a result of Indonesian overproduction, which has had a severe effect on New Caledonia's economy. Swiss company Glencore withdrew from the Koniambo mine in the territory early this year, leading to its closure as it was no longer profitable.

This economic crisis has exacerbated political tensions already running high as a result of controversial

constitutional reform and the fallout from the 2021 referendum on self-determination.

The problems facing the nickel-mining sector also threaten social protections, prompting calls for financial support from France. Supporters of independence view nickel as a strategic asset and want to process it locally to create greater value, through the Noumea Accord's "nickel doctrine."

However, this strategy is struggling given the present global market conditions and high energy costs. During his visit to New Caledonia last week, President Emmanuel Macron offered to provide financial aid, contingent on reform of this strategy, a move viewed by some as a "colonial pact" and thereby fueling further unrest.

The world is changing. Where in the past the pro-independence movement looked to Libya for protection, now it is Azerbaijan, frustrated by France's role in its own crisis with Armenia, that is offering support.

Yet the bigger story is that France is starting to lose its grip on the international territories that confer upon the nation its strategic posture, whether in terms of maritime capacity or, in the case of French Guiana, the space sector. A profound change is taking place, as a result of which the latest unrest in New Caledonia had a different tone to previous disputes.

Macron, one must acknowledge, did travel to New Caledonia and personally faced the difficult situation there. He followed this with a historic visit to Germany, the first state visit by a French president to Berlin in 24 years.

On the first day, he and Chancellor Olaf Scholz issued a joint statement in which they said "we must strengthen European sovereignty." This declaration is necessary for the future of Europe but nevertheless begs the question of what the future might be for French sovereignty of its overseas territories within this wider European sovereignty.

This adds to the contradictions of the West; will France be pushed to mutualize with Europe all of its national strategic power to maintain its position in the global geopolitical game? The unrest in New Caledonia is perhaps a harbinger of deeper questions France might face, such as the future of its nuclear arsenal or its seat as a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

# Strict separation is not the answer for Palestine and Israel

Yanis Varoufakis

RECOGNIZING a Palestinian state is the moral thing to do and the only way to achieve a just peace in the Middle East. To convince the next Israeli government that Palestinians must have full political rights, a fresh wave of countries extending formal recognition — as Spain, Ireland and Norway have just done — is necessary. But to prevent this wave from petering out in a puddle of performative symbolism, supporters must emphasize that the Palestinian state can be neither a mirror image of Israel, nor a means of strictly separating Jews from Palestinians.

Set aside the sad fact that no Israeli government in sight is willing to discuss a just peace, and that Palestinians have no democratically legitimized leadership to represent them. Let us simply imagine that such a dialogue was about to commence. What principles must it embody to inspire confidence in a just outcome for all — irrespective of ethnicity, religion and language — from the (Jordan) river to the (Mediterranean) sea?

The reason why a Greater Israel has always been incompatible with justice is that Israel denies its Palestinian citizens — 20 percent of the total — full equality in order to maintain itself as an exclusionary Jewish (not just Israeli) state. Simply establishing a Palestinian state alongside Israel would do nothing to address this.

And what would happen to the Jews who have settled (illegally) in the West Bank and East Jerusalem if Palestine were established as an exclusionary Palestinian Arab state? One idea being considered is a population swap, reminiscent of the tragic exchange of ethnic Greeks and Turks after the 1919-22 war.

Have we lost our minds? A century after that act of ethnic cleansing, descendants of those exchanged people are still mourning their lost homeland. Do we really want to promote a similar catastrophe, another mass uprooting, in the name of peace and justice?

Just imagine a Palestinian state emulating the Israeli policy of building closed roads to connect non-contiguous communities (for example, a closed highway connecting the West Bank and Gaza), or exclusively Palestinian roads connecting Palestinian communities in Israel with the new Palestinian state. The closed roads that Israel has built to connect Jewish communities function as walls that inevitably fence in Palestinians. Surely the solution cannot be to build new closed roads that connect Palestinians and fence in Jews.

What about the idea that Israeli settlers could choose to remain as dual citizens under a Palestinian state, while Israel's Palestinian citizens would also acquire dual citizenship? This makes sense, but how could Jews in Palestine and Palestinians in Israel be confident that they would not be treated as an

underclass? How, for example, could each state's security forces be prevented from treating the minority as a problem to be contained or perhaps eliminated in the future? In short, how do we avoid replacing one apartheid state with two such states sitting side by side?

Many Palestinians, moved by their long subjugation, will be tempted to demand that every Jewish settler be expelled from the Palestinian state. Others, for whom statehood is the top priority, may be happy with a two-apartheid-state solution. But are such goals worth fighting for? Can they generate the global support Palestinians need to achieve a just peace?

If the Palestinians' goal were an exclusionary Palestinian state, I doubt that South Africa, whose lawyers — reared on the humanist principles of Nelson Mandela — so eloquently prosecuted Israel at The Hague, would be on board. The vision inspiring pro-Palestinian student protests in the United States, Norway, Spain, Ireland and many other European countries is one of equal rights, not of a symmetrical right to impose apartheid.

The principle of separating Jews from Palestinians is incompatible with human rights because it implies mass transfer or being treated as an underclass. Both sides, therefore, must abandon the demand for an exclusionary state (Jewish or Palestinian-Arab).

This does not mean that Jewish life must be diminished in any way, or that Palestinians must renounce their aspirations for statehood. What it does mean is that the goal must be porous Israeli and Palestinian states that guarantee self-determination for both peoples. To work well, confederal institutions would be needed to safeguard equal rights. Last, but certainly not least, such an arrangement would require full dual citizenship. This solution would ensure the human rights that the Global South (ably represented today by South African lawyers) demands and that the Global North pretends to revere.

How do we get there? There may be truth in the familiar Irish quip — "I wouldn't start from here" — but I think the answer has already been provided by the Jews, Muslims and others campaigning simultaneously against anti-Semitism and genocide. Israelis and Palestinians must mutually acknowledge (perhaps via a South African-like Truth and Reconciliation Commission) three types of pain: the pain Europe inflicted on Jews for centuries; the pain Israel has been inflicting on Palestinians for eight decades; and the pain Palestinians and Jews have been trading in the poisonous shadow of war and resistance.

As the bombs continue to fall, and the propaganda war rages, it is hard to imagine any way out of the Israeli-Palestinian tragedy. But that could reflect our failure to imagine two states whose purpose is to bring their two peoples closer, not to ensure their strict separation.

# China, Arab states begin new era of cooperation

Tang Zhichao

IN the 20th year of its establishment, the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum is holding its 10th ministerial meeting in Beijing, where leaders and ministers from China and Arab countries will gather to discuss ways to further deepen cooperation and build a China-Arab community with a shared future.

Over the past 20 years, the CASCF has been driving the rapid development of China-Arab relations. The forum's achievements are a testament to its role as a significant platform for cooperation.

The relationship between China and Arab countries is characterized by peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, and mutual learning and mutual benefit. In the more than 70 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China-Arab cooperation has made remarkable achievements, becoming a model of overall South-South cooperation. In particular, since the establishment of the CASCF, China-Arab ties have been upgraded, evolving from a new type of partnership to a strategic partnership, with the two sides now agreeing to build a China-Arab community with a shared future.

In December 2022, President Xi Jinping attended the First China-Arab States Summit, during which the Chinese and Arab sides agreed to build a China-Arab community with a shared future for the new era, marking a significant milestone in China-Arab relations. Despite challenges such as the Israel-Palestine conflict and the United States' attempts to sow discord between China and Arab countries, China-Arab cooperation has progressed steadily. Both sides have implemented various policies and measures, achieving early

results, strengthening their strategic partnership and accelerating the construction of a community with a shared future. Over the past year, China-Arab political cooperation has broadened and strategic mutual trust deepened, with increasing high-level visits and strategic consultations. The two sides support each other on core issues. China strongly supports Arab unity, self-reliance and intra-Arab cooperation, and has been using diplomacy to help end the Israel-Palestine conflict. It also supports the just cause of the Palestinian people and their right to a Palestine state.

On the other hand, on issues such as Xinjiang, Taiwan and Hong Kong, the Arab countries have provided strong support to China, which has bolstered the strategic mutual trust between the two sides. Also, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi

Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Algeria have either joined or have applied to join BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, thereby strengthening cooperation among the Global South.

Besides, the China-proposed Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative have received positive responses from the Arab countries. And China-Arab cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative framework has entered a new stage of higher-quality common development. As for the Global Security Initiative, it helped China bring about a rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, leading to the two Middle East countries re-establishing diplomatic relations after seven years of tensions and contributing to regional peace and stability. Cultural exchanges and

mutual learning between China and Arab countries have also yielded positive results, with the Arab League becoming the first regional organization to join the Global Civilization Initiative.

The rapid development of China-Arab cooperation over the past 20 years can be attributed to three main factors: the CASCF, the visionary leadership of China and Arab countries, and the powerful impetus provided by the Belt and Road Initiative. To further strengthen the China-Arab strategic partnership and build a community with a shared future, the two sides should focus on four areas.

First, they should continue upholding the spirit of mutual support, equality, mutual benefit, inclusiveness and mutual learning, because these are the foundation of as well as the driving force behind Sino-Arab friendly relations. Second, they ought to strengthen strategic coop-

eration and deepen strategic mutual trust. Third, the two sides should deepen cooperation in the three China-proposed global initiatives while establishing high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative framework to advance the modernization of Chinese and Arab societies. And fourth, they should establish an upgraded version of the CASCF.

However, the forum, which has been boosting China-Arab cooperation and has become a model for promoting common development, should address its shortcomings and deepen cooperation in new fields such as "new quality productive force", security and cultural exchanges in order to build a China-Arab community with a shared future.

The future of China-Arab relations appears bright, and the two sides can strengthen their friendship and cooperation through their concerted efforts.



# American progressives better learn what a feminist is

At the 2014 MTV Video Music Awards, American superstar Beyonce performed in front of a giant screen blazoned with the word “Feminist” in huge lettering. She said she did it because “people don’t really know or understand what a feminist is”.

She was right. Since then, we have seen over and over again how much of America have no idea what a feminist is and what feminism really stands for.

Over the past 10 years, we have heard of self-professed “feminists” who proudly declared their support for misogynyist-in-chief Donald Trump. Newspapers ran think pieces on how there are many different ways of being a feminist, and how women can still be “feminists” while opposing the most basic tenets of feminism or supporting men who objectively harm women. Work became feminist. Objectification of the female body became feminist. Surrogacy, as it helped certain women “have it all”, was also declared feminist. In fact, it became clear that in the American dis-

course, “feminist” was any woman – or man – who claimed to be one, for whatever reason. People who clashed with conservative men on any given subject, no matter their positions on any other issue relating to women and girls, were also immediately accepted and celebrated as “feminists”.

Mainstream US “feminism” has become so individualised that every single woman there appears to define it only in terms of what the term means for her. This type of “feminism” does not translate into a collective movement, and therefore develops no principles, ethics or goals. “Feminist” in the current US context has become just another empty identity tag that serves no other purpose than political posturing and virtue signalling.

This is partly the reason why American progressive intelligentsia appears to be struggling to make sense of the left-wing, feminist backlash to the rapid mainstreamisation of “gender ideology” in the United Kingdom.

They are unable to

distinguish between British feminists’ reasoned opposition to the erasure of women’s rights under the guise of “trans inclusion” and the bigotry of those on the American right who view trans-identified people with the same derision with which they have always viewed gay men and lesbians.

These so-called “progressives” do not see the rise of “gender ideology”, which argues that an individual’s internal sense of gender should supersede in all aspects of life and under law, as a threat to themselves, and thus conclude that it is no threat to women as a collective.

Furthermore, they perceive trans rights activists, who show no regard for women’s rights and concerns in their advocacy, as true feminists simply because they are targeted by the American right as part of the culture wars.

These so-called “progressives” in America wonder why so many left-wing feminists, many of whom are lesbians, seem to have suddenly turned into right-wing bigots on this side

of the Atlantic. They are unable to comprehend that we have not moved to the right, and are not targeting a marginalised minority out of hate, like right-wing homophobes, but taking a principled position in defence of women’s rights.

This apparent disconnect stems also from the fact that there is no true left in the US.

Today the American left is dominated by the adherents of a performative brand of identity politics focussed on often right-coded values like personal liberty and freedom of speech.

Left-wing politics in America, at least in the mainstream, is reduced to loud but inconsequential shouting about bigotry and prejudice. As there is little or no working-class mobilisation, the “left-wing” elites are left to speak of “oppression” on their own, without knowing much about it at all.

This sad state of the American “left” translates to trans-rights activists – who claim to be fighting for the most vulnerable and oppressed

Julie Bindel

group among all identity groups – being celebrated as brave feminists, while real feminists concerned about women and girls’ wellbeing are condemned for their alleged prejudice.

There are, of course, many women in the US who do know what a feminist is, and reject gender ideology, not out of any bigotry but genuine concern for women’s rights, in the same way we do in the UK. Regrettably, they too are swiftly branded as bigots.

Take the infamous Wi Spa incident in Los Angeles in 2021 where women who complained about a trans-identifying male exposing his penis to women and girls in a female changing room. Most of the left-wing US media, led by the Guardian US, presented the issue as an attack on the unnamed trans-identifying man, and accused women who object to his presence in the changing room of being transphobic liars. As the controversy grew, and far-right groups like the Proud Boys got involved in the

consequent protests outside the spa, the supposed alliance between “transphobic women” and bigoted, right-wing thugs became the focus of the entire story. Eventually, the man in question was revealed to be a convicted sex offender and was further charged with indecent exposure in relation to his behaviour in the spa changing room, but neither the media, nor the “left-wing” commentators and politicians offered the women they accused of being bigots and Nazis an apology.

The attitudes of this so-called progressive “left” in America towards women concerned about gender ideology are also having an impact back here in the UK.

Many British progressives in media, academia and politics who eagerly follow the lead of the Americans on culture war issues are also dismissing feminist concerns over gender ideology as bigotry and trying to push us out of the national conversation over this issue.

Countless feminists across the country have

been silenced and shamed, have lost jobs and opportunities, and have been accused of allying themselves with the worst of the global right for the “crime” of speaking up for women.

Regardless of the abuse we face, we will continue our fight for what is right, and we will not let British feminist and left-wing spaces be captured by faux feminists, fake leftists and their performative politics imported from America.

The situation in the US, however, is much more critical.

Women and men anywhere to the left of the Republican Party who are concerned about gender ideology have nowhere to turn to. Democrats are not only refusing to listen to their concerns, but branding them as bigots and even fascists for daring to question their accepted hierarchies of oppression.

The Democratic Party is in no way guaranteed a victory in the upcoming presidential election. If they don’t change course, and stop accusing people of being big-

oted for raising the alarm about gender ideology, some women, and men, may decide to vote on this issue alone and plump for Trump – who has been clear about his opposition to gender ideology, albeit not on feminist grounds – in November.

If the Democrats lose the election, and it is determined that their stance on this issue has contributed to the outcome, however, they should not dare blame women critical of gender ideology.

They should understand that they have no one else to blame but themselves, and that they have alienated countless potential Democratic voters by branding them as right-wing bigots for defending women’s rights.

American progressives may genuinely believe they are on the “right side of history”, but if they don’t make the effort to truly “understand what a feminist is”, and believe us when we say gender ideology is a threat to women, come November, they may themselves be history.

# Open letter by Gaza academics and university administrators to the world

**WE have come together as Palestinian academics and staff of Gaza universities to affirm our existence, the existence of our colleagues and our students, and the insistence on our future, in the face of all current attempts to erase us.**

The Israeli occupation forces have demolished our buildings but our universities live on. We reaffirm our collective determination to remain on our land and to resume teaching, study, and research in Gaza, at our own Palestinian universities, at the earliest opportunity.

We call upon our friends and colleagues around the world to resist the ongoing campaign of scholasticide in occupied Palestine, to work alongside us in rebuilding our demolished universities, and to refuse all plans seeking to bypass, erase, or weaken the integrity of our academic institutions. The future of our young people in Gaza depends upon us, and our ability to remain on our land in order to continue to serve the coming generations of our people.

We issue this call from beneath the bombs of the occupation forces across occupied Gaza, in the refugee camps of Rafah, and from the sites of temporary new exile in Egypt and other host countries. We are disseminating it as the Israeli occupation continues to wage its genocidal campaign against our people daily, in its attempt to eliminate every aspect of our collective and individual life.

Our families, colleagues, and students are being assassinated, while we have once again been rendered homeless, reliving the experiences of our parents and grandparents during the massacres and mass expulsions by Zionist armed forces in 1947 and 1948. Our civic infrastructure – universities, schools, hospitals, libraries, museums and cultural centres – built by generations of our people, lies in ruins from this deliberate continuous Nakba. The deliberate targeting of our educational infrastructure is a blatant attempt to render Gaza uninhabitable and erode the intellectual and cultural fabric of our society. However, we refuse to allow such acts to extinguish the flame of knowledge and resilience that burns within us.

Allies of the Israeli occupation in the United States and United Kingdom are opening yet another scholasticide front through promoting alleged reconstruction schemes that seek to eliminate the possibility of independent Palestinian educational life in Gaza. We reject all such schemes and urge our colleagues to refuse any complicity in them. We also urge all universities and colleagues worldwide to coordinate any academic aid efforts directly with our universities.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the national and international institutions that have stood in solidarity with us, providing support and assistance

during these challenging times. However, we stress the importance of coordinating these efforts to effectively reopen Palestinian universities in Gaza.

We emphasise the urgent need to reoperate Gaza’s education institutions, not merely to support current students, but to ensure the long-term resilience and sustainability of our higher education system. Education is not just a means of imparting knowledge; it is a vital pillar of our existence and a beacon of hope for the Palestinian people.

Accordingly, it is essential to formulate a long-term strategy for rehabilitating the infrastructure and rebuilding the entire facilities of the universities. However, such endeavours require considerable time and substantial funding, posing a risk to the ability of academic institutions to sustain operations, potentially leading to the loss of staff, students, and the capacity to reoperate. Given the current circumstances, it is imperative to swiftly transition to online teaching to mitigate the disruption caused by the destruction of physical infrastructure. This transition necessitates comprehensive support to cover operational costs, including the salaries of academic staff.

Student fees, the main source of income for universities, have collapsed since the start of the genocide. The lack of income has left staff without salaries, pushing many of them to search for external opportunities. Beyond striking at the livelihoods of university faculty and staff, this financial strain caused by the deliberate campaign of scholasticide poses an existential threat to the future of the universities themselves.

Thus, urgent measures must be taken to address the financial crisis now faced by academic institutions, to ensure their very survival. We call upon all concerned parties to immediately coordinate their efforts in support of this critical objective.

The rebuilding of Gaza’s academic institutions is not just a matter of education; it is a testament to our resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment to securing a future for generations to come.

The fate of higher education in Gaza belongs to the universities in Gaza, their faculty, staff, and students and to the Palestinian people as a whole. We appreciate the efforts of peoples and citizens around the world to bring an end to this ongoing genocide.

We call upon our colleagues in the homeland and internationally to support our steadfast attempts to defend and preserve our universities for the sake of the future of our people, and our ability to remain on our Palestinian land in Gaza. We built these universities from tents. And from tents, with the support of our friends, we will rebuild them once again.

**Signatories:**

Dr Kamalain Shaath, Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Islamic

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# Traders repose full trust in BF leadership

— announces support in upcoming SCCI election

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Presidents and office bearers of all trades unions and bodies from Peshawar reposed full trust on Businessman Forum under dynamic leadership of former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour and announced fully support the Businessman forum in the upcoming election of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

A meeting was held under chairmanship of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq at the chamber House to discuss traders' issues and their appropriate resolution and devising a comprehensive strategy.

Businessman Forum leader former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, Anjumana Tajraan Khyber Pakhtu-

nkhwah president and former president of the SCCI Haji Muhammad Afzal, former president FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour, the SCCI Senior Vice President Sanaullah Khan, vice president Ijaz Khan Afridi, former presidents of the chamber Zahidullah Shinwari, Malik Niaz Ahmed, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Sher Baz Bilour, executive member Haji Ghulam Hussain, Fazal Muqem, Nadeem Rauf, Saddam Gul, Faiz Rasool, Fazal Wahid, acting secretary general Muqtasid Ahsan, leaders of various market associations, trade unions and bodies across Peshawar, industrialists and representatives of the business community participated in large numbers in the meeting.

Ilyas Bilour while speaking on the occasion reiterated his firm resolve that the

BF will continue to serve the traders and the business community without discrimination.

He said BF will participate in the elections in a vigorous manner and claimed they will win the election with a majority.

Bilour said that the BF believes in the selfless service of traders and industrialists and the success of the BF in elections for the last 25 years is evident that it is the only forum of the business community whose leadership is fully capable to solve their problems.

The BF has proved it by rendering services without any discrimination due to which the business community fully trusted the leadership as their problems took up with the government and institutions in real sense and also resolved amicably, he added.

Furthermore, he said the BF has always presented viable solutions of the business community issues and played a key role in providing relief to the community at all levels.

The BF leader assured that they will continue to serve the business community in future and their problems will be solved on priority basis.

Earlier during the meeting, business leaders and heads and office bearers of market associations, trade unions and organizations also addressed and informed them about the issues in detail.

The participants expressed full confidence in BF leadership of Senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour and other leaders. They also announced the full support of the BF in the upcoming elections of the chamber.



PESHAWAR: Leader Businessman Forum Ilyas Ahmad Bilour addressing traders leaders during a meeting. Vice President SCCI Ijaz Khan Afridi also present on occasion.

## Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, Maersk Cairo, X-Press Altair, MSC Positano and Milaha Ras Laffan carrying Container and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal and Port Gas Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile three more ships, Maersk Pelepas, Zhida-6 and TRF Kobe scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice and Chemicals also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on during last 24 hours.

A total of 10 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Atlantic Ibis, X-Press Altair, MSC Positano and PVT Venus left the port on today morning while three more ships, Bo-Mustafa-O, Gelico and Maersk Cairo are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 157,915 tonnes, comprising 121,966 tonnes imports cargo and 35,949 tonnes export cargo carried in 4,368 Containers (3,279 TEUs Imports and 1,089 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. There are 08 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Tarsus-M, Intuition and Bateleur & three more ships, Bashudra Malika, APL Southampton and MSC Lucy scheduled to load/offload Grain, Rice, LPG, Mogas and Containers are expected to take berths at respectively MW-1, FAP, FOTCO, EVTL and QICT on today.

# Aleem holds meeting with Tajik traders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Privatisation, Board of Investment and Communication Abdul Aleem Khan held a meeting on Thursday with prominent business figures from Tajikistan to discuss prospects for enhancing bilateral trade and investment cooperation between the two countries.

Over ten major business groups from the textile, pharmaceutical, construction, IT, banking, and airline sectors attended the meeting. The investors expressed keen interest in constructing a goods terminal for import and export

near the Pakistan-Tajikistan border, said a press release.

The minister assured all possible support and patronage for business-to-business activities, stating that all economic sectors are open to businessmen from Central Asia. He emphasised that Pakistan could be a significant agricultural and trade market.

He informed the businessmen that Pakistan's private sector is ready to engage in trade with other countries. He added that the government would incentivise foreign investors to invest in free economic zones and other areas to

promote industrial development in the country.

Abdul Aleem Khan expressed hope that the bilateral business volume between Pakistan and Tajikistan would further increase with the frequent exchange of trade and business delegations, as well as enhanced people-to-people and government-to-government contacts.

The business groups from Tajikistan expressed their keen interest in investing in various sectors of Pakistan's economy, besides promoting trade and investment cooperation between the two countries.

# Pakistan Stock Exchange gains 41 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) gained 41.82 points on Thursday, a slight positive change of 0.06 per cent, closing at 74,878.12 points against 74,836.30 points the previous day.

A total of 410,575,241 shares valuing Rs 14,922 billion were traded during the day as compared to 408,073,662 shares valuing Rs 16,500 billion the previous day.

As many as 413 compa-

nies transacted their shares in the stock market; 161 of them recorded gains and 196 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 56 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Fauji Cement with 42,521,383 shares at Rs 22.91 per share, Dewan Cement with 26,322,838 shares at Rs 11.06 per share and Dewan Motors with 25,937,975 shares at Rs 44.73 per share.

Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 57.78 per share price, closing at Rs 976.41, whereas the runner-up was JDW Sugar Mills with a Rs 37.52 rise in its per share price to Rs 506.52.

Ismail Industries Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 127.37 per share closing at Rs 1,535.38, followed by Mari Petroleum Company Limited with a Rs 48.40 decline to close at Rs 2,754.44.

## Gold rates dip by Rs1,500 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,500 and was sold at Rs 241,200 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs 242,700 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,286 to Rs 206,790 from Rs 208,076 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 189,558 from Rs 190,736, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,900 and to Rs 2,486.28.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$17 to \$2,335 from \$2,352, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

# Hamdard University team visit Karwan-e-Hayat



## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Karwan-e-Hayat is thrilled to announce a promising new

collaboration with the Faculty of Pharmacy at Hamdard University.

A delegation from Hamdard University visit-

ed Karwan-e-Hayat to explore potential partnerships in research, training, and wellness management.

# Stock markets diverge ahead of key inflation data

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets diverged Thursday as traders awaited key inflation indicators that could determine the future direction of interest rates on both sides of the Atlantic.

All the main indexes were lower in New York, following on to Wednesday's slump when shares were hit by concerns that interest rates will stay high for an extended period.

Europe's main stock markets inched higher, but not enough to make up the losses from the previous session. US Treasury yields held near their recent highs, indicating expectations of higher-for-longer interest rates.

"Much of the optimism that we saw at the beginning of this month appears to be fizzling out," said David Morrison, senior analyst at Trade Nation.

"Sentiment has taken a

knock this week thanks to a big jump in yields on US Treasuries. The question now is whether this pull-back is the start of a larger retreat, or a minor hiccup before the market recovers its poise in preparation for further gains."

Traders awaited Friday's release of the crucial PCE index, the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation, hoping for signs that prices are being brought under control enough for rates to be cut.

Ahead of the data, the Fed's "Beige Book" survey of the world's top economy suggested the outlook had become gloomier, with discretionary spending cooling and consumers more sensitive to costs in recent weeks. It also said job gains were largely modest to negligible.

The report provided signs the Fed's tight policy stance was having some

effect, though with inflation still well above its two percent target, rate-cut hopes have dimmed.

Friday also sees the release of the latest euro-zone consumer price index, a key release ahead of the European Central Bank's monetary policy meeting on June 6 and which could decide whether the central bank goes ahead and as expected cuts rates by 25 basis points. Salesforce shares slumped 19 percent at the opening after reporting disappointing results the previous day.

Elsewhere on Thursday, the Sydney stock market closed lower with shares in BHP shedding 1.7 percent after the Australian mining giant ended its \$49-billion takeover bid for British rival Anglo American, whose shares were down five percent in London.

## Foreign investment decline to 50-year lowest level matter of concern

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said that decline of foreign investment to lowest level of fifty years of the country is matter of grave concern.

Talking to business community on Thursday, he said the lack of investment could affect the availability of a new IMF program, which would be unfortunate.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that some irresponsible politicians were bent on pushing the country into crisis, which will also cost them their supporters. Economic stability has come to the country due to the efforts of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, he added.

However, political stability has not come, which has caused investors to be worried and not ready to invest in Pakistan.

The business leader said that the prime minister was trying hard to attract investment in the country, and Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have assured him of fifteen billion dollars of investment.

However, the prices of electricity and gas, the highest policy rate, and political instability were hampering the PM's plans, he noted.

# EIC, SCCI agree to establish consortium of companies

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) and Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Thursday signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate establishment of a consortium of companies in Ethiopia that are related to sports goods, sports wear, leather products, surgical instruments, gloves and workwear.

The MoU was signed by Abdul Ghafoor Malik, President SCCI and Hanna Arayaselassie, Ethiopian Investment Commissioner. Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia to Pakistan and Atif Sharif Mian, Ambassador of Pakistan in Ethiopia witnessed the signing ceremony.

This significant agreement lays the groundwork for enhanced bilateral trading cooperation between the business

communities of Pakistan and Ethiopia through joint ventures. The signing ceremony marked a pivotal step in fostering stronger economic ties and exploring new investment opportunities between the two nations.

Speaking on the occasion, Hanna Arayaselassie said that Ethiopia offered a conducive environment for the investors as its government was committed to attract the foreign direct investment.

She assured the Sialkot Chamber's President that the Ethiopian government provided full protection to foreign investment, and also facilitated foreign investors in all-possible ways.

Abdul Ghafoor Malik expressed his enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating, "This MoU represents a crucial step towards a deeper economic partnership between

Pakistan and Ethiopia. Ethiopia's robust economic growth, strategic location, and favorable investment climate make it an attractive market for Pakistani businesses.

The Ethiopian market is not only rich in natural resources but also offers a burgeoning labor force and a growing consumer market, making it an increasingly attractive hub for trade and investment."

The SCCI delegation's stay in Ethiopia has been marked by a series of productive engagements aimed at exploring various investment avenues and strengthening economic ties. The delegation has participated in numerous meetings with key stakeholders, including the Ethiopian Ministry of Mines, where they experienced the Ethiopian Mineral Gallery and gained valuable insights into the country's rich mineral resources and mining sector.

# IBA-SBS 3rd International Conference 2024 organized

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: School of Business Studies (SBS), Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi, organized IBA-SBS 3rd International Conference 2024 on "Innovation and Disruption: Business Success Through AI" at Main Campus, IBA. Esteemed national and international academicians, researchers, practitioners, students and speakers participated in the conference.

Executive Director, IBA Karachi, Dr. S Akbar Zaidi, warmly welcomed the attendees to a dynamic conference featuring presentations and discussions on AI in business, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

In his opening remarks, he stated, "The presence of artificial intelligence is causing major interference, disruption in how we think about life and the School of Business Studies is particularly impacted by such interferences and innovations."

This makes it pivotal to hold such conferences addressing the evolving

challenges and opportunities presented by AI. Furthermore, Dr. Zaidi recognized the SBS for hosting its 3rd international conference on the pertinent topic of AI, emphasizing that we are behind the curve in Pakistan on this front and therefore need to catch up and adapt as faculty.

Welcome remarks were given by Dean SBS and Conference Chair, Dr. Abdullah Zafar Sheikh, who shed light on the potential of AI to drive business success. Dr. Sheikh stated, "We are living in an era which is nearly impossible without artificial intelligence. Universities are key actors in the development of digital culture and business schools take center stage when it comes to such discussions and dialogues."

He further emphasized that "The goal of business school is to ensure that our curriculum and pedagogy is sufficiently technology infused and how we can leverage from artificial intelligence and digital transformation."

Associate Professor SBS

and Conference Convener, Dr. Irum Saba, delivered the introductory remarks, emphasizing the uniqueness of IBA's SBS International Conference in bringing together academic scholars from Pakistan and around the world, along with industry practitioners.

She added that this third conference received 130 research papers (from around the world), articles, and case studies submissions.

More than 15 universities of Pakistan participated in the conference and the IBA is delighted to provide this platform for intellectual discourse on AI and its nuances.

Chairman, Higher Education Commission (HEC), Sindh and Guest of Honor, Dr. Tariq Rafi, commended IBA for organizing the conference on such a relevant topic. He shared his thoughts on how artificial intelligence can be applied in education. He stated, "Through strategic partnership with industry leaders, development agencies, and international organizations, we are working to bridge

the gap between the academia and the industry."

He added that by bringing together leaders, practitioners, policy makers from around the world, we can collectively explore the possibilities, challenges, and ethical complications of AI-driven innovations and disruptions.

Federal Minister, Maritime Affairs, Pakistan and Chief Guest, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, highlighted the importance of AI in modernizing industries and improving operational efficiencies.

He stated, "Today's topic of Artificial Intelligence is of great importance. Businesses in Pakistan, many of which are family-run, have not taken advantage of the innovations of AI." He emphasized the significance of AI, as it offers immense opportunities for our youth and can propel our country towards greater economic achievements.

Keynote speakers at the conference included Professor of Leadership & Management for Healthcare and Director of Global



Business School for Health, University College London (UCL), Dr. Nora Colton; Department Chair of DAN Management, Western University, Canada, Dr. Geoffrey Wood; and Associate Professor of Finance, Montpellier Business School, France, and Poznam University of Economics and Business, Poland, Dr. Adam Zaremba.

Dr. Colton in her keynote address stated, "Universal healthcare is impossible to achieve in our current model without

innovation. And that's where innovation and AI come in.

Health needs cannot be left unaddressed." She emphasized the critical role of AI and innovation in transforming global healthcare. She also highlighted challenges like workforce shortages, rising costs, and the impacts of pandemics and climate change.

Using UCL as a case study, she stressed the importance of systemic technology adoption to improve healthcare effi-

ciency and productivity. Dr. Wood focused on several critical aspects of AI and its implications, focusing on five components: significant events, calibrating intelligence, the double-edged sword of technology, AI and its associated hype, and an overview of AI's workings, including a detailed exploration of how AI works, along with the questions and challenges it raises. He emphasized the challenges of integrating AI with humanity, noting that while

technology offers substantial benefits, it can also have unforeseen consequences. Additionally, Dr. Wood addressed the ethical responsibilities involved in the development and application of AI, urging a more profound consideration of these factors.

Multiple panel discussions, keynote addresses, and parallel technical sessions took place on both days of the conference, delving into the intricacies of AI, innovation, and business disruption.





## In brief

## PCB denies NOC to Usama Mir

LAHORE (Web Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has refused to issue a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to leg-spinner Usama Mir to participate in T20 Blast tournament. The board said the centrally-contracted players could play only two leagues per year under the policy, adding that Mir has already participated in two leagues from July 2023 to May 2024. It said that the player had participated in The Hundred and Big Bash League. Usama Mir was scheduled to represent Worcestershire Rapids in the T20 Blast. However, the franchise has cancelled agreement with him after he was denied NOC. West Indies player Hyden Walsh has replaced him in the team.

## PAF, Wapda qualify for seims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and Wapda have moved in the semifinals of All Pakistan Muhammad Majid and Abdul Nasir Memorial Basketball Tournament at Siddique Memon Sports Complex Karachi. On the third day of the six-day event, Pakistan Air Force had shown some aggressive game against Police to win the third consecutive victory by 75-40 points. Mehtab Akram scored 18 points and Mohammad Akhtar scored 14 points for the PAF side, said a press release. In the second match, Balochistan faced another defeat against Sindh Greens by 43 points to 85 points. Taimour Zaheer and Rana Athar of Sindh Greens scored 15, 15 points respectively. In the third match, Punjab Rangers defeated Sindh Whites by 81 points to 56 points. Muhammad Mudassar scored 26 points and Fakhar Akram scored 16 points played a vital role for Rangers victory. In the fourth match, Wapda also won their third consecutive victory against Sindh Greens thanks through their attacking game to win the match by 91-50 points. The last round of pool matches would be played on Friday while the semifinals on June 1st.

## Lamichhane denied visa for T20 WC

KATHMANDU (AFP): Nepal said Thursday the US embassy had denied controversial star Sandeep Lamichhane a visa and there was a "slim or no chance" he would play in the T20 World Cup. The T20 World Cup begins on Saturday, co-hosted by the United States and West Indies, with Nepal's first game on June 4 in Dallas. Nepal wanted to select spin bowler Lamichhane, who had his eight-year sentence for rape quashed on appeal this month. The former captain said last week his US visa had been denied, calling the decision "unfortunate". Chhumbi Lama, central committee member of the Cricket Association of Nepal, said their subsequent bid to push for a US visa had failed. "There is a slim — or no chance — for him to be involved in the World Cup," Lama told AFP. "The Cricket Association of Nepal had lobbied to the US embassy through different Nepal government agencies, but the visa was denied." Lamichhane, 23, was once the poster boy for cricket in Nepal, but was not included in the original squad because of the conviction for raping a young woman in a Kathmandu hotel in 2022. The International Cricket Council said that all T20 World Cup squads had been named by the May 25 deadline. Any alteration to Nepal's squad would now require approval from the ICC's event technical committee.

## New York boosts security after reported specific threats to Pak-India match

WASHINGTON (Reuters): New York will boost security for the upcoming T20 Cricket World Cup in June, the governor said on Wednesday, after reports of threats especially related to the India-Pakistan match.

"In preparation for the @cricketworldcup, my team has been working with federal & local law enforcement to keep attendees safe," Governor Kathy Hochul wrote on X, adding there was "no credible threat at this time."

ABC News cited a New York City Police Department bulletin saying the tournament and its related events in New York City could be viewed by extremists as an opportunity to commit acts of violence or disruption.

"Recent pro-ISIS propaganda which specifically referenced the upcoming India-Pakistan match at this major event ... raises concerns and reinforces the need for heightened vigilance" among security partners, the bulletin is quoted as saying by ABC News.

Nassau County Police Commissioner Patrick Ryder said the World Cup received a Daesh Khorasan-linked threat in April and more specific threats over the India versus Pakistan match.

World Cup matches between India and Pakistan, which have not played a bilateral series in several years due to tense political relations, are

among the most viewed sporting events in the world.

Hochul said in a statement New York State Police had been directed to increase enforcement presence, surveillance and screening processes for the tournament.

Cricket has three formats — Tests, One Day Internationals and T20s, with T20s being the newest. The ninth T20 World Cup will run from June 1-29, with matches at nine stadiums — six in the West Indies and three in the United States.

The India-Pakistan June 9 contest will take place in at the Eisenhower Park stadium in Nassau County, New York.

## Fakhar, Shaheen, Imad advace in ICC Rankings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman, Shaheen Afridi and Imad Wasim has gained in the ICC Men's T20I Team Rankings following the ongoing series between England and Pakistan.

In the latest weekly update that also considers performances in the last two matches of the Bangladesh-USA series and the ongoing series between England and Pakistan, Pakistan opener Fakhar Zaman has advanced from 57th to 51st, England captain Jos Buttler inched up to seventh position while Jonny Bairstow was up eight places to 36th, said a press release.

In the bowling rankings, Shaheen Afridi was up three places to 11th while Imad Wasim is another Pakistan player to gain, up 14 places to 38th.

For the USA, Steven Taylor has made big gains, progressing 28 places to

109 in the batting rankings while for Bangladesh, Rishad Hussain has moved up 38 places to 52nd in the bowling rankings.

Meanwhile, Two-time champions West Indies have moved up to fourth position in the ICC Men's T20I Team Rankings, ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, which they co-host from June 1 to 29.

The winners of the 2012 and 2016 editions of the tournament were ahead of New Zealand and South Africa after their 3-0 win over South Africa, who were pushed down to seventh position in the list led by India.

India, winners of the inaugural edition in 2007, were on 264 rating points, 2021 champions Australia are second with 257 points, defending champions England third with 254 points and the West Indies two points behind them on 252. New Zealand were on

250 while Pakistan and South Africa are both on 244 points with Pakistan slightly ahead on decimal points.

The West Indies players too have reaped the benefits of their superb performances in the home series not long before their tournament opener against Papua New Guinea in Guyana on 2 June.

Opening batter Brandon King is up five places to eighth position after topping the series aggregate with 159 runs and Johnson Charles, who hammered 69 off 26 balls to be named Player of the Match in the third T20I, is up 17 places to 20th.

Kyle Mayers was another batter to move up, gaining 12 places to reach 31st position with an aggregate of 102 runs while left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie has advanced a whopping 84 places to 27th after finishing with eight wickets in the series.

## Kompany insists call from Bayern Munich was no surprise

MUNICH (AFP/APP): Vincent Kompany was officially presented as Bayern Munich's new coach on Thursday, insisting he did not share the football world's surprise at his appointment.

Bayern's decision to take a gamble on the 38-year-old former Manchester City defender took many people by surprise because his first foray into managing in the Premier League ended with the relegation of his Burnley side two weeks ago.

But Kompany said: "I think the aspect of being surprised is because you assume it is the only club that called and you only assume it because I am a private person. "Maybe I was surprised by the first call but it wasn't from Bayern Munich" he told the press conference, speaking in a mixture of German and English.

"My mentality is that I never haven't ever worked for a top club in my head," Kompany said.

Kompany replaces Thomas Tuchel after failed attempts by Bayern to lure Bayer Leverkusen boss Xabi Alonso. Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann and Austria's Ralf Rangnick to one of the biggest jobs in the game.

Reflecting on Bayern's recruitment process, he said with a smile: "The only thing I can say is, the fact I am here means they are doing a very good job!"

And he set out a clear vision of how he wants to shape his new team which has just suffered its first trophyless season for 12 years.

"As a coach, you have to coach who you are as a person. "I grew up on the streets of Brussels. I want the players of Bayern Munich to be brave and

have personality on the ball. I want the team to be aggressive. I want the team to represent my character, to be brave and aggressive."

After a successful playing career where he captained Manchester City and the Belgian national team, Kompany returned to his first club Anderlecht to begin his managerial career.

He moved to Burnley in 2022 and took them to the Premier League as second-division champions, before crashing back to earth with a poor season in which they won just five games and slipped back into the Championship.

Bayern's sporting director Max Eberl believes they have made a sound investment in acquiring Kompany, someone he said had been on their radar "for a long time".

## First-ever hockey academy in an educational institution inaugurated

RAWALPINDI (APP): Women hockey is set to get a major boost in Pakistan as the country's first-ever hockey academy in an educational institution was inaugurated at Vigar-Un-Nissa Post Graduate College for Women Rawalpindi on Thursday.

Member National Assembly (MNA) Hanif Abbasi, who was the chief guest, inaugurated the academy. Besides others MNA Daniyal Chaudhry, Olympian Khawaja Junaid, Political Secretary British High Commission Cormic Dreelan, Group Head Allied Bank Faisal Ghauri, Principal Vigar-Un-Nissa College Zahida Parveen attended the inauguration ceremony.

"The ultramodern astro-turf turf, which presently costs around Rs 35 million, was imported during the PML-N government's last tenure, but unfortunately

this asset was not utilized till to date.

"I'm must appreciate Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy and Allied Bank for joining hands to make this facility functional for our female athletes.

"The college has around 6,000 students and I hope it will provide some shining stars for the national women hockey team," he said. Daniyal Chaudhry on the occasion expressed the hope that the initiative would have great impact on the students as well as the broader community.

"It is heartening to see Khawaja Junaid Academy is nurturing the talent from the grassroots level, ensuring that young girls receive comprehensive training in both the technical and strategic aspects of hockey.

"I'm sure the success of this academy will pave the way for similar initiatives

in other parts of the country," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Khawaja Junaid said that the academy was aimed at identifying and nurturing budding players to represent Pakistan at the national and international levels.

He said the long-term vision for the academy included hosting tournaments, establishing exchange programmes with international hockey academies, and producing players who can represent Pakistan at the global level.

"We have provided experienced coaching staff for the academy, while Allied Bank will be providing financial support for the coaching purposes", he added.

Faisal Ghauri in his remarks said Allied Bank was proud to support Khawaja Junaid Academy as it would help promote



LONDON: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in group photo during a reception hosted by Pakistani High Commissioner in honor of Pakistan Cricket team. —APP Photo

## Pakistani cricket players to bring WC with hard work: Naqvi

LONDON (APP): Interior Minister and Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday hoped that the World Cup would come to Pakistan with hard work of Pakistani cricket team.

Addressing a reception hosted by the Pakistan's High Commissioner in the UK, Dr Mohammad Faisal in honour of the Pakistan Men's Cricket Team and the management at Pakistan House, London, Mohsin Naqvi said that entire cricket team of Pakistan was giving their best to the game. He urged the Pakistan's fans to keep supporting the team on their upcoming tour to the United States of America.

The PCB chairman said that team management was independent in making decisions about players which he added important for delivering good performance.

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan on the occasion stated that he was very happy to welcome Pakistan Cricket Team at London and wished them best of luck for upcoming matches.

He said that Babar Azam was his favourite batsman and hoped the team would win in Babar's captaincy.

Welcoming the team, Dr Mohammad Faisal said that Pakistani diaspora in UK was waiting for Pakistani team's tour to England. He said that team's presence in United

Kingdom was uniting the cricket loving communities. The High Commissioner wished the team best of luck for the upcoming matches.

Pakistan Cricket team players and management thanked the High Commission and Pakistani diaspora in UK for expressing unprecedented support and the warm welcome.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, former Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, UK's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, Pakistani cricket legends and a large number of Pakistani diaspora in London also attended the reception.

## Pakistan clean sweep Volleyball Series against Australia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's team has made history by clean-sweeping the first-ever three-match Volleyball Series 2024 against Australia, here at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex, in a thrilling finale on Thursday.

In the third and final match, Pakistan team emerged victorious over Australia by 3-0 with a score of 26-24, 25-20, and 25-20, showcasing exceptional skill and determination.

The chief guest of the final match was Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program, Rana Mashhood, who distributed prizes among the players.

This clean sweep marks a significant milestone for Pakistan's volleyball team, demonstrating their top notch skills on the international stage.

The team's outstanding performance has earned them a well-deserved victory, and fans were ecstatic about their historic win.

The series victory shows team's hard work and dedication, and this win would boost the popularity of volleyball in Pakistan. With this triumph, Pakistan's volleyball team has outshined in the international arena displaying top performances in the series.

## Djokovic cruises at French Open as fans hit by alcohol ban

PARIS (APP): Novak Djokovic reached the French Open last 32 for the 19th successive year on Thursday as Roland Garros organisers banned alcohol from the stands in an effort to counter growing complaints from players over disrespectful, rowdy fans.

Defending champion Djokovic cracked 43 winners past Spain's 63rd-ranked Roberto Carballes Baena to canter to a 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 win. The three-time champion, seeking a record 25th Grand Slam title, goes on to face either Gael Monfils of France or Italian 30th seed Lorenzo Musetti.

Djokovic holds a 19-0 winning record against Monfils and has defeated Musetti four times in five meetings. However, the Italian gave the Serb a major scare at the French Open in 2021 when he won the first two sets before having to retire injured in the decider. "It was a difficult match against Roberto. He hit a lot of very good and precise shots," said Djokovic.

"The last game of the first set I played really well and started to play at a higher level. At the end of the match I was then playing very well." Also easing through to the third round on another rain-hit day in the French capital were women's title contenders Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina.

However, the behaviour of fans at the tournament, which was brought into focus by Belgium's David Goffin's claim that he had chewing gum spat at him, prompted a series of measures to clampdown on loutish behaviour.

"Alcohol has been allowed in the stadiums until now but that's over," tournament director Amelie Mauresmo told reporters.

However, alcohol including beer from mobile vendors, will still be sold around the grounds. Mauresmo said fans will be ejected if they throw something at a player and that "umpires have tighter, even more precise instructions on keeping the crowd under control". Fourth seed Alexander Zverev, who effectively ended Rafael Nadal's French Open career in the first round, defeated Goffin 7-6 (7/4), 6-2, 6-2.

Zverev arrived in Paris on the back of winning the Rome Open title and is the only player to reach the semi-finals at the last three French Open tournaments.

On Friday, a Berlin court will hear an appeal by Zverev against a fine for allegedly assaulting his ex-girlfriend. He received a 450,000-euro (\$487,000) fine in October but appealed the ruling earlier this year, leading to a full trial.

The 27-year-old is not

required to attend the proceedings and insisted on the eve of the tournament that he "believes in the German system". On Thursday, he refused to further discuss the case. "I have said everything before the tournament," he said. After only nine singles matches were played after a Wednesday washout, 55 second round ties were scheduled on Thursday. Amongst early winners were world number two Sabalenka who fired 27 winners past Japanese qualifier Moyuka Uchijima to win 6-2, 6-2.

- 'Blanket and tea' - The two-time Australian Open champion, a semi-finalist in Paris in 2023, has made at least the last four at her past six Grand Slams and is expected to be Iga Swiatek's chief rival in the Pole's quest for a fourth French Open title.

Sabalenka will take on close friend Paula Badosa of Spain for a place in the last 16. "It's not the best weather. I feel like going back to the hotel. Getting a blanket and hot tea, and Netflix," said the Belarusian who had the benefit of playing under the roof of Court Philippe Chatrier. Fourth-seeded Rybakina, the only woman to defeat Swiatek on clay this year, was similarly untroubled. She eased past Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands 6-3, 6-4.

## Peshawar secures gold in men's squash

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar clinched the gold medal in the men's squash event at the ongoing Under-23 Inter-Regional Games, held under the auspices of the Directorate of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at various venues on Thursday.

After the competition, the result was 11-7, 11-8, 7-11 and 11-9 while Azan beat Shamlan 11-6, 11-4, 11-13 and 11-9.

According to the results of the day, in the 50 kg weight competition, M. Salman of Peshawar won the gold, Zahidullah of Bannu won silver, while Muhammad Sulaiman of Kohat and Mobin Malik of Mardan won bronze medals. In the 55kg weight category Muhammad Ibrar of Peshawar won the gold medal, Rohan got silver medal, Sabir Khan of Malakand and Abdullah of Mardan got the bronze medal.

In 60kg Shahabuddin Sonaka of Peshawar won the medal in this event Mudassar of Hazara came second while Amir Hamza of Kohat and Abdullah of Peshawar got bronze medals.

In the 67kg Bilal of Peshawar won gold medal, Ahmad of Hazara won silver medal and Asad Ullah of Malakand and Ahamd Rehman of Kohat claimed bronze medals. In the 75 kg event, Arshad of Malakand won the gold while M Salman of Mardan won the silver medal and Adnan and Hazara's Sher Qadir Ali won the silver medal. In the 84kg weight category, Rahad Khan of Peshawar won the gold medal by defeating Misbah of Kohat.

In the 90kg weight Adnan of Bannu won the gold medal by defeating Sher Qadir Ali and Haris Habib of Kohat beat Ihtisham of Peshawar in the individual event and Hamid of Mardan got a bronze medal.

The results of the other sports were as follows. In the Badminton event Peshawar, Swat, Mardan and Bannu moved to the semi-finals. In the first quarter-final, Peshawar beat Dera Ismail Khan while Bannu beat Kohat and Mardan beat Hazara.

In the first semi-final of the ongoing cricket at the Hayatabad Cricket Stadium, Mardan qualified for the final by defeating Peshawar by 23 runs. After winning the toss and scoring 130 runs in the first game, Mohsin Jamshed stood out with 35 runs. From Peshawar, Mudassar took the charge. Numanullah and Numan Ali dismissed the two players.

On this occasion, Sports Events Hayatabad Sports Complex Nimatullah Marwat was the special guest. Deputy Director Operations Jamshed Baloch and Director Operations Azizullah were also present on this occasion.





## In brief

### Free medical in Kasur

ISLAMABAD (APP): A successful three-day free medical and eye camp was organized by Pakistan Rangers Punjab in collaboration with Saylani Welfare in the Kanganpur area of Kasur. The camp, which concluded recently, provided medical assistance to over 900 individuals, including women and children, from border villages. PTV reported on Thursday. The camp offered a range of medical services, including surgeries for those suffering from eye diseases. A total of 189 people underwent successful eye surgeries during the camp, bringing hope and improved vision to many. The local community expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the conduct of the camp, which brought much-needed medical attention to the under-served area.

### Police arrest three robbers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Sadiqabad Police while conducting raid here managed to arrest three accused allegedly involved in robberies and street crimes and recovered Rs87,000, two mobile phones, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad police rounded up three robbers namely Danish, Noor ul Islam and Muhammad Hussain. He informed that cash Rs 87,000, two mobile phones, weapons and other items were recovered from their possession. The arrested accused would be challenged with concrete evidence, SP Rawal, Faisal Saleem said adding, the accused who attacked the life and property of the citizens could not escape from the grip of the law.

### One killed in traffic accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): One killed while another sustained serious injuries on Thursday in a traffic accident near the Baloch Colony Flyover on Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi. According to a private news channel, the accident occurred when an over speeding car collided with another car coming from the opposite direction. The deceased was identified as Zaigham, while the injured was identified as Ali. Both the injured and the deceased were promptly transported to a nearby hospital for further medical treatment. Police has initiated an investigation into the incident to ascertain the exact cause of the collision.

### 16 lawbreakers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other lawbreakers here on Thursday arrested 16 accused besides recovering over 780 grams charas, over 42 liters liquor, five 30 bore pistols, a 9mm pistol, ammunition and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Pirwadhai police held Tariq for having 780 grams charras. Pirwadhai, Kalar Syedan and Cantt police rounded up Khizer Hayat, Zia ul Haq, Jamsheed, Faisal, and Imran and recovered 42 liters liquor from their possession. Gujar Khan, Airport, Morgah, Dhamial, and Kalar Syedan police arrested Qadir, Saleem, Khurram, Haider, Rehan, Mubashir and Saqib and recovered five 30 bore pistols, a 9mm pistol and ammunition. Meanwhile, Wah Cantt and Kalar Syedan police conducted raids at illegal petrol agencies and netted Shehzad, Habib ur Rehman, and Asad on recovery of 43 liters petrol and other items. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are under process.

# Roshan Pakistan programme to end energy crisis: Awais

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Energy "Power Division" Awais Ahmad Khan Laghari on Thursday said that the 'Roshan Pakistan' programme will eliminate the energy crisis in the country.

While holding a press conference with Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik in Islamabad, Federal Energy Minister Awais Laghari said that the electricity demand was 25,820 megawatts across Pakistan on May 29, of which 21,588 megawatts have been produced and supplied from within our system. However, he said 4,232 MW was the load shedding.

He said that this load shedding was done only on those feeders, where losses are occurring. "From 20 per cent to 100 per cent where our losses are occurring, 4,232 megawatts of electricity was not provided there" he added. Awais Laghari said that where the losses are less than 20%, unfortunately, the power supply to these feeders also remained off for a few hours.

The Federal Minister of Energy said that if they start supplying this electricity to these areas, the losses will increase to such an extent that the Pakistani economy will be further destroyed. "Until our distribution companies determine their direction and address these losses with the help of provincial governments, this load shed-

ding will continue" he informed with certainty.

He said that more steps are being taken in the energy sector including elimination of load shedding and electricity theft. He said that the Roshan Pakistan programme will end the energy crisis by showing the data on the demand and supply of each feeder.

He said that reforms in the energy sector with the help of provincial governments are indispensable. The federal minister further said that they have contacted the provinces and told them to set an example in preventing electricity theft.

Let me give you an example of my area, the minister stated. "A place in Dera Ghazi Khan has only three hours of electricity in 24 hours" and added, "It is very easy for me to provide full-time electricity there but we preferred principle over politics". He said that reforms in the energy sector with the help of provincial governments are inevitable, adding, action will be taken in areas where electricity is stolen and those who are involved in this malpractice would be punished.

Awais Laghari said that he took strict measures to prevent electricity theft in his constituency and the people involved in electricity theft were also arrested in Dera Ghazi Khan. He said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government

has assured that they will provide assistance to reduce electricity theft and a proposal is being prepared with them in this regard.

The minister said that the complaints related to the overbilling of consumers are being redressed. He said that the DISCOs will share daily electricity demand and supply data which will help in controlling load shedding problems. He said that there are many defects in the distribution sector, adding, there will be no compromise regarding governance in electricity companies.

New boards of electricity companies will come in next week, he added. Awais Laghari said that there is no shortfall of electricity in the country at present, 7000 megawatts of electricity is being generated from water.

He said, "We have plenty of electricity and transmission capacity". To a question, he said that our weakness was in the arbitration court case against NTDC. The federal minister said that such systems have not been implemented through which information reaches the public, tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, each DISCO will present the details of electricity transmission and demand of load-shedding.

Awais Laghari said that data used to be presented on Roshan Pakistan, now that data will be restarted under this program.

## Siddiqui denounces Imran's 'alarming' comparisons to 1971 crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): PML-N Parliamentary Party Leader in Senate, Senator Irfan Siddiqui Thursday strongly criticized the portrayal of the country's current situation by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder (PTI) Imran Khan as akin to the 1971 East Pakistan crisis.

Siddiqui expressed concern over the controversial message posted from Imran Khan's verified official X account, which he said, gave a misleading impression that Pakistan was heading towards another Fall of Dhaka.

"Such claims are alarming, unacceptable, and deplorable," he said in a statement.

Siddiqui said Imran

Khan's post was not merely a tweet, but a "meticulously scripted short film with a clear anti-army agenda".

The film employs images from Bangladeshi and Indian media, which are usually used to malign the Pakistan Army, thereby revealing its malicious intent, he added.

He emphasized that the tweet echoed a "hostile mentality" against military personnel.

"Those who are making hollow and empty arguments to justify the pictorial tweet must tell the people how they will cover the press talk of PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub with the help of a written statement outside Adiala Jail along with former President

Arif Alvi, who just after meeting with Imran Khan in jail reiterated the same thoughts as conveyed in Khan's contentious tweet", Siddiqui said.

He said the PTI founder's likening himself to the most popular politician Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, making accusations against the current military leadership and drumbeating a new Dhaka fall was "highly condemnable".

Siddiqui said, "Imran Khan's rhetoric might be setting a stage for another incident like May 09," he said, referring to last year's violent attacks by the PTI party workers at national institutions and monuments.

## BISP's aid reaches 93,000 families: DG

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Naveed Akbar said on Thursday that the programme is currently providing financial assistance to approximately 93,000 families living below the poverty line.

In an interview with Pakistan Television News, he detailed the scope and impact of BISP's initiatives and said that BISP was committed to alleviating poverty in the country.

The April-June instalment of this program has been launched nationwide. "We provide Rs. 10,500 every quarter per family, he stated.

Additionally, BISP runs two significant support programs aimed at enhancing education and nutrition for the beneficiary families. "We are supporting the education of 9.4 million children from these families, ensuring they attend school and receive the necessary educational support," he noted.

One key initiative was the Health and Nutrition Program, which offers nutritional and financial support to pregnant and lactating women, helping them secure nutritious food for themselves and their children.

Addressing concerns about transparency, he

assured that the BISP surveys were meticulously conducted. "No one has discretionary powers to add or remove anyone without following a specific process, he said.

He further said that 650 centres across the country were established where families could update their records if their poverty score changed. To combat fraud, BISP collaborates with agencies and cyber-crime units, he added.

He urged beneficiaries to trust only the official communication channel saying, "All our messages come from the number 8171. Do not trust any other number."

## Poliovirus found in five more sewage samples

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The National Polio Testing Laboratory has released a report on sewage samples from 5 districts, confirming the presence of poliovirus.

According to the report today, the virus was found in sewage samples from Karachi, Quetta and Kohat. This year, 153 out of 39 districts' sewage samples have tested positive for poliovirus.

The sampling for polio testing was conducted from May 9 to 15 in 5 districts. Karachi East's Rashid Minhas Road and Machhar Colony sewage samples tested positive for poliovirus, sources said.

This year, 19 out of Karachi East's sewage samples and 5 out of Karachi Central's sewage samples have tested positive.

The poliovirus found in Karachi's sewage is genetically linked to the local strain. Quetta's Tausabad area sewage sample also tested positive, with 19 out of Quetta's sewage samples testing positive this year.

The poliovirus found in Quetta's sewage is genetically linked to the Chamman strain, sources said.

According to sources, Kohat's Faqirabad area sewage sample tested positive for poliovirus, with this being the fourth time this

year that poliovirus has been detected in Kohat's sewage. The poliovirus found in Kohat's sewage is genetically linked to the Peshawar strain.

It is pertinent to mention here that the third polio case of 2024 was reported in Pakistan as a minor girl from Kila Abdullah was diagnosed with the virus. The girl, from Balochistan's Kila Abdullah, showed symptoms of paralysis on April 20. The health ministry said that genetic testing of the affected girl's samples is still underway. All of the three cases reported this year are from Balochistan.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov along with his delegation called on Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani at Aiwan-e-Sadr. —APP Photo

## Ashrafi advocates for issuance of structured Fatwa to curb extremism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC), Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has emphasized the urgent need for fostering dialogue across various societal factions.

Speaking at a national seminar on 'Countering Violent Extremism', organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) here Thursday, he highlighted the ongoing challenges of violent extremism in Pakistan and said that this call for dialogue would reduce misunderstandings and create an environment of mutual respect among different groups, promoting a more harmonious and resilient community.

Ashrafi further highlighted the importance of implementing Paigham-e-Pakistan, a comprehensive doctrine designed to bridge gaps between different schools of thought and unify religious scholars and leaders in a joint effort to combat extremism across the nation. "This collaborative strategy is seen as vital for ensuring long-term peace and stability not only in the country but also in the region," he added.

Addressing the misuse of reli-

gious decrees, Ashrafi called for the establishment of a mechanism for issuing Fatwas on matters of public importance. Citing the examples of Dar-ul-Ifra institutions in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, he emphasized the need for a government-level oversight to ensure that religious decrees are issued responsibly and effectively.

He said Dar-ul-Ifra Saudi Arabia and Dar-ul-Ifra Egypt were renowned for their systematic approach to issuing Fatwas as these institutions employ qualified scholars who deliberate on religious matters in a methodical manner, providing well-considered and balanced religious opinions. He suggested that Pakistan could benefit from adopting a similar model, which would help mitigate the risks associated with arbitrary and unqualified Fatwas that can incite violence and extremism.

Ashrafi proposed taking action against those who issue Fatwas contrary to Shariah, the Quran, and the Sunnah. He urged religious and political leaders to transcend personal interests for the greater good

of society. He called for a united effort to create an enabling environment that promotes the equitable growth of all community members.

Ashrafi underscored the importance of collaboration and selflessness among leaders to foster social harmony and counteract extremism. By prioritizing collective well-being over individual gains, he said leaders could contribute to a more inclusive and peaceful society. He opined that this approach was essential for addressing the root causes of extremism and building a resilient society capable of withstanding divisive influences.

In his concluding remarks, he emphasized the urgent need for expeditious judicial proceedings in cases related to blasphemy and violent attacks on minority communities. "Swift hearings are essential to prevent prolonged injustice and to send a clear message that such acts of violence and discrimination will not be tolerated," he asserted, emphasizing the importance of reinforcing the rule of law and upholding the principles of equality and human rights.

## Mashood emphasizes crucial role of technology for empowering youth

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman of Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan on Thursday emphasized the crucial role of technology for empowering youth.

Addressing the event titled "Bridging the Academia-Industry Gap" organized in collaboration with Microsoft and the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the chairman PMYP said that equipping graduates with the latest technological skills is paramount to ensuring their success in the competitive global landscape.

He said that such events pave the way for a more collaborative and future-proof education system.

Microsoft Pakistan brought together leading figures from academia and industry focusing on nurturing collaboration and equipping graduates with the skills needed to thrive in the modern workplace. The event commenced with a welcome address by Dr Zia Ul Qayyum, Executive Director of the Higher Education Commission followed by a Keynote by Microsoft's Director of Education Industry, Central Europe Middle East and Africa Jaye Richards Hill.

Highlighting the importance of this

collaboration, Jaye Richards Hill stated, "At Microsoft, we believe that technology can be a powerful bridge between academia and industry. By equipping students with the latest tools and technologies, and fostering collaboration with industry leaders, we can prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow."

Jibran Jamshad speaking to the audience on latest AI offerings by Microsoft, highlighted a recent survey from the World Talent Initiative, which paints a picture of a rapidly changing workplace driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The survey revealed a significant increase in AI adoption, with a staggering 75 per cent of knowledge workers now using AI tools in their daily tasks. Interestingly, nearly half 46 per cent reported adopting these tools within the last six months, highlighting a rapid acceleration in AI integration. Despite initial fears of job losses due to AI, the survey also identified a talent shortage in cybersecurity, engineering, and design.

Companies are now prioritizing AI skills when hiring, and employees are actively upskilling themselves through platforms like LinkedIn Learning to stay competitive.

LinkedIn has introduced a new AI skill framework for organizations, offering over 50 free learning courses to help professionals at all levels enhance their AI expertise. This suggests that AI is creating new opportunities for those who are willing to adapt. Imagination and innovation took center stage with a showcase by Team Sign Saathi, a group of GIKI students whose project reached the Imagine Cup global semi-finals. Top Imagine Cup projects were also showcased to dignitaries.

The event also featured remarks by Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, the Chairman of Higher Education Commission.

Marking a significant milestone, the event witnessed the launch of Microsoft Copilot, Microsoft Learn for Educators & Microsoft for Startups – Founders Hub in the presence of respected Vice Chancellors of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This initiative signifies Microsoft's commitment to supporting academic institutions in Pakistan and empowering the next generation of tech leaders. The event concluded with a networking session, solidifying the connections between academia and industry leaders.

## Hilal e Ahmar Pakistan chairman calls on KP Governor

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Anjuman Hilal e Ahmar Pakistan, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari called on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi at Islamabad and discussed the organization services in the country

especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Chairman Hilal e Ahmar Pakistan informed the Governor about its organization's financial and human assistance to people during recent floods and torrential rains in the country especially in KP.

The Governor said the

role of Hilal e Ahmar Pakistan during natural calamities and accidents were of prime importance.

Tue Governor underlined the need for further strengthening of provincial branches of Hilal e Ahmar Pakistan for speedy services to the depressed.

Underscoring the need

of the organization active role in solution of human problems created due to environmental changes and climate variations, the Governor suggested establishment of a mechanism for strengthening of linkages of the provincial branches with local and international donors.



ISLAMABAD: President Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL) Tahir Yaqoob Bhatti calls on Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi.



### Water project completed

KABUL (BNA): The strengthening of two water barriers and the cleaning of the Cheshma Garmak, Sheikh's Shrine and Shur Ab canals in the Chal and Farkhar districts, as well as in Takhar, have been completed at a cost of 600,000 Afghanis. The fortification of the water barriers and the cleaning of the mentioned canals were carried out under the supervision of the Taloqan River Basin Authority with financial support from the FAO office.

### 1,000 deported in one day

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of Afghanistan (MoRR) reported the forced expulsion of nearly a thousand Afghan refugees from neighbor country. The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of Afghanistan announced Thursday that 979 Afghan migrants returned after being expelled from neighbor country. The deportees returned on May 29 through the Spin Boldak border and the Torghundi border.

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

## Flood victims urgently request assistance

BAGHLAN (TOLOnews): A number of families affected by the recent floods in Baghlan are urgently requesting assistance.

These flood victims report that, in addition to the loss of lives, they have suffered significant financial losses due to the recent floods.

Abdul Ahad, a flood victim, said, "The floods have completely devastated the people of the Larkhab Valley. There are no schools, livestock, or mosques left; everything is completely destroyed."

Another flood victim, Mohammad Ishaq, said, "Where we are standing now, this was our home, and the flood took it all away."

Shahi Khan, a 70-year-old resident of the Larkhab Valley in the Doshi district of Baghlan, says he lost

four family members due to the recent floods.

This elderly man added that in addition to the loss of lives, the recent floods took all his possessions, and he is currently in a dire situation.

Shahi Khan said, "Our request is for help in any way possible because we are struggling in every aspect. We have lost family members, and our land, livestock, and livelihood are gone."

The devastating floods in Baghlan have not only destroyed residential homes and agricultural lands but have also damaged some public infrastructure, including the Kabul-Baghlan highway.

Some travelers and drivers are calling for the reconstruction of this route.

Ashraf Ghani, a driver, said, "Our request from the

Islamic Emirate is to rebuild the roads that have been destroyed by the floods."

However, Alem Majidi, the spokesperson for the governor of Baghlan, says that the survey of affected families has begun, and necessary assistance will soon be provided to them.

Majidi said, "Recently, teams from various organizations have been formed here, and the affected people are being surveyed. All affected individuals will be identified to provide them with assistance."

In the past three weeks, deadly and devastating floods have caused significant damage not only in Baghlan but also in several other provinces of the country.

Many of these flood victims are currently living in the open or under tents.

## Cost of rail transport tariffs opped by 50%

KABUL (Ariana News): Uzbekistan railway officials in Termez city say they have reduced the cost of Uzbekistan-Hairatan rail transport tariffs by 50%.

Goods from China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other countries enter Afghanistan via this route.

Uzbek railway officials have said in order to facilitate and expand trade relations between the two countries and to support Afghan businessmen, they have reduced the tariffs by 50 percent.

Previously, specific tariffs were charged for the shipments coming from the Afghan government. For example, goods brought in over Friendship Bridge were charged \$200 for a 40-ton wagon and \$100 for a 20-ton wagon. Similarly, different amounts had to be paid at customs based on different services, but now all payments up to \$500 have been waived until the end of the year, said Farhad, head of Termez railway.

Meanwhile, Afghan traders in Balkh welcomed Uzbekistan's initiative and the creation of facilities in the rail transport sector, but have urged the Islamic Emirate to create more facilities.

Balkh railway officials also said that to increase transfers, they need better facilities so as to ensure a smooth transfer of goods.

The efforts to start practical work on the Afghan-Trans railway line are also underway; this line will start in Uzbekistan and end in Pakistan.

## Iran receives 300m cm of water from Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Amid ongoing tensions over Iran's water rights from the Helmand River, Iran's special representative for Afghan affairs has confirmed that 300 million cubic meters of water from Afghanistan have entered Iran.

Hassan Kazemi Qomi, Iran's special representative for Afghanistan affairs, told Islamic Republic-affiliated media that Iran will fully receive its rightful share of water from Afghanistan.

What is referred to as Iran's water rights from the Helmand River is based on a treaty signed in 1973 between the two countries' officials, stipulating that a specified amount of water must flow from Afghanistan to Iran each year.

According to Iranian claims, this treaty was not implemented by the Taliban administration, leading to one of the most serious verbal tensions between the Taliban officials and the Iranian government last year, which resulted in consultations and negotiations.

Following these negotiations, it is reported that 300 million cubic meters of water from Afghanistan have entered Iran. Mr. Qomi, emphasizing the "commitments of the Afghan side," expressed hope that Iran's entire water share of 820 million cubic meters from the Helmand River will be fully met.

It is worth noting that, following consecutive droughts in Afghanistan, new analyses of snowfall and rainfall across the country indicate that Afghanistan will experience a wetter year than a normal water year.

Najibullah Sadaid, a water and environmental management specialist, told Khaama Press that new findings containing scientific analyses of climatic phenomena show that the extent of snow cover and the snow thickness is significantly greater than last year.

According to him, "this year, except for some elevations of the Pamir and Hindu Kush mountains, snow is more abundant across the country than in a normal water year," indicating that Afghanistan has been rescued from a severe drought crisis.

## Minister assessed progress of housing project

KABUL (BNA): Sheikh Hamdullah Nomani, the Acting Minister of Urban Development and Housing, met with the head of the contractor company for construction of housing to orphan families in the residential city of Lashkar Gah, Helmand.

The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing's press office reported in a statement, that the meeting focused on plans to expedite the project's implementation while ensuring quality and standard construction.

Sheikh Hamdullah Noomani assigned the head of the contractor company to promptly resolve existing issues and complete the land and map plans relevant



to the ministry. He urged the contractor to take practical steps for construction of the boundary walls of the

project, which is set to be built on 272 acres of land. It's worth mentioning that a residential city for 500

orphan families is set to be built in Helmand province, funded by the Al-Gharafa Charity Foundation of Qatar.

## Foreign Ministry welcomes Moscow's stance on interim govt

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate in a statement praised Russia's stance on engaging with the interim government.

The ministry said that Kabul has always sought to strengthen relations with Moscow.

Part of the statement reads: "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomes the remarks of the leadership, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and other Russian officials expressing political will to expand relations with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The Islamic Emirate has also established good diplomatic relations with that country."

Russian President Vladimir Putin, at a press conference in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, called Russia's engagement with the interim government of Afghanistan important and added that Moscow's relations with the interim government are significant and necessary. Vladimir Putin told

based on mutual respect and shared interests."

Zabihullah Mujahid, spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, told TOLOnews: "The recent remarks of Russian officials have been positive and indicate that they want to keep the door open for engagement with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The Islamic Emirate has also established good diplomatic relations with that country."

Russian President Vladimir Putin, at a press conference in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, called Russia's engagement with the interim government of Afghanistan important and added that Moscow's relations with the interim government are significant and necessary. Vladimir Putin told

reporters: "There are problems in Afghanistan, these problems are clear and known to everyone; but the question is how to establish relations with the current officials? We need to build it in a way -- these are people who govern their country and territory, they are now in power, we must move forward based on realities and build our relations on that basis."

Recently, Zamil Kabulov, Russia's special representative for Afghanistan, and Sergey Lavrov, the country's Foreign Minister, spoke about removing the Islamic Emirate from Russia's list of terrorist organizations.

However, on the other hand, the spokesperson for the White House National Security Council reacted to Russia's decision to remove

the names of Islamic Emirate officials from the list of terrorist groups, saying that this decision will have negative consequences for other countries.

John Kirby said: "The Taliban have not fulfilled any of their commitments, the way they treat people, Afghan girls and women, and their management of the economy. We are not in a position to recognize the Taliban as the official government of Afghanistan. If Russia does this, we believe it will have bad consequences for others."

In a joint statement published following the Russian president's visit to Uzbekistan, establishing peace and stability in Afghanistan was mentioned as a priority for Moscow and Tashkent.

## Police report remarkable drop in crime



KABUL (BNA): The Panjshir security command's spokesperson reports an unprecedented reduction in criminal incidents in the province.

According to BNA, Abidullah Oqab Farooqi, the spokesperson for the Panjshir Police Command, stated that over the past two months, only six criminal incidents have occurred

throughout the province.

He added that these incidents, recorded from the beginning of March to the end of April this year, included assault, theft, and injury.

In connection with these criminal incidents, three individuals have been arrested while ten other suspects remain at large. Oqab Farooqi mentioned

that since the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, criminal activities in Panjshir have decreased to an unprecedented level.

He attributed the reduction in criminal incidents to the efforts and leadership of the Panjshir police in ensuring the security of the residents of the province.

## Ministry sells 20,000 tons of Bamyan zinc

BAMYAN (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum sold 20,000 tons of zinc extracted from the Yakawlang mines in Bamyan, worth nearly 8 million dollars, to a domestic company.

Shahabuddin Delawar, the acting head of this ministry, stated that this tender was held among 31 bidding companies, with one company winning by offering the highest bid. The acting head of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum said: "This will strengthen the Islamic system, lead to self-sufficiency, and contribute to the development of Afghanistan."

The head of the winning company said that they will first transfer this zinc to Iran and after processing, it will be sold to European countries. Sheikh Ahmad, the head of the winning company, said: "We are currently transferring it to Iran, where it will be semi-processed, then sent to Turkey, and from there to European countries."

However, Homayoun Afghan, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, added that contracts for the exploration and extraction of lead and zinc mines have been awarded to

domestic companies in Herat, Kandahar and Bamyan provinces.

Afghan said: "The mines that have currently been contracted are in the provinces of Ghor, Bamyan, and Kandahar. We have signed contracts for four large mines in Ghor with domestic companies, and their processing will be done 100% in Afghanistan."

Some experts always emphasize the establishment of mineral processing plants and add that due to the lack of such plants in the country, minerals are exported at much lower values than the global market rates.

## Group of women open coffee shop in Kabul



KABUL (Ariana News): A group of four young women have opened a coffee shop and library in Kabul where women and girls can get together to read, enjoy a cup of tea, or treat themselves to a sweet treat.

The owners of the coffee shop, called Dari Roya-e-Zan, which in English means a Woman's Dream,

is in Khair Khana in the city. It was officially opened during a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

For women who attended the event, this was a welcome initiative, especially for those barred from attending school or university.

With over 1,000 books to choose from, women can order tea or coffee, and read

at leisure in a safe environment. The owners, who asked not to be identified, bake their own cakes and other sweet delights, which are also available to customers.

An initiative like this has been widely welcomed by women in Kabul, especially young girls who have been barred from school above Grade 6 and from university.

## UN: 27% of people in Afghanistan facing food crisis

KABUL (Khaama Press): 3.2 million children under five years old, suffer from "acute malnutrition," and 3.4 million others are in the "emergency phase."

Several humanitarian aid agencies and the United Nations have previously warned of an increasing emergency level of food insecurity in Afghanistan.

Reports indicate that the return of refugees and the rise in natural disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, have increased this need.

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## ARCS assists 7m people

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) states that in the past year, they have provided medical services and food aid to nearly 7 million people.

Mudassir Hamraz, the spokesperson for the organization, adds that they strive to assist an even greater number of needy individuals in the country.

The spokesperson for the Afghan Red Crescent said, "We are providing health services. The Afghan Red Crescent Society has provided services to nearly seven million people over the past year."

Meanwhile, some patients and those in need have welcomed these aids and call on all other aid organizations to increase their assistance in health and essential food supplies. Mir Rahman, a patient, said, "Hospital services are progressing well, and the staff treats people kindly and attends to emergency patients." Another patient, Abdul Khaleq, said, "The facilities available here are provided well; however, with these problems, our and the nation's issues cannot be resolved." The Afghan Red Crescent Society is a humanitarian charity organization that provides services to victims of natural disasters and offers medical services to those in need in the country.



# KP CM directs stringent crackdown against drug addicts

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting held here on Thursday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur approved two separate action plans one each for anti-drugs and anti-beggary in the provincial capital Peshawar.

Under anti-drugs action plan, special steps would be taken for the rehabilitation of over 2000 drug addicts identified in Peshawar, in addition to launching stringent crackdown against the drug addicts as well as drug supply chains across the city.

Provincial Minister for Excise and Taxation Mian Khaliq-ul-Rehman, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, Administrative Secretaries of concerned departments, Commissioner Peshawar and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The meeting also decided to establish special task force to ensure implementation of action plan against drug addiction in the provincial capital.

Under the plan, private

sector institutions/organizations having optimum skills and expertise in the relevant field, would be engaged for the rehabilitation of drug addicts. After undergoing of four months long rehabilitation period, the rehabilitated persons would also be imparted with two months technical and vocational courses. The rehabilitated persons would be sent back to their homes, however they would be followed up constantly for six months so as to ensure that they are not suffered again from that scourge. Similarly, the drug addicts belonging to other provinces would be sent back to their respective home zones after completing the rehabilitation process.

The participants on this occasion, expressed great concerns over the prevailing trends of drug addiction in the educational institutes and decided that special initiatives would be taken to protect the students from this menace.

It was also decided to launch awareness campaign in the educational institutes, further deciding that in the first phase, general screening of students would be carried out in the higher educational institutions. A committee to be headed by the Secretary

Higher Education would devise a mechanism in consultation with the administration of education institutes in this regard.

It was further decided that the screening report of students would be shared only with their parents. "Stringent crackdown would be launched against the big fishes involved in drugs trafficking", it was decided in the meeting, adding that the Excise and Narcotics Control department, Police and Anti-Narcotics Force would carry out joint operations for this purpose. Similarly, a special control room would be established at Chief Minister Secretariat for monitoring the actions against drug peddlers.

Addressing the participants, the chief minister underlined the need to have integrated approach to effectively deal with this challenge, adding that all the stakeholders would have to play their proactive role for this purpose. He said that protecting our young generation from the menace of drug addicts is the collective responsibility of all of us. The elements involved in drug peddling/trafficking should be dealt with iron hands in order to make the provincial capital free from drug additions.

## PTI founder acquitted in May 9 cases

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday acquitted in two May 9 violence cases.

As per details, the District and Sessions Court heard the bail pleas, where Judicial Magistrate Omar Shahab announced the verdict on two May 9 cases registered at Shahzad Town Police Station.

The court acquitted the PTI founder in both cases due to insufficient evidence. Imran Khan's counsel Mirza Asim Beg and Naeem Panjotha had completed their arguments on the bail pleas. The FIR was registered by an unauthorized person and the PTI founder was charged under Section 109, but no evidence was presented, said the lawyer.

Earlier, former PM Imran Khan filed a plea seeking an acquittal plea in May 9 violence cases. The PTI founder's counsel Naeem Panjutha appeared before the court and filed a plea for Imran Khan's acquittal. Judicial Magistrate Sohaib Bilal inquired about he number of cases against the PTI founder and asked if the challan against Khan was collected in the cases.

Naeem Panjutha told the court that Imran Khan's Tosha Khanna sentence is suspended, and the sentences in the illegal marriage case, cipher case are still pending. Violent clashes were broken out across Pakistan after former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested on May 9, 2023. The protests were held in remote and major cities as the party workers were agitated due to their chairman's arrest, with Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad summoning the armed forces to ensure law and order. Army installations, including Corps Commander's house in Lahore, had come under attack during the protests by PTI workers. It is pertinent to mention that the PTI founder is named as main accused in all the May 9 riots cases.

## Above normal rainfall expected

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Met Office has forecast above normal monsoon rainfall in most parts of the country in its June to August outlook for this year.

According to the weather outlook, central and northern Punjab as well as southern Sindh likely to get above normal rainfall. Northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan may get nearly normal rainfall in monsoon, whereas most parts of Baluchistan may get slightly above normal rainfall during June, July and August this year. The Met Office predicted that the second half of the monsoon season is expected to be wetter than the first half.

Nationwide, the daytime maximum temperature is expected to be nearly normal however northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan may experience warmer than normal maximum temperature during the season. Nighttime temperatures are likely to exceed normal levels across most regions of the country, with marked deviation anticipated over northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and southwestern Balochistan, according to the outlook. High temperatures in Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and southwestern Balochistan, may accelerate snowmelt, increasing river flow.

Daytime temperature is likely to remain above normal all over the country during start of the forecast period but the expected rains towards the end of the season will normalize the high temperature. Strong winds, dust storms, and gusts are highly likely in the season. Flash flooding is anticipated in hill torrents of Koh-e-Suleman and urban flooding in major cities in Sindh, Punjab, AJK, and KP due to heavy rainfall during the season. The weather department outlook also stated that the atmospheric conditions are supportive for the likelihood of heat-wave in the plain areas of the country, especially over the southern half in June.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Jeyhun Bayramov addressing a joint press conference.

# People's problems to be solved online: Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon, stated that all decisions made in the Sindh Cabinet meeting are aimed at the welfare of the people of Sindh. The appointment of primary teachers in Obawaro was approved during the Sindh Cabinet meeting. Additionally, it has been decided to arrest individuals who dispose of debris on the roads.

Addressing a press conference after the Sindh Cabinet meeting, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the Sindh government spends billions of rupees on solid waste management. He highlighted that people also dispose of debris from their houses onto the roads, which leads to blocked drains and other problems. Therefore, during the Sindh Cabinet meeting, it was decided that those who throw debris on the roads should be arrested. In this regard, instructions have also been issued to the SHOs.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that during the Sindh Cabinet meeting, it was also decided to introduce an e-logistics portal and provide e-payment facilities. There are 48 departments in Sindh, and 16 of these will be digitized. The work of all these departments will be computerized to ensure transparency. People's problems will be solved online, with support from the World Bank, and this work will be completed this year. These departments include food, environment, revenue, SBCA, municipalities, and others. After digitization, all public services in these departments will be accessible



online from home. Instructions have also been issued to the departments to create the necessary rules for this initiative. He said that a modern hospital, school, autism center, and playground for special children will be built on 100 acres of land along Malir Expressway, a project that has been approved by the Sindh Cabinet. Previously, many centers have been established through the efforts of the Sindh government and Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon announced that in the Cabinet meeting, the registration fee for electric cars has been extended for another two years at Rs 1,000. Previously, we introduced fifty EV buses, and now more EV buses will be operated, with new routes being started. Our target is to operate eight thousand buses.

He mentioned that the Sindh Cabinet meeting also included discussions with the federal government regarding the steel mill. There has been a detailed discussion between the federal and Sindh governments, and it has been decided to resume operations at the steel mill. The Sindh government plans to create an export processing zone on the land of the steel mill, designating it as a special

economic zone. The earnings from this zone will support the steel mill financially.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that "Roti, Kapra, Makan" is the slogan of the People's Party. The Sindh government, led by the People's Party, plans to build housing societies for various departments. In these societies, government employees will be provided plots at a very low cost, with the option to pay for the plots in installments.

He mentioned that a committee consisting of cabinet ministers has been formed to address the issue of government land for the corporate agricultural farming project. This committee will make decisions and present recommendations in the next cabinet meeting. The caretaker government had allocated 52,713 acres of government land for this project.

Sharjeel Inam Memon announced that the water plant on the Hub River has been approved in the Cabinet meeting. The project will commence within a year, and it is expected to address and resolve the water problem in Karachi soon.

He mentioned that new EV bus routes will be started in Karachi. Sindh is the first province in Pakistan, with Karachi as the first city, to operate eco-friendly EV buses. These EV buses help protect the environment, save fuel, and offer reasonable fares. Sindh is also the only province that first began working on alternative energy and established wind power generators. Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that the government's policy on drugs is founded on zero tolerance. The battle against drugs is not a small endeavor; it is a significant one that may require considerable time to achieve success.

## ET uncovers interesting finding during NA-48 rigging case hearing

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Tribunal (ET) overseeing the alleged rigging case in National Assembly Constituency NA-48 has uncovered a significant revelation. During a crucial hearing, Form 45 of independent candidate Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar and PTI candidate Ali Bukhari were found to be matching, raising eyebrows and sparking intrigue in the ongoing legal battle.

Amidst a charged atmosphere in the courtroom on Thursday, presiding judge Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri issued a stern order in the absence of Returning Officers (ROs). Expressing dissatisfaction over their non-appearance, the judge levied a fine of 15,000 rupees, underscoring the gravity of the situation.

The drama escalated further when the lawyer representing PML-N leader Raja Khurram Nawaz, victor of NA-48, claimed the absence of certified forms. However, Justice Jahangiri swiftly rebutted, questioning the

plausibility of such a scenario, emphasizing that the Election Commission furnishes all necessary documents to the winning candidates. In a bold move, the Election Tribunal imposed a hefty fine of 15,15,000 rupees on PML-N leader Raja Khurram Nawaz and the Returning Officer for their failure to produce certified copies of Form 45 and the required response. As the hearing progressed, the spotlight intensified on the comparison of Form 45s of various candidates.

Board of Revenue (FBR) and other high officials. **PM for mutually beneficial stronger Pakistan-Azerbaijan trade, investment ties:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, expressing satisfaction on the positive trajectory of relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, stressed the need to further strengthen mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, energy and security domains.

He was talking to Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov, who paid a courtesy call on him at the Prime Minister's House. The prime minister expressed appreciation that both sides had always extended their full support to each other on issues of core interest, and reaffirmed that they would continue to do so at every international forum.

He felicitated Foreign Minister Bayramov on Baku's selection as the host city for COP29 to be held in November this year and said that Pakistan would work closely with Azerbaijan to ensure the successful outcome of that important event. Fondly recalling his productive and fruitful interactions with President Ilham Aliyev during his visit to Baku in June last year, the prime minister reiterated his invitation to the Azerbaijan's president to undertake an official visit to Pakistan later this year.

## PTI leaders and lawyers booked in Maneka attack case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A terrorism case has been registered against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and lawyers for slapping Khawar Maneka outside a court in Islamabad, police said on Thursday.

A First Information Report (FIR) has been registered at Ramna Police Station Islamabad, and 12 policemen have become witnesses to the slapping incident. The names of 25 accused including PTI lawyers Naem Panjotha, Ali Ijaz Butter, Zahid Bashir Dar, Usman Gill, and Ansar Kayani were included in the FIR.

According to the FIR, as court proceedings commenced in Islamabad, PTI leaders and lawyers began gathering outside the court. Advocate Burki was leading the PTI lawyers and activists outside the court. When the hearing ended and Khawar Maneka came out, Advocate Burki shouted that Maneka had testified against their leader Imran Khan so he should not be left alive. The FIR said Advocate Burki then pushed Khawar Maneka and Naeem Panjotha Advocate assaulted him with punches.

Yesterday, an unpleasant situation developed outside a court in Islamabad when prior to pronouncement of the decision in the illegal nikah case against former prime minister and PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi, PTI lawyers and party workers attacked Khawar Maneka, the petitioner in the case.

PTI female workers threw bottles at Maneka and even had a scuffle with him, while PTI lawyers slapped him inside the courtroom. As the Islamabad district and sessions court did not announce its already reserved verdict in the Iddat case against Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi, the complainant, Khawar Maneka – the former husband of Bushra Bibi – was assaulted outside the court.

# PHC seeks reply for delay in Senate elections at KP

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprised of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Waqar Ahmad directed Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to submit a written response within three days regarding the delay in Senate elections on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) seats, on Thursday.

PHC also asked the ECP to clarify when the Senate elections will be held in the province. The petition filed by former Senator Azam Swati, who is also a candidate for the upcoming Senate elections while his counsel Ali Zaman along Ali Azeem advocate and Mohsin Kamran Siddiq appeared before PHC on behalf of ECP.

The petitioner's counsel argued that the ECP's decision to delay the Senate elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is illegal and unconstitutional. However, ECP's lawyer Mohsin Kamran Siddiq informed the court that two cases related to Senate elections

are pending before Supreme Court of Pakistan, one regarding reserved seats and the other regarding oath-taking.

Justice Waqar Ahmed asked the ECP's counsel to clarify when the Senate elections will be held, as the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are being deprived of their representation in the Senate. The court has directed the ECP to submit a written response and clarify the position regarding the Senate elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while adjourned further hearing till 6th June.

Meanwhile, Peshawar High Court (PHC) has disposed of a petition filed by Provincial Minister Arshad Ayub against enlisting him in the Provisional National Identification List (PNIL) and has directed the Chief Secretary and Provincial Government to respond to a petition filed by Provincial Minister Fazal Shakoor against inclusion of his name in the stop list, on Thursday.

A two-member bench of

the PHC comprising Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Waqar Ahmed heard the petitions. The counsel Ali Azeem Afridi represented Arshad Ayub and argued that the petitioner is enlisted in the PNIL without any reason, which bars him from travelling abroad.

Additional Director Legal Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Abdul Rehman Afridi informed the court that Arshad Ayub's name has been removed from the list. Regarding Fazal Shakoor's petition, the court directed the Chief Secretary and Provincial Government to respond to the petition. Fazal Shakoor's counsel argued that his client's name was included in the PNIL without any reason, which is why he cannot travel abroad. Additional Director Legal FIA, Abdul Rehman Afridi argued the court that Fazal Shakoor is enlisted in the PNIL on the recommendation of the Provincial Home Department. PHC adjourned further hearing in the plea.

# Indian capital swelters as temp hits all-time high

NEW DELHI (Reuters): Delhi recorded an all-time high temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius (127.22 Fahrenheit) on Wednesday as extreme heat conditions gripped the north and western parts of India, causing students to faint in schools and drinking water taps to dry up.

A heat wave alert has been in place for large parts of India since last week but on Wednesday the temperature in Mungeshpur, a densely packed corner of Delhi, crossed the 50 C

mark, the weather office said. The Indian capital has had temperatures of over 45 C in previous years but never gone as high as 52.9 C. Streets in Mungeshpur in northwest Delhi were deserted and most shops were shut as people stayed indoors to avoid the searing heat, while residents handed out free cold drinks in Narela area temperatures went up to 49.9 C on Tuesday.

"When we go outside it seems like someone is slapping our faces. It has become difficult to live in

Delhi," said resident Akash Nirmal.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) said it is examining the data and sensors to look into Mungeshpur's temperature which was an outlier compared to other stations. "There is so much heat in Delhi that students are fainting, some are falling sick, some are facing dehydration. The students are facing a lot of trouble in this heat. The fans don't work in our institutions," said Nidhi, a student, who gave only their first name.

## Bring May 9 planners

(Continued from Page 1)

forum also expressed complete solidarity with the people of Palestine and condemned serious human rights violations and war crimes being perpetrated in Gaza, supporting the International Court of Justice decision to stop Rafah Operation and all other operations within the Gaza Strip.

The forum underscored that politically motivated and vested digital terrorism, unleashed by conspirators duly abetted by their foreign cohorts, against State institutions is clearly meant to try to induce despondency in the Pakistani nation, to sow discord among national institutions, especially the Armed Forces, and the people of Pakistan by peddling blatant lies, fake news, and propaganda. However, the nation is fully cognisant of their ugly and ulterior

motives and surely the designs of these nefarious forces will be comprehensively defeated, InshaAllah.

The forum noted that planners, perpetrators, abettors, and facilitators of 9th May need to be brought to justice for the collective good of the country, and that without swift and transparent dispensation of justice to the culprits and establishing the rule of law, stability in the country will ever remain hostage to the machinations of such elements.

The forum resolved to continue to fully support the government's initiatives in various domains for sustainable economic growth and curbing illegal activities, including smuggling, hoarding, electricity theft, implementation of One Document Regime, dignified repatriation of illegal foreigners, and safeguarding of the national data-

base, etc.

The COAS appreciated the high standard of training displayed by formations during various exercises and the excellent performance of officers and troops in counter-terrorism operations. The COAS commended the formations for their high morale and round-the-clock operational readiness. The participants expressed their complete satisfaction with the steps being taken at the Army level for the training, administration, and welfare of serving and retired officers and troops.

The forum noted the significant milestone achieved by Pakistan on Youm-e-Takbir and its stabilizing impact on the region. The Conference concluded by affirming the resolve to neutralize all threats to the security and stability of the country with the full backing of the proud nation.