

Uzbek FM due tomorrow
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov will pay two-day official visit to Pakistan from May 09 (Wednesday). The Uzbek FM will call on PM and hold in-depth talks with Deputy Prime Minister and FF Ishaq Dar on a wide range of bilateral issues of mutual interest, with special focus on trade and connectivity, according to a Foreign Office press release.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 105

Regd. No. 241

SHAWWAL 29 1445 -- WEDNESDAY, MAY 08 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



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

Saudi team's visit significant headway in bilateral ties: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the visit of Saudi investment delegation to Islamabad was a significant headway in the relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting of the Federal Cabinet, appreciated the federal ministers, government officers and staffers for their efforts to ensure the success of the Saudi delegation's visit, a PM Office press release said.

The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Aviation, accorded approval to Air Sial to launch its flight operations for China, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and Kuwait. The approval was granted under the National Aviation Policy 2023 and Air Services Agreement. It also gave a nod to the signing of Memorandum of Understanding for formation of the Joint Trade Committee between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Columbia.

The cabinet approved to transfer the control of Directorate General of Special Education from the Human Rights Ministry to the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. The body also endorsed the decisions of Cabinet Committee on Chinese investment projects taken in its meeting held on April 30.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the Saudi business delegation highly commended the preparedness and confidence of the federal ministers and other government team members, displayed during their visit, which augured well for the country's future.

The prime minister, informed the cabinet members that during the interaction with him at the dinner reception he had hosted for them on Monday, the appreciation by the head of Saudi delegation, bought him immense pleasure for it being unprecedented.

He said he would hold a separate meet-

ing with the cabinet members and the government officials who had put in their utmost efforts to ensure the success of Saudi delegation's visit. Prime Minister Shehbaz told the meeting that the head of Saudi delegation, who was an intelligent and highly educated, acknowledge during meeting with him in the presence of the ministers, that guidance, presentations and follow-ups by Pakistan side, were a pleasant surprise and very encouraging.

The members of Saudi delegation also acknowledged that they were returning with satisfaction and pleasure and would report to the Saudi leadership that they had witnessed a new era in Pakistan. The prime minister congratulated the cabinet members and federal secretaries for their hard work, adding that the appreciative words by the Saudi delegation, made his evening as well as that of the whole of Pakistan.

Shehbaz for strict departmental proceedings against negligent officials over T&T system: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed for initiation of strict departmental proceedings against the officials held responsible in an inquiry report for showing negligence in the enforcement of Track and Trace System (T&T) with flawed planning and inflicting losses to the national economy.

The prime minister chaired a high level meeting over Track and Trace System of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The system was introduced to monitor production at cigarette manufacturing, fertilizer, sugar and cement industries, identification of counterfeit products and ending of smuggling.

The prime minister observed that due to faulty planning in the system and negligence in its enforcement of the system caused the national economy to suffer. A report of the inquiry committee formed to probe the issue was presented before the prime minister.

SC adjourns IHC judges letter case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday adjourned the hearing of in suo motu notice case on letter of six judges of Islamabad High Court (IHC) for indefinite time.

A six-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, and comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan heard the case. During the course of proceedings, the chief justice remarked that pressure could be exerted in every way and they were focusing on that. "It has also become a big pressure that we are relentless," he added.

He said that some people had taken over the social media and "live court proceedings are our reaction to see for yourselves how the

court proceedings are conducted". Referring to Article 209 of the Constitution, the CJP said the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) should not be burdened as it was not its responsibility.

Addressing the Islamabad Bar Association's (IBA) lawyer, the CJP said that the SJC could change the code of conduct. "You should write a good letter to the Council, if they deemed it appropriate they may accept it." The IBA's lawyer Ahmed Hassan Shah said that the responsibility would not be determined without investigation into the matter.

Even for the judges, the method and the law would be the same, he said. The Supreme Court Bar Association, in its comments submitted to the SC, said it would never compromise on the independence of the judiciary, calling for investigations against those

who interfered. It further said that there was a complete code of conduct regarding the responsibilities and protection of judges.

The SCBA said the IHC had the power of contempt of court proceedings and it should have utilized it. It was beyond understanding that why the high court did not initiate the contempt of court proceedings. During the hearing, the Karachi Bar Association also submitted its proposals in the case. It said that judges should be bound to inform the competent authority within seven days of any attempt of interference, and the authorities should be bound to ensure the protection of judges. It said that if anyone gave a false statement then action should be taken against him. The Supreme Court and high courts should set up a special cell for such report. Later, the case was adjourned.

founder chairman Imran Khan in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail. Barrister Gohar said the PTI would hold rallies across the country to mark the May 9 anniversary. "We will hold peaceful protests on May 9 and the ticket holders will lead them."

Speaking about his meeting with the party founder, Barrister Gohar said he held consultations with Khan on political and legal matters. Referring to the Supreme Court's order suspending the Peshawar High

Court's (PHC) ruling depriving the PTI of its reserved seats, Gohar said he provided guidance to the incarcerated party founder in the light of the verdict.

"We hope that our 78 snatched seats will be returned," he said referring to the February 8 general election. He said US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome had requested a meeting with PTI and added that the envoy was briefed on the alleged human rights violations in the country.

KP govt to send request for assembly session

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision on oath-taking from elected representatives on reserved seats in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly, the provincial government has decided to call assembly session.

According to official sources, the assembly session could be summoned on May 10. They said that after the decision of the apex court, there was no obligation to administer oaths to elected members on reserved seats.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Peshawar High Court had upheld the decision of the election commission to distribute reserved seats to other political parties in the House and directed the provincial government to call assembly session for oath-taking. The provincial government and assembly speaker challenged the decision in the Supreme Court which suspended the decision of PHC.

'No way to impose governor's rule in KP'

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has denied imposition of the Governor's rule in the province. Talking to media at Mazar-e-Quaid here Governor Kundi said, "They are trying to become political martyrs, but we will not allow them to become a martyr". "We are not thinking about imposing the Governor's rule in KP. When a small person sits on a big seat, he will talk in this manner," KP governor remarked.

"The law will not allow him to go back to KP, if the chief minister will attack Islamabad," Kundi said. "The chief minister would have to go to some other place then," governor said. KP's governor alleged that the chief minister has bagged the seat after betraying the PTI's founder. "He has made the close aides of the PTI's founder as OSDs," governor said.

Nawaz seeks acquittal in Toshakhana reference

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has sought acquittal in the Toshakhana reference. According to details, the accountability court heard the Toshakhana reference against President Asif Zardari, Nawaz Sharif, and former prime minister and current Senate Chairman, Yousaf Raza Gilani.

Judge Naseer Javaid Ranjha conducted the hearing on the reference, and Arshad Tabriz advocate appeared on behalf of President Asif Zardari in court. Pleader Rana Muhammad Irfan appeared in court on behalf of Nawaz Sharif, who submitted a plea for acquittal of the former three-time PM.

The Frontier Post

Farmers' protests continue
F.P. Report

MULTAN: Farmers in various cities of Punjab continue to protest against the government's failure to procure wheat, leading to widespread demonstrations and hunger strikes in many areas. The protests, sparked by the government's inability to provide subsidies to small-scale farmers for wheat procurement, have expanded across the entire province.

Army committed to dismantle terrorist groups: DG ISPR

— May 9 perpetrators will not go unpunished as it's a case of entire Pakistan

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Director General Inter-Service Public Relations, Major General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry has disclosed that plot to kill Chinese engineers in Besham was hatched in neighboring Afghanistan. Addressing a news conference in Rawalpindi, he said the suicide bomber was the Afghan national and the vehicle used in the attack was also prepared in Afghanistan. He said four other key culprits have been arrested by the law enforcement agencies.

The DG ISPR pointed out that there are twenty-nine thousand Chinese nationals in Pakistan. Of these, twenty-five hundred Chinese are engaged with CPEC-related projects and 5500 others are working on other development projects. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said it is our priority to ensure security of all Chinese nationals and all possible steps are being taken in this regard.

The DG ISPR said the attack on Chinese engineers was aimed at sabotaging Pakistan-China friendship and hurt the CPEC project. He expressed firm commitment to completely dismantle terrorist groups and ensure protection of the people. Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said security forces conducted thirteen thousand, one hundred and thirty five intelligence based operations against terrorists and their facilitators.

He said that about one hundred operations are carried out on daily basis. The DG ISPR categorically said that nobody will be allowed to disturb law and order situation in the country. He said the Army Chief has stated that there is no place for terrorists inside Pakistan. He said it is

because of sacrifices of the security forces personnel and the people that the country is fast heading towards peace.

He said those involved in terrorist activities have no links with the state of Pakistan and Islam. Referring to the situation on the eastern border, the DG ISPR said Pakistan's civil and military leadership is fully cognizant of the planning being made in India to divert attention from its internal anarchy. Alluding to the Indian ceasefire violations, the DG ISPR said Pakistan Army has responded in a befitting manner and it will continue to do so in future. He said Pakistan is fully prepared for the defense of its integrity and sovereignty.

The DG ISPR said Pakistan stands by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters and will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to them for their right to self-determination. He said India is also involved in extra territorial killings of Sikhs. He said there are also evidence of the involvement of India in assassination of people inside Pakistan. When asked about May 9 incident, the DG ISPR said it is not the case of Pakistan Army, but of the whole Pakistani nation.

Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry emphasized that those involved in the attacks on military installations and disgrace of martyrs' memorials should be brought to justice at the earliest in accordance with the law of the land and the constitution. He said doing so is also important to ensure that the people have faith in the justice system. The DG ISPR said there are irrefutable evidence of the involvement of a particular party in the May 9 events. He said the narra-



tive based on falsehood cannot sustain.

The DG ISPR said they have no objection on the formation of a Judicial Commission for investigation into May 9 incidents. He, however, said this Commission then should also probe into the objectives of 2014 sit-in and the attacks on the PTV and parliament. He stressed it should also be seen as to how the resources of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were utilized for another onslaught on the federal capital.

The DG ISPR also mentioned the attempts made by a particular party to sabotage Pakistan's deal with the IMF. Responding to a question, the ISPR Chief said the constitution of Pakistan clearly states that Pakistan's integrity, security and defence cannot be undermined in the name of freedom of expression. He said it also bars from harming Pakistan's foreign relations with friendly countries. Major General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said freedom of expression does not allow ruining moral values of the society, disturbing public order, and tarnishing integrity and dignity of the higher judiciary. He hoped that the parliament will go for necessary legislation to check lies, propaganda and fake news.

Zardari for dialogue with all political forces in Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday said that certain quarters did not want stability in Balochistan and in the country and for the future of the province, they would talk to all the political forces in the province.

The president was given a briefing on the law and order and the progress on different ongoing development projects in the province. The meeting was attended by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Governor Balochistan Shaikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhel, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, provincial ministers and senior federal and provincial authorities, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the president underscored the need to eliminate smuggling which was causing damage to the national economy and observed that there was a deep link between terrorism and narcotics smuggling. He also stressed upon an effective mechanism for provision of job opportunities to the people living at the border areas. In the meeting, it was decided to commence consultations regarding adopting a joint national narrative against terrorism.

The president directed the law enforcement agencies to continue their efforts against terrorists. He said that they were fully cognizant of the backwardness and the frail economic situation of the residents of the province, adding that the province lacked health facilities when compared with other provinces. President Zardari also suggested that for the training of youth in the nursing and other sectors, system of Sindh government could be emulated, besides seeking its services in the health sector as well.

He opined that both the provinces could evolve a joint strategy for cooperation in different sectors of public welfare. The president stressed for seeking of coopera-

tion from different countries through Ministry of Foreign Affairs for provision of jobs to the technically educated and skilled youth of the province abroad.

For removal of backwardness of the province, release of allocated funds by the federal government was essential and for the public welfare oriented projects, funds could be released for certain projects on priority basis, he added. The president also underlined the need of outsourcing prospects over Kachhi canal and said that for the completion of projects, public-private partnership system could be evolved. He further proposed construction of dams and supply of water for making the lands cultivable and overcoming the paucity of water in the province by arranging for water supply from Central Asian countries.

The chief minister highlighted the governance, climate change issues and security challenges in the province. He said that due to lack of basic infrastructure and communication network in the province, in the far flung areas, the provision of basic facilities was a real challenge and stressed upon expeditious release of PSDP and other allocated funds for the mega development projects.

The early release of allocated funds could lead to timely completion of public welfare projects in the province, he added. Bugti further said that they were working seriously for maintaining peace in the province and for the future course, holding of negotiations could not be ruled out, adding that agenda in this regard should be reached with consensus at the national level.

During the meeting, cooperation of the federal government was sought over different uplift projects including Burj Azam Khan Dam, Kachhi canal, Hub-Dareji to Dadu road, besides other projects related to Gadani Ship Breaking Yard, Gwadar Port, imparting skills to youth and climate change.

President gets 'immunity' in Toshakhana vehicle case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In view of the constitutional immunity of the head of the state, an accountability court in Islamabad on Tuesday halted its proceedings against incumbent President Asif Ali Zardari in the Toshakhana vehicle reference.

At the outset of Tuesday's hearing, PPP's lawyer Farooq H Naik — counsel of President Zardari — appeared before the accountability court and filed a plea seeking to

halt the court's proceedings against his client. "As per the law, Asif Zardari has presidential immunity. The case against Zardari cannot proceed as long as he remains in office," argued the lawyer.

Approving his request, accountability court judge Justice Javed Rana halted the proceedings against the president in the Toshakhana case. The development came a month after the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), in a written reply submitted to the accounta-

bility court in the Toshakhana vehicle reference, requested to end the criminal proceedings against President Zardari, saying that he enjoys constitutional immunity.

It is pertinent to mention here that the NAB last month exonerated Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif in the same vehicle reference. The anti-graft body, in its report, had requested an accountability court in Islamabad to acquit the former premier.

Reforms being introduced in multiple sectors: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that the country standing at the crossroads was going through transformation and various reforms were being introduced in multiple sectors.

Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb and Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar he said that the country's economy was on the right track and all the indicators were positive.

The minister said that international organizations including financial journals had confirmed that the figures about the economic stability were correct. He said after coming into power, steps were taken by the government to reduce its expenses and privatization of loss-making public sector entities was part of that plan.

"Reforms in pension structure are being mullied in the government institutions across the board", he remarked. He said that pensions were a big hurdle in the government plan of curbing expenditure. He said that life expectancy has increased in the world and various countries had increased the retirement age. He said there was a proposal to increase the age of retirement across the board.

He said that a section of the media was speculating that it was aimed at some specific institution which was incorrect, if approved it would be implemented across the board. He said so far proposals regarding increasing the upper age limit for retirement and discussions were being held. Attaullah Tarar said that for avoiding fake news and propaganda, efforts were being made to take the people on board on various issues being discussed at government forums. He said at this stage, various proposals were being discussed at this stage and when any decision could be finalised, the masses would be taken on board.



PESHAWAR: A joint meeting was held between delegation of World Bank and high ups of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Tuesday.

Children with special abilities deserve most attention

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister for Social Welfare and Special Education Mashal Azam Yousafzai said that special children deserve the most attention of the society and the government.

Provincial government will take all necessary measures for the welfare of special children.

She expressed her views while addressing the annual prize distribution ceremony at Special Education Complex Mardan.

Member Provincial Assembly Tufail Anjum, former Member Provincial Assembly Sajida Hanif, Director Social Welfare Rafiq Mohmand, Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Junaid Khalid also participated in the ceremony. District Officer Social Welfare Jamal Shah and Deputy Director Special Education complex Aneeq Ahsan also addressed the event.

On this occasion, children with hearing, physical disabilities and blind children presented different tableau and national songs.

Deputy Director Aneeq Ahsan said that 421 children with different types of disabilities are studying in the institution. He highlighted the problems of the institution.

In her address, Advisor to Chief Minister Mashal Azam Yousafzai appreciated the talents of special children. She paid tribute to the parents of such children and especially the teachers who are performing the difficult task of educating and training these children.

She said I have chosen the social welfare sector at my wish so that I could serve the people with special abilities.

She said that 23 matriculating students from the institution will be given admission and hostel facilities in the intermediate class at special education complex Hayatabad. Whereas within a year in Mardan, educational facilities up to intermediate level will be provided. Many special children are out of schools, we will get a building on rent to admit them in schools where they will be equipped with the jewel of education. In this regard we are collecting detailed data of disabled people which will be helpful in policy making.

She specially encouraged to the girl who secured first position in her class and directed the Director Social Welfare to provide an electronic wheelchair to the girl.

Mashal Azam Yousafzai directed for extending the transport facility for special children to Rustam, while District Officer Social Welfare to immediately give the bus in Mardan to the Special Education Complex for the transportation of special children. She also directed for recruiting women attendants for buses.

On this occasion, Advisor to the Chief Minister Mashal Azam Yousafzai distributed prizes and shields to the special children who got prominent positions in different classes, while shields were given to the Adviser to the Chief Minister, Director of Social Welfare and other guests on behalf of the institution.

IGP prioritizes women's empowerment

PESHAWAR (APP): Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Khan, has committed to enhance the capacity and working conditions of the women police force in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, enabling them to contribute fully to establishing a peaceful society alongside their male counterparts. During the inauguration of a newly constructed hostel for lady police officers at the Police Training Center Peshawar, IGP Khan expressed these views. Also present at the event were Additional IG Police Training, Saqib Ismail Memon, Director Police Training Center, Hukam Khan, AIG (Gender) Anila Naz, and other senior police officers.

IGP emphasized the importance of gender equality, stating that women, constituting half of the population, deserve equal representation in all spheres of life, with their abilities fully utilized. He praised the capability of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa lady police officers, highlighting their contributions alongside male officers in the fight against terrorism, with some even sacrificing their lives. Recognizing the competence of women police officers, IGP assured priority measures to address their professional challenges, enabling them to play a pivotal role in the country's development effectively.

He expressed optimism that the newly constructed hostel, equipped with modern facilities, would facilitate a conducive environment for the training of women police officers. In a symbolic gesture, IGP inaugurated the hostel, designated for the residence of 128 lady police officers undergoing training, and participated in a tree plantation campaign at the Shah Kas Police Training Center. Additionally, Additional IG Police Training presented a souvenir shield to IGP during the event.

Hamza Foundation arranges trip for thalassemia patients

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Hamza Foundation Welfare Thalassemia Center and Blood Transfusion Services Peshawar KP Pakistan organized one day Safari Tourist Train trip from Peshawar to Atock Khurd for Thalassemia kids and their parents to mark "World Thalassemia Day 8th May" with an aim to create awareness about Thalassemia disease and its prevention and to spread the message to community that Thalassemia kids as human being have the right to enjoy the colors of life like other healthy people.

Famous poet, writer and educationalist Dr. Abaseen Yousafzai was the chief guest of the event while Divisional Superintendent Pakistan Railway Maqsood Jan received and warmly welcomed all the Thalassemia kids and guests on Cantt Railway Station Peshawar. Pakistan Railway arranged musical band for the welcome reception for Thalassemia kids.

The tourist Safari train reached on 12 pm at Atock Khurd Railway station where Station Master of Atock Khurd railway station, Azmat Jehangir received all the participants at the station. Founder Chairman Hamza Foundation Mr. Ijaz Ali Khan highlighted the importance of World Thalassemia Day and also delivered a lecture on Thalassemia disease and its prevention. He lauded the entire management of Pakistan Railway for their support & cooperation for arranging such a wonderful and unique trip for the Thalassemia kids and their families from Peshawar Cantt to Atock Khurd. Juices, chips, cold drinks, lunch and tea was also arranged by Hamza Foundation for all the participants. Thalassemia kids and their families too much enjoyed the journey by Train as well as they enjoyed horse riding, the scenic river side view and the Atock railway bridge on Indus River made during 1885 at Atock Khurd tourist spot.

Participants Abasin Yousafzai and others termed the tour as a commendable step by the Hamza Foundation for Thalassemia affected children and said that it was not just a fun tour but to express solidarity with these children. They said KP government has termed screening for thalassemia before marriage as compulsory in the province thus they emphasized on implementation of thalassemia test for all couples before marriage to prevent this genetic disease. All the kids, families and social workers thanked the management of Hamza Foundation for the arrangements of such a wonderful trip for the celebration of World Thalassemia day events.

Arbab asks public to show solidarity with Pak Army

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Arbab Khizer Hayat has said that the entire nation should wave the flag of Pakistan on houses and Cars on May 9 to express solidarity with Pakistan Army and the state. All the characters of May 9 have been exposed. Those who challenged the state and damaged the martyrs' monuments and government and non-government property are either imprisoned or absconding ?He said that Imran Khan and his group had come out with an agenda of rebellion in the country on May 9, which failed the people with the cooperation of security agencies ? He said that Muslim League-N and allied parties are standing by the side of Pakistan Army? Domestic and foreign criminals who look at the country with a bad eye are not entitled to forgiveness but to severe punishment ?

Power suspension notified

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Tuesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Shahi Bagh Grid Station on 9 th May from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Consequently, consumers of KSM, Industrial Naguman, Northern Bypass, Bakhsho Pull, Ghari Hamza, Old Naguman, Shah Alam, Latif Abad, Dilazak, Sirbuland Pura, Samarbagh, New Takht Abad, New Naguman and Khazana feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain also be suspended from Warsak Grid Station on 9th and 13th May from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Kochian 1,2, Mathra 1,2, Sardar Abad, Shahi Bala, Swat Scout, Shagai Industrial, Dheri Kandy feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Bannu Station on 9th and 11th May from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., resultantly consumers of City 1,2,3,4,5, Express, Fatima Khel 1,2, Wolen Mill, Cantt 1, 2, Haveed feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, the power supply will be suspended from Mingora Grid Station on 9th and 11th May from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Malam Jaba, Express Saidu Hospital, Bandai, Mingora 1,2,3,4, 5, Kabal, Nawa Kali, Saidu Sharif, Barikot 2, Odigram, Kabal 4, Matta 2, Faiza Ghat, Kabal 2, Gulda, Marghuzar, Saidu Hospital, Kabal 3, Gogdara, Takhta Band, Qambar, Singer, MES, Haji Baba, Shin, Saidu Baba, Bara Bandai, Shah Dara, Hospital Express feeders will face inconvenience.

The power supply will remain suspended from Mardan Grid Station on 9th and 14th May from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Mohabatabad, Express, SIDB, Shaikh Maltoon, Industrial, SIDB, Janabad, Pakistan Chowk, Canal Road, New Charsadda Road, New Manga, Saleem Khan, Gujar Ghari, Town, Muslim Abad, New Saleem Khan, Bacha Khan, MED, Benazir Children Hospital, Muhabatabad Road, Nissata Road, Sheikh Maltoon, Ahmat Abad, Misri Abad, PRC, Eid Ghah, Green Area, New Sheikh Maltoon feeders will face inconvenience.

Hot weather to prevail

PESHAWAR (APP): The Met Office has predicted hot weather condition across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the next 24 to 48 with considerable increase in the temperature during the day time. However, a westerly wave is likely to enter southern parts of the region on May 09 night and likely to grip most parts of the region on May 10 and 11. Rain, dust storm, wind storm are expected in Chitral, Lower and Upper Dir, Malakand, Buner, Swat, Shangla, Kohistan, Battagram, Torghar, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda, Peshawar, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Kurram, Orakzai, Hangu, Kohat, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, DI Khan, Tank, North and South Waziristan, districts from May 09 to 12. Hailstorm is also expected at isolated places during the period.

KP government begins wheat procurement

3,000,00 tons of wheat purchasing underwau: Minister

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The process of purchasing three hundred thousand metric tons of wheat is underway, with local produce being procured first followed by wheat from Punjab.

Minister for Food Zahid Shah Toru revealed that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has commenced the process of wheat procurement from the province's farmers.

A decision has been made to purchase three hundred thousand metric tons of wheat, with the procurement process expected to continue for two months, incurring an expenditure of 29 billion rupees.

Addressing the media on Tuesday, the Minister for Food, Zahid Shah Toru, stated that the procurement process of wheat from local farmers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has commenced. Meanwhile, Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur, is set to inaugurate the wheat procurement process from local farmers in Dera Ismail Khan on May 8th.

He mentioned that the warehouses in Dera Ismail Khan have a capacity of approximately 55 thousand metric tons.

Minister for Food Zahid Shah Toru further stated that they will purchase three hundred thousand metric tons of wheat,

amounting to a total cost of approximately 29 billion rupees. Concrete steps have been taken to enhance transparency in the procurement process, including the installation of cameras in warehouses, the establishment of monitoring control rooms for complaints, and the provision of payment to farmers within 24 hours.

Speaking about the transparency of the wheat procurement process, Minister Zahid Shah Toru mentioned that committees have been formed at the district level to inspect the quality of wheat. These committees include District Food Controllers, Assistant Food Controllers, district

administrations, revenue departments, representatives from flour mills associations, officials from the NAB, and anti-corruption authorities. Additionally, a complaint cell has been established, and citizens can lodge complaints by calling the hotline number 091-9225379. Moreover, a procurement app has been introduced to ensure real-time online recording of all transactions.

Minister Zahid Shah Toru appealed to the public, stating that farmers facing any difficulties can contact the complaint cell at any time, which operates at the district, provincial, and Chief Minister's Secretariat levels.

Gandapur elected while Kundi rejected four times by people: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Barrister Dr. Saif, the Advisor for Information and Public Relations to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has issued a statement regarding the public sentiment towards elected officials. He highlighted a stark contrast between the elected Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur, and the upcoming appointment of a new Governor. It's been noted that while Ali Amin Gandapur has been elected

by the people, Faisal Karim Kundi has been rejected four times.

The statement, released via a video message from his office, addresses the public's concerns and reactions. Dr. Saif emphasized the distinctiveness of public support for Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, indicating that his popularity extends beyond his constituency of Dera Ismail Khan.

It's anticipated that Chief Minister Gandapur will not only attend public gatherings but also actively

engage with the audience, introducing himself and his affiliation with Dera Ismail Khan.

Furthermore, Dr. Saif extended an invitation to the upcoming public gathering, inviting the prospective Governor to attend a Thursday session in D.I. Khan. He also underscored the importance of maintaining decorum during such events, urging attendees not to resort to any disruptive behavior such as throwing eggs or tomatoes.

Dr. Saif reiterated the responsibility to uphold

civility during these gatherings, ensuring a conducive environment for dialogue and exchange of ideas.

The distinction drawn between Ali Amin Gandapur's widespread acceptance and Faisal Karim Kundi's repeated rejection by the electorate sheds light on the dynamic political landscape in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As the region navigates through these transitions, public sentiment and engagement remain pivotal in shaping the course of governance and leadership.

Youth centric programme for Green Jobs launched



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The European Union launched a new programme to empower the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with essential skills demanded by the job market.

The launch event held at the Vocational Training Centre of Excellence in Hayatabad established with previous European Union support, marked a significant milestone of the Team Europe Initiative on building back better to support creation of green jobs in KP province.

Through this programme, the European Union (EU) and the Government of Germany aim to transform the vocational training landscape in KP through dedicated support to selected VET schools across the province that will be better

equipped, have better trained staff and curricula better catered for the demand of the labour market, thus paving the way for economic prosperity and sustainable development.

The EU's support will particularly focus on improving skills in key sectors such as agribusiness, water, and energy. The new support programme is not just part of the broader Team Europe Initiative involving the EU, France, Germany and Italy to build back better through green jobs creation, but also contributes to the EU's Global Gateway Initiative in which the EU is trying to leverage public and private sector investments by investing in skills of young people in Pakistan.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Abdul Karim

Thorder, Special Assistant to Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa emphasised the government's vigorous efforts to relaunch KP's economy, underscoring the pivotal role of the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programme in this endeavour.

The EU Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Riina Kiionka discussed the importance of reforming the TVET sector in KP, noting its profound impact on empowering youth: "With youth constituting about 35% of KP's population, the importance of skills development cannot be overstated. A youth equipped with employable skills has the potential to contribute to the socio-economic future of this province. The new programme places special emphasis on empowering

youth, particularly women, in high-technology trades, opening new avenues for economic prosperity—an initiative much needed for optimal utilisation of this youth bulge".

Dr. Sebastian Paust, Head of Cooperation at the German Embassy, highlighted the enhanced impact of Team Europe partners Germany and the European Union working together with the KP authorities to improve the TVET sector, thereby enhancing employment prospects for its youth.

The TVET Sector Support Programme (TVET SSP) is a five-year programme designed to strengthen Pakistan's TVET sector, by providing training opportunities to men and women in high-demand professions. The action aims to advance Pakistan's human capital development through creation of decent jobs in green and digital areas.

Building upon the successes and lessons learned from the previous three phases of Team Europe's support to Pakistan's TVET sector, the programme aims to enhance skills development in environmentally friendly sectors such as agribusiness, water, and energy. It places a special emphasis on empowering skilled female workers in digital and high-tech sectors. The programme will be jointly implemented by GIZ and the British Council.

FIA initiates strong actions against sale of spurious drugs

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in its crackdowns against spurious medicines in Peshawar Zone on Tuesday confiscated scores of medicines, injections, and pills and

sent them to laboratories for verification.

The crackdowns on medical stores and pharmacies were conducted in areas including Namak Mandi, Stagadai Plaza Mall Road, Baku Dher Mardan,

and adjacent localities.

The FIA team was also accompanied by the drug inspectors.

During inspections, a large amount of banned medicines were also confiscated.

The FIA registered inquiries for registration of cases against the owners of the medical stores and pharmacies.

It said that cases would be registered once laboratory reports are received.

JI Amir Hafiz Naeem to visit Peshawar on 18th

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In any nation, the capital and assets of a country are in the hands of its people, who are the leaders of the nation and the country. When the youth of a nation are deter-

mined to bring a revolution to fruition, no power in the world and no obstacles in society can deter them from their path.

Amir Jamaat-e-Islami District Peshawar, Behrullah Khan Advocate, further stated that on May

18, thousands of youth in Peshawar will give a grand welcome to their revolutionary leader, Youth Leader Hafiz Naeem-ul-Rehman.

Unfortunately, it is regrettable that in 75 years, no government in this

country obtained in the name of Islam has been able to implement the system of social justice and justice of the Islamic society, but instead, the nation and society have been divided along lines of classes and ethnicities.



In brief

Youth sets mother on fire

SHEIKUPURA (INP): A pitiless youth set his mother on fire over domestic disputes leaving her critically burnt here on Tuesday. According to details, the incident took place in Mohallah Ghareebabad of Sheikhpura where accused Bilal exchanged hot words with his mother Razia Bibi 37, over domestic issues. After verbal clash, the accused set his mother on fire leaving due to which she was scorched seriously. The scorched woman was shifted to hospital and police after registering a case against the accused started investigations. Meanwhile, seven people were injured where an oil tanker overturned after hitting two motorcycles here on Tuesday. Thousands of litres diesel was spilled. According to details, an over speeding oil tanker rammed into two motorcycles and turned turtle at Sargodha near Dhantpura stop in Sheikhpura. Seven people were injured in the accident and thousands of litres diesel oil was spilled. Police and rescue teams reached the scene and shifted the injured to hospital.

Three people shot dead

SHIKARPUR (INP): Three people were shot dead while another was injured when two rival armed groups clashed in Tehsil Garhi Yasin of Shikarpur District on Tuesday. According to police, the armed clash took place in Dakhan Nakay area of Garhi Yasin where, according to preliminary reports, unidentified armed men gunned down three people. The indiscriminate firing also caused a stampede among the people standing there. The bodies were shifted to a local hospital for medico-legal procedure. The police suspected old enmity being run among rival Mehar and Maarfani communities. The dead were identified as Asif Ali Marfani, Muhammad Ali and Saeed Ahmad.

Anti-power theft drive continue

MULTAN (INP): Authorities intensify their operations across key cities including Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan, and Islamabad. In a concerted effort to alleviate the country's power crisis and rejuvenate its economy, the government, in collaboration with military leadership, has launched an aggressive crackdown on electricity theft. The latest figures divulged by authorities unveil the remarkable strides made in curbing this illicit practice, with over 91 billion rupees amassed from perpetrators nationwide and more than 69 thousand individuals apprehended. During the period spanning April 28 to May 5, authorities intensified their operations across key cities including Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan, and Islamabad, resulting in the recovery of 0.13 billion rupees from electricity thieves. Furthermore, in regions encompassing Peshawar, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Quetta, and recently annexed areas, a substantial sum of 0.272 billion rupees was garnered. The diligence of concerned agencies culminated in the arrest of 21 electricity thieves from various parts of the country, underscoring the resolute commitment to eradicating this scourge from every nook and cranny. Emphasising an unwavering resolve, authorities have pledged to sustain their operations until the complete obliteration of electricity theft nationwide. This commendable endeavour not only signifies a pivotal step towards stabilizing the country's energy sector but also underscores the government's unwavering dedication to fostering a climate of accountability and economic prosperity for all citizens.



QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti welcoming Federal Minister, Syed Mohsin Naqvi upon his arrival at CM's House.

Locals flay closing of BISP sub offices

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Closing of all sub-offices of Benazir Income Support Program in Landi Kotal and confine the facility to a single BISP center was equivalent to deprive the deserving women of the financial support.

In a press statement Tehsil Chairman Haji Shah Khalid said on Tuesday that only two offices in the sub-division will not be enough to facilitate more than twenty four thousand beneficiaries of BISP. He said that sub-offices had been established in Khuga Khel, Wali

Khel, Sultan Khan, Sadu Khel, Pased Khel, Shiekmal Khel, Bazaar Zakha Khel, Kam-Shelman and Loy-Shelman to facilitate the poor women locally.

However, he maintained the Federal Government suspended all the sub-offices of BISP and restricted the scheme to only two BISP centers situated in education hostel, Loy-Shelman and Government High School Zentara, Landi Kotal.

It is impossible for the concerned officials to tackle the crowd of thousands of the scheme beneficiaries in

two offices he added and said due to lack of facilities at the two centers, it is an extra financial burden in form of fare put on the recipients to approach the far located BISP centers besides road and other securities, he lamented.

In sub-offices, the womenfolk had benefited from the scheme without any expense and sufferings, he added. He demanded of Naveed Akbar, the Director General of BISP to set up sub-offices at village and neighborhood councils to facilitate the beneficiaries at their door steps.

Punjab govt determined to promote tourism: Amina

F.P. Report

TAXILA: Pakistan Muslim League (N) Member Provincial Assembly Amina Hassan Sheikh has said that Punjab government investing in tourism, culture for economic growth. The Punjab government under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is trying hard to introduce revolutionary measures to promote domestic tourism by attracting more and more tourists. Punjab govt, have been doing their best to provide facilities to the tourists. Government also renovating and beautifying tourist and historic places.

She expressed these views while visited Taxila Museum. Member Provincial Assembly Mohsin Ayub Khan and others were also with him. She emphasized the importance of such institutions in fostering cross-cultural understanding. It was a truly enriching experience as each immersed themselves in the profound history of the Gandhara Civilization, marveling at its cultural significance and artistic achievements. She mentioned that this unforgettable journey through time wouldn't have been possible without the dedicated efforts of the Directorate General of Archaeology Punjab, whose unwavering commitment to preserving and showcasing our heritage continues to inspire admiration and gratitude. Their diligent work ensures that the legacy of the Gandhara Civilization remains accessible for generations to come.

Amina Hassan said that Tourism plays a vital role in the success of economies through revenue generation, job creation and infrastructure development. Many countries in the world have been earning billion of dollars in foreign exchange by strengthening their tourism industry and bolstering their economies. According to the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, the task of making Punjab a center of tourism will be completed.

She said that now with the special interest, attention and guidance of CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz, important steps are being taken to promote tourism in Punjab which will further strengthen the economy and increase the importance of the country's historical, religious and cultural sites. There is ample room to promote tourism industry in Pakistan, in general, and Punjab, in particular. The present government, under the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has paid attention to the promotion of tourism and provision of facilities to the tourists.

Amina Sheikh, has set its sights on boosting the tourism sector by strengthening institutional capacity through better skill development. It also aims to boost economic growth and aid new job creation, besides improving the country's image abroad. The Punjab government is determined to promote tourism sector to realize its full potential and is exploring new avenues to attract maximum number of foreign tourists.

Special children deserve most attention: Mashal

Anees Takar

MARDAN: Advisor to Chief Minister for Social Welfare and Special Education Mashal Azam Yousafzai here on Tuesday that special children deserve the most attention of the society and the government. Provincial government will take all necessary measures for the welfare of special children.

She expressed her views while addressing the annual prize distribution ceremony held in Special Education Complex Mardan. Member Provincial Assembly Tufail Anjum, former Member Provincial Assembly Sajida Hanif, Director Social Welfare Rafiq Mohmand, Additional Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Junaid Khalid also participated in the ceremony.

District Officer Social Welfare Jamal Shah and Deputy Director Special Education complex Aneeq Ahsan also addressed the event. On this occasion, children with hearing , physical disabilities and blind children presented different tableaux and national songs. Deputy Director Aneeq Ahsan said that 421 children with different types of disabilities are studying in the institution. He highlighted the problems of the institution.



In her address, Advisor to Chief Minister Mashal Azam Yousafzai appreciated the talents of special children. She paid tribute to the parents of such children and especially the teachers who are performing the difficult task of educating and training these children. She said that the vision of our leader Imran Khan is to serve the poor and down-trodden sections. Service to suffering humanity is also my mission and social welfare department I have chosen with my wish so that I can serve people.

She said that 23 matriculating students from the institution will be given admission and hostel facilities in the intermediate class at special education complex Hayatabad. Whereas within a year in Mardan education facilities up to intermediate level will be provide. Many special children are out of schools, we will get a building on rent to admit them in schools where they will be equipped with the jewel of education.

In this way, we are col-

lecting detailed data regarding disabled people which will be helpful in policy making. Advisor to Chief Minister Mashal Azam Yousafzai gave special encouragement to the special girl who secured the first position in her class and directed the Director Social Welfare to provide an electronic wheelchair to the girl.

Mashal Azam Yousafzai directed to extend the transport facility for special children to Rustam, while District Officer Social Welfare to immediately give the bus in Mardan to the Special Education Complex for the transportation of special children and directed to recruit women attendants for buses. On this occasion, Advisor to the Chief Minister Mashal Azam Yousafzai distributed prizes and shields to the special children who got prominent positions in different classes, while shields were given to the Adviser to the Chief Minister, Director of Social Welfare and other guests on behalf of the institution.

Appointment of female physiotherapist demanded

F.P. Report

BUNER: The Female patients have demand female physiotherapist at physiotherapy unite in DHQ hospital Daggar Buner. This position had become vacant a month ago due to the transfer of the female physiotherapist who had been transferred to home town Batkhela Hospital. But the authorities not posted a substitute of the female physiotherapist and this post being left vacant.

The female patients who come for physiotherapy from all over the district are facing severe difficulties. This is because female patients cannot do physiotherapy openly with male physiotherapists like female physiotherapists, due to which female patients and male physiotherapy staff are facing many problems and difficulties in treatment

process. In this regard, female patients and their male relatives have repeatedly contacted the media and demanded that a female physiotherapist should be posted here as an immediate solution to this issue.

In this regard, when contacted Dr. Riazin charge of the physiotherapy unite and MS of DHQ hospital Dr. Fazal Wahab, they said that a woman working with Directorate General Health in this physiotherapy unit with the support of SRSPD project was serving, but a month ago that female physiotherapist was transferred to the hospital of her native town Batkhela and as her replacement, no female physiotherapist has been appointed here yet. Due to which female patients and male staff of physiotherapy unit are facing difficulties and problems in getting

physical treatment process.

In this regard, when the local MPA advisor to Chief Minister Syed Fakhar Jahan was contacted, he asked for details and assigned his PS Fida Muhammad Khan to contact the relevant project director and DG Health Office, but it took a month. Even after passing, no female physiotherapist has been appointed in DHQ Hospital Daggar Physiotherapy Unit, due to which the female patients, their relatives and male staff of the physiotherapy unite are concerned and the advisor to Chief Minister Syed Fakhar Jahan has again demanded that he and the PTI government should fulfill their right of representation by immediately appointing at least a female physiotherapist for the physiotherapy unit established at this big hospital sole physiotherapy unite for the sack of female patients best treatment.

45m needed to complete projects in DHQ Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: MS District Head Quarter (DHQ) Hospital Javid Iqbal has said that the hospital has been upgraded from Category B to Category A and it has been given the status of a teaching hospital. He said that the hospital is working hard to provide all basic facilities to patients. For this purpose, Rs 45 crore is needed to complete the pending projects, including the construction of a new building and the purchase of medical equipment. Doctors and social workers will have to work together to eradicate the root causes of diseases, said Dr. Javid Iqbal.

These views were expressed by Dr. Javid Iqbal, MS of DHQ Teaching Hospital and Dr. Syed Muhammad Tariq, a renowned child specialist,

during a press conference at the Mardan Press Club. Dr. Javed Iqbal said that there are 10 to 12 specialist departments in the hospital which are currently vacant but approval has been obtained from the Health Department to fill these positions. He said that the hospital is being upgraded and will have 1,000 beds which will meet the health needs of Mardan city and surrounding areas.

Dr. Javed Iqbal said that last year, more than 4,000 patients were treated for dengue fever and with the help of citizens the hospital was able to control the spread of the disease. He said that despite financial difficulties, HIV testing is being done free of charge and rabies vaccines are also available. Dr. Javed Iqbal said that after taking charge as MS, reforms were started in the hospital and sever-

al departments were upgraded to provide better facilities to patients. He said that a new building has been constructed for the gynecology department, ultrasound and other basic facilities have been provided. He said that the hospital is also starting postgraduate programs in various departments.

Dr. Syed Muhammad Tariq said that serving humanity is a duty and he is committed to providing quality healthcare to the people of Mardan. He said that during his tenure, the pediatric ward was upgraded from 12 beds to 75 beds, and a separate nursery was established for children. He said that Mardan is our shared city, and we will work together to develop it, especially in the health sector. We appreciate the positive criticism and suggestions of journalists."

Awareness Session on RTS Commission Act arranged

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: An awareness session on the Right to Public Services (RTS) Commission Act 2014 and Notified Services was held on Tuesday in District Kohat. The session was attended by Commissioner RTS Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Judge (R) Mohammad Asim Imam, Commissioner-in-charge RTS, Zakir Hussain Afridi, Commissioner RTS, Deputy Commissioner Kohat, District Police Officer,

Additional Deputy Commissioner General, District Monitoring Officer Tashfin Israr and officials from various departments including Health, Education, Local Government, Food, Agriculture, Transport, and others.

Commissioner RTS briefed the participants on the RTS Act and its notified public services, emphasizing the importance of timely and efficient service delivery. The meeting also discussed non-compliance issues in services provided by the RTS

Commission, awareness campaigns, and other measures to enhance service delivery. Judge (R) Asim Imam commissioner and Zakir Hussain Afridi Commissioner issued direction to all departments to prioritize matters related to services and create facilities at the district and tehsil levels to ensure timely provision of all possible facilities to the people. They stressed the need for collaboration and cooperation among departments to achieve this goal.



HYDERABAD: Students solving their first paper of class ninth in examination centre.



JAMRUD: Additional IGP Training, Saqib Ismail Memon presenting shield to KP IGP, Akhtar Hayat Khan during his visit to Shakas Police Training Centre.

0.5m tons of wheat to buy from farmers of Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Provincial Food Minister Haji Noor Muhammad Dummer said that Balochistan Food Department has decided to buy 5 lakh tons of wheat from the farmers. He said that the provincial government has instructed the finance ministry to release 5 billion rupees in this regard while maintaining and monitoring the quality of stored wheat would not be tolerated.

He expressed these views while discussing on the occasion of his visit to the PR Center managed by the Food Department in Pishin district. Provincial Secretary of Food Asghar Khan Harifal and former Provincial Minister Sikandar Umrani were also with him on this occasion.

The minister said that there would be no compromise on the timely supply of quality food to the people of the province and legal action would be taken against the absent and frivolous employees. He said that providing quality and cheap wheat to the people was our priority saying that in this regard, the provincial government has decided to buy 500,000 tons of wheat from the farmers of Balochistan from May 6.

However, the provincial finance ministry will release 5 billion rupees in this regard, he said. The minister said that Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti decided to release 13.9 million rupees to the Provincial Food Department for the purchase of bardana which was a very welcome and people-friendly

initiative.

Earlier, the provincial minister also inspected the stock register and the attendance register of the employees while inspecting the wheat in the warehouses of the PR center. He also expressed his satisfaction with the quality of wheat in the warehouses and the effective monitoring and appreciated the services of the staff deployed in the PR Center. Deputy Director Quetta Zone Sulman Kakar, Deputy Director Admin Jabir Baloch, Assistant Director Juma Khan, Account Officer Mubeeb Khan Assistant Food Controller Syed Jameel Agha, Mohammad Jan, Naqibullah Khan, Saifur Rehman Kakar and others were also present on this occasion.



GAZA: People flee the eastern parts of Rafah.

Armed group in western Myanmar claims to capture base

BANGKOK (AP): A powerful ethnic minority armed group battling Myanmar's army in the country's west claimed to have taken hundreds of government soldiers prisoner when it captured a major command post.

The Arakan Army, the well-trained and well-armed military wing of the Rakhine ethnic minority movement, has been on the offensive against army outposts in the western state of Rakhine - its home ground - for about six months. The group said in a video statement posted on the Telegram messaging app that soldiers belonging to the military government's Operational Command No. 15 headquarters in Rakhine's Buthidaung township surrendered after a siege.

Buthidaung is about 385 kilometers (240 miles) southwest of Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city. The reported capture of the base could not be independently confirmed. Myanmar's military government made no immediate comment, and the spokesperson of the Arakan Army did not respond to questions sent by The Associated Press. The fight in Rakhine is part of the nationwide conflict in Myanmar that began after the army ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021 and suppressed widespread nonviolent protests that sought a return to democratic rule. Despite its

advantages in arms and manpower, Myanmar's army has been on the defensive since October, when an alliance of three ethnic rebel groups launched an offensive in the country's northeast. The video released by the Arakan Army was described as having been made. It shows Arakan Army fighters guarding men in military uniforms and civilian clothes, some injured, as they walk through a field and down a roadside accompanied by women and children - families of soldiers often live at their posts.

A caption accompanying the video says it shows the deputy commander of the group and his troops after a "final assault in which (they) faced total defeat and surrendered." The video does not specify the total number of captured soldiers and their family members, but in one part about 300 men can be seen sitting in rows in an open field. In a statement released, the Arakan Army said it captured the command post after attacking it for two weeks. It claimed another army post was seized the next day, along with others over the past two months. The attackers captured "weapons, ammunition, military equipment and surrendered prisoners of war," the statement said. Some parts of the video released show young men who appear to be members of the Muslim Rohingya minority.

Myanmar's military has been accused of filling its depleted ranks with Rohingya men in Rakhine under the recently activated conscription law. The army has lost personnel to casualties, surrender and defections while facing increasingly tough opposition on the battlefield. The Rohingya were the targets of a brutal counterinsurgency campaign incorporating rape and murder that saw an estimated 740,000 flee to neighboring Bangladesh as their villages were burned down by the army in 2017. Ethnic Rakhine nationalists aligned with the Arakan Army were also among the persecutors of the Rohingya minority, but now the Arakan Army and the Rohingya are uneasy allies in opposition to the military government. The Arakan Army, which seeks autonomy from Myanmar's central government, is part of an alliance of ethnic minority armies that launched an offensive in October and gained strategic territory in Myanmar's northeast bordering China. Its success was seen as a major defeat for the military government, and boosted the morale of restive ethnic minorities as well as the pro-democracy resistance. The Kachin Independence Army, another major ethnic armed group, claimed to have captured Sumprabum, a township in the northern state of Kachin.

'Today I saw death': Tales of horror as floods hit Brazil

PORTO ALEGRE (AFP): In all her 74 years Lorena Martins had never seen anything so horrible: a torrent of foul, rust-colored flood water engulfing her modest home in Brazil, taking away everything but her family.

With help from her son-in-law, Martins steps out of a boat manned by firefighters who managed to persuade them to abandon their home in a poor district of the city of Porto Alegre, which has been devastated by days of flooding. The latest in a string of weather catastrophes to hit the South American giant has left dozens of people dead or missing and forced nearly 130,000 from their homes in the capital of southern Rio Grande do Sul state.

The boat carrying Martins arrives at a flooded intersection that has become a makeshift pier for rescue operations. Motorboats, jet skis and row boats come and go constantly as crews try to persuade people who refuse to leave their flooded homes. A military police

officer from neighboring Santa Catarina state, Dionis Belletini, has shown up as a volunteer, eager to help in this improvised rescue armada. Some people are refusing to leave their homes for fear of seeing them looted, said Belletini, who wears a life jacket and civilian clothes despite his military status. "We cannot force them to leave. It is optional," he tells AFP as three men behind him try to repair a motorboat needed for the many rescue trips that await them. A four-wheel-drive vehicle towing yet another boat pulls up to join the operation.

These volunteers are urgently needed because the government cannot save all the people standing on their rooftops looking at streets turned into rivers in this booming 250-year-old city of 1.4 million people, which manages at once to be both modern and quaint. Martins, her son-in-law Elisandro, his wife Carmen and their 14-year-old daughter Giovanna stand on the street corner fiddling with bags of food, like uncooked pasta. They look

out sadly at all the water everywhere and comfort their two dogs. The moment is almost peaceful, when they saw the reddish flood waters rise steadily in their home and they decided to stay put anyway. "Today I saw death," said Martins, acknowledging that the flood water scared her. "My little house is abandoned now. I am trying to stay calm," she says, as her voice quivers and she can no longer speak. Martins looks positively exhausted.

"It is so sad," she manages to say. "I think about the poorest people." The toll in the flood so far is 83 dead and 111 missing. The number of people forced from their homes is also rising as rescue efforts press on during a break in the torrential rains. A stunning amount of water has pushed the Guaiba river and its tributaries to the highest level ever recorded. "We have seen scenes of terror," said Filipe Bezbbati, a 27-year-old event organizer in a wet suit as he tries to fix the boat he uses to make one rescue run after another.

"It should be the government that is leading," Bezbbati complains. "This is people helping people," adds Jefferson Martines, a 28-year-old entrepreneur who is also helping with the rescues. The two men met on the street corner that has become a makeshift operations center and are now on the same team.

Not far away a nurse named Paola Martinez holds out food to try to lure three dogs across a waterlogged street. Bezbbati eventually helps her get them into a boat and onto dry land. President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has said the state will get all the resources it needs in order to rebuild. And Governor Eduardo Leite has said it will need nothing short of a Marshall Plan, like the one that rebuilt Europe after World War II. But for now people have more immediate needs: things like food, clothing and medicine. It is midday and the sun is beating down as neighbors rescue neighbors all over the flooded and shell-shocked city.

Australia PM accuses China

SYDNEY: Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has accused Beijing of "unacceptable" conduct after reports a Chinese fighter jet fired flares in the flight path of an Australian navy helicopter over international waters.

The MH60R Seahawk helicopter was flying above the Yellow Sea as part of the United Nations' efforts to enforce sanctions on North Korea when a Chinese Air Force J-10 jet dropped flares above and several hundred metres ahead of it, Australia's Department of Defence said. "We've just made it very clear to China that this is unacceptable," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told Australia's Nine Network on Tuesday.

Albanese said Australia has raised its concerns through diplomatic and military channels, although Beijing had yet

to respond. The Australian Defence Force personnel were "in international waters, international airspace, and they're doing work to ensure that the sanctions that the world has imposed through the United Nations on North Korea, due to their intransigent and reckless behaviour, are enforced," he said. "They shouldn't have been at any risk," he added.

This is the second such incident in six months after Canberra in November said a Chinese destroyer had injured Australian Navy divers in Japanese waters by deliberately blasting them with sonar pulses. Beijing's foreign ministry denied deploying the sonar, and said no harm had been caused.

Albanese made a breakthrough trip to China last year, hailing improved economic ties after years of bickering and reprisals. But tensions remain when

it comes to security, as Australia moves closer to the United States in an effort to counter China's expanding influence in the Asia-Pacific region. Chinese Premier Li Qiang is expected to visit Australia next month, Albanese noted. "We will make our position clear as well in discussions," he said.

Defence Minister Richard Marles said the flares were 300 metres (986 ft) in front of the helicopter and 60 metres (197 ft) above it, forcing the pilot to "take evasive action in order to not be hit by those flares."

The minister said the consequence of being hit by the flares would have been significant. In the event, no injuries or damage were reported. Australian National University navy expert and former naval officer Jennifer Parker told the public broadcaster ABC that the Chinese use of

flares was "incredibly dangerous" and could have led the engines to shut down. "This isn't normal by any stretch of the imagination," she said. "Impeding its flight path I would interpret as a breach of international law."

In 2022, Australia lodged a protest after a Chinese navy vessel pointed a laser at an Australian military aircraft close to Australia's northern coast. In a separate incident in 2022, Australia said a Chinese fighter aircraft "dangerously intercepted" an Australian military surveillance plane above the disputed South China Sea, releasing a "bundle of chaff" containing pieces of aluminium that were ingested into the Australian aircraft's engine. Chinese navy ships have been tracked off Australia's coast several times in recent years, including monitoring exercises with the US military. — Aljazeera

EU to drop rule-of-law dispute with Poland

BRUSSELS: The European Commission says it will end a years-long dispute with Poland over the rule of law. The commission said in a statement that it intends to withdraw the procedure launched in December 2017 under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union after Warsaw's new centrist government took steps to restore judicial independence.

"Today, marks a new chapter for Poland," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said, calling the breakthrough a result of the country's determined reform efforts. "The ongoing restoration of the rule of law in Poland is great for the Polish people and our union as a whole." The EU said in a statement that Poland had launched a series of legislative and non-legislative measures to address concerns about the independence of the justice system.

Poland has recognised the primacy of EU law and is committed to implementing the judgements of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights, the EU said. "Great news from Brussels today! Thank you President @vonderleyen for the cooperation and support!" Polish Minister of Justice Adam Bodnar wrote on the social media platform X. "Poland is consequently bringing back rule of law. We are determined and devoted to our common European values."

The EU and Poland had clashed after the nationalist Law and Justice party came to power in 2015 and implemented reforms that critics said placed Poland's judiciary under political control. The EU blocked Poland's access to EU funds and in December 2017 moved to suspend the country's voting rights under its Article 7 procedure. Known as the EU's "nuclear option", the procedure can see a member state lose its voting rights, but the bloc has never got that far due to the required unanimity on the European Council. — Aljazeera

US Senator Bernie to run for reelection

WASHINGTON: United States Senator Bernie Sanders, the 82-year-old leftist and two-time presidential candidate from Vermont, has announced that he will run for reelection amid rumours of possible retirement. Sanders, whose presidential campaigns in 2016 and 2020 galvanised young people and progressives, announced that he would run for a fourth six-year term in the US Senate.

"Let me thank the people of Vermont, from the bottom of my heart, for giving me the opportunity to serve them in the United States Senate. It has been the honour of my life," Sanders, an independent, said in a video recording. "Today, I am announcing my intention to seek another term." The announcement comes during a tumultuous time for the Democratic Party, which is facing intense backlash from key constituencies, especially young voters, over President Joe Biden's support for Israel's war in Gaza.

While initially rejecting calls for a ceasefire, Sanders has emerged as one of Congress's most outspoken critics of Israel's military campaign in Gaza. The war has killed nearly 35,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, and reports have emerged of Israeli forces committing rights abuses, such as the torture and indiscriminate bombing of civilians. In January, Sanders spearheaded a bill that would have halted security aid to Israel until the US Department of State completed a report evaluating claims of human rights abuses in Gaza. The measure was ultimately defeated after Sanders forced it to a vote. Sanders, who identifies as Jewish himself, has also voiced support for the antiwar encampments that began on college campuses in April to show solidarity for the Palestinians under Israel's siege. — Aljazeera

Kremlin leader sworn in again

MOSCOW (BBC): He could probably walk it blindfolded. For the fifth time Vladimir Putin will be taking the long walk through the Grand Kremlin Palace to the St Andrew's Throne Hall. There he will take the oath of office and be sworn in as Russia's president for a new six-year term. The route may be familiar, but much has changed since Putin's first inauguration ceremony in May 2000.

Back then, President Putin pledged to "preserve and develop democracy" and to "take care of Russia." Twenty-four years on, the Kremlin leader is waging war against Ukraine; a war in which Russia has suffered heavy losses. At home, instead of developing democracy, President Putin has been curtailing it: jailing critics, removing all checks and balances on his power. "Putin thinks of himself now as Vladimir the Great, as a Russian tsar," believes Fiona Hill, a former White House national security advisor. "If we took ourselves back to his first two presidential terms, I think we'd have a fairly favourable assessment of Putin. He stabilised the country politically and made it solvent again. The Russian economy and system were performing better than at any other previous time in its history."

"The war in Ukraine, going back to the annexation of Crimea 10 years ago, has dramatically changed that trajectory. He's turned himself into an imperialist instead of a pragmatist." It's remarkable to think that since Vladimir Putin first came to power, America has been through five different

presidents and Britain has had seven prime ministers. After nearly a quarter of a century running Russia, Mr Putin has certainly made his mark. In the past, people rarely spoke of "Brezhnevism", "Gorbachevism" or "Yeltsinism". But Putinism: that's a thing. "We have one more -ism in our history: Stalinism," says Andrei Kolesnikov, senior fellow at the Carnegie Eurasia Russia Centre. "I would say that Putinism is one more incarnation of Stalinism. He behaves like [former Soviet dictator] Stalin. His power is personalised like in Stalin's time. He prefers to use a lot of political repressions. And like Stalin he is ready to keep himself in power until the physical end." The challenge, for the West, is how to deal with an increasingly authoritarian Russian leader determined to restore what he sees as Russia's greatness; a modern-day tsar... with nuclear weapons. "On the issue of nuclear weapons, there's an awful lot that we can do," believes Fiona Hill. "Some countries, like China, India, Japan, have been extraordinarily nervous when Putin has engaged in nuclear sabre-rattling in Ukraine and have pushed back against that. We can enforce restraint on Russia by creating an international framework for pushing back on this wild and speculative talk about using nuclear weapons. "Perhaps that is something of a model for how we can deal with Vladimir Putin, who in many respects is something of a rogue leader. We need to create a more constraining environment, less permissive for the kinds of

actions that he wants to undertake."

Officially Vladimir Putin won more than 87% of the vote in the March presidential election. However, he'd faced no serious challenger in a contest widely seen as neither free nor fair. So how do Russians view the longest-serving Kremlin leader since Joseph Stalin? To find out I drive to the town of Kashira, 70 miles from Moscow. Here a gigantic Putin portrait, a massive mural, takes up one whole side of an apartment block.

In Kashira Big Vladimir is watching you. "I like him," says pensioner Valentina who is selling flowers by the roadside. "Putin has good ideas and does a lot for people. True, our pensions aren't big. But he can't fix everything in one go." "He's had nearly 25 years," I point out. "But we don't know who'd come next [if Putin goes]." Valentina replies. "In Russia we're all expected to think the same way," says Victoria, who is walking past the Putin mural. "If I say anything against Putin my husband says: 'You criticise Putin again and I'll divorce you!' He's mad about him. He says that if it wasn't for Putin life here would be as tough as in the 1990s." When I ask another passer-by, Alexander, what he thinks of the president, he replies: "It can be dangerous now to express an opinion. No comment."

Most of the people I talk to say that they walk past Putin's portrait without even noticing it now. They're used to it. Just like they've grown used to one man running Russia and no imminent prospect of change in the Kremlin.

Two killed as building collapses in South Africa

CAPE TOWN (AP): A multi-story apartment building under construction collapsed in a coastal city in South Africa, killing two construction workers and leaving 53 trapped under the rubble, authorities said. An additional 20 workers were pulled from the mangled wreckage of the building and were being treated for injuries at various hospitals, city authorities said. The building collapse happened just after 2 p.m. in the city of George, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) east of Cape Town on South Africa's south coast. Hours later, more than 100 emergency personnel were at the site and were likely to work through the night, using sniffer dogs to try and locate survivors, some of whom were feared buried under huge slabs of concrete.

Cranes and other heavy lifting equipment were being sent to help with the rescue effort, the George municipality said, while more emergency responders were being brought in from nearby towns and cities. They were expected

to reach the site at about midnight. There were 75 workers at the building site when it collapsed, and family and friends were gathered at the nearby municipal offices waiting for news, the municipality said. Authorities were investigating what caused the tragedy and a case was opened by police, but there was no immediate information on why the building suddenly collapsed. Marco Ferreira, a local representative of the Gift of the Givers non-governmental organization, was at the site with a team to offer support and food and drink to the rescuers. Gift of the Givers is a charity that often helps during disasters in South Africa. It had also provided three sniffer dogs and handlers to help with the search, Ferreira said. "The situation at this stage is still very much in the rescue stages," Ferreira told the eNCA TV news channel. "We don't know, it's probably going to carry on for days. There are some cranes there to help lift some concrete. But it's not a pretty sight." Authorities

didn't immediately provide details of the injuries sustained by the workers who were taken to hospitals, but South African media reported that a number of them had suffered serious injuries. The two workers who died were declared dead after being admitted to hospitals, the George municipality said. "Our thoughts are with the families and all those affected who continue to wait on word of their loved ones," George Executive Mayor Leon Van Wyk said.

The provincial Western Cape government said it was closely monitoring the situation and had sent resources to assist with the emergency response. "All the necessary support has been offered to emergency personnel to expedite their response. At the moment, officials are focused on saving lives. This is our top priority at this stage," Western Cape Premier Alan Winde, the head of the provincial government, said in a statement. The national government was being briefed on the rescue operation, Winde said.

Columbia Varsity cancels ceremony after protests

COLUMBIA: Columbia University has cancelled its university-wide commencement ceremony after it cracked down on student protests in support of Palestinians, a campus movement that spurred a wave of similar demonstrations around the world.

In a statement, Columbia said it would prioritise "Class Days and school-level ceremonies, where students are honored individually alongside their peers, rather than the University-wide ceremony that is scheduled for May 15". "Our students emphasized that these smaller-scale, school-based celebrations are most meaningful to them and their families," it said.

The decision comes just days after the Columbia administration called New York City police onto campus to disperse students who had occupied a school building and erected a protest encampment to show solidarity with

Palestinians. The students have demanded an end to Israel's war on the Gaza Strip and urged Columbia to divest from any companies that are complicit in Israeli abuses against Palestinians. The Columbia protest encampment and subsequent crackdown by police - during which hundreds of people were arrested - inspired similar initiatives at universities across the United States, as well as in Canada, France and the United Kingdom. University administrators have accused pro-Palestinian demonstrators of using anti-Semitic language and creating an unsafe environment on campus.

US President Joe Biden made similar claims during a speech last week addressing the protest movement. "Dissent is essential to democracy, but dissent must never lead to disorder or to denying the rights of others so students can finish the semester and their college education," Biden

said. "There's a right to protest but not the right to cause chaos." But the demonstrators have rejected those allegations, saying the decision to send police officers to break up the Gaza encampments and arrest participants is what put students in harm's way. Al Jazeera's Patty Culhane, reporting from a Gaza encampment at George Washington University in Washington, DC, said the protest there has "definitely grown" in recent days. "There's tent after tent of water or food, and signs saying, 'Everything is free just like Palestine will be one day.'" Culhane said.

Mariam, a Jewish student demonstrator who spoke to Al Jazeera using only her first name, said anti-Semitism allegations are intended to divert attention from Gaza. "It's meant to take the focus away from the genocide in Gaza, and it is meant to take the focus away from our demands," she said. — Aljazeera

The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's

Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Asia-Pacific risks being anvil under US hammer

GERMAN Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has used her just concluded one-week trip to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji to hype up warnings against countries becoming too reliant on China.

According to Australian media reports, Baerbock said her country has overhauled its strategic approach to China to avoid a repeat of its past mistake when the NATO member failed to realize the extent of its energy dependence on Russia. The top German diplomat apparently wants to dissuade countries from developing stronger trade ties with China. Yet such warnings, which are nothing but echoes of Washington's scaremongering about China, may not fall on receptive ears.

Australia, for instance, has worked hard to improve relations with China after experiencing hard times when its trade with China nosedived thanks to the "decoupling" efforts of the previous Scott Morrison government. With the incumbent Anthony Albanese government taking a more objective view of bilateral ties, the economic and trade ties between the two countries have been rapidly improving. Baerbock may also want to send a message that is different from German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's advocacy of pragmatic cooperation with China, since she is a member of the German Green Party, which is part of the coalition government. Her scaremongering on China has, to some extent, undercut the efforts made by the German leader in his recent trip to China.

Judging by the current political atmosphere in the West which deems anti-China sentiments to be political correctness, China not only needs to evaluate the impact of such internal political divisions but also guard against the US' maneuvers in piecing together new anti-China small cliques. Last week, the defense chiefs of the US, Australia, Japan and the Philippines gathered in Hawaii for a second joint meeting. Given the tensions between the Philippines and China in the South China Sea, it is no surprise that this regional grouping should be dubbed the "Squad" by Pentagon officials. Like its template, the Quad, which was also assembled by the US, the new quadrilateral group has been formed with the obvious intention of making waves in the South China Sea, posing a tangible and immediate threat to China's security outlook. Thanks to its outdated Cold War mentality, the US has been tirelessly trying to create tensions and frictions in the Asia-Pacific so as to destabilize the development environment in China's neighborhood. Washington's selfish antics are turning the region into a new venue for bloc confrontation. Countries in the region must remain vigilant against the risk-laden antics of the US, say "no" to interference from outside forces and join hands to build a peaceful and prosperous Asia-Pacific for all.

Xi in Paris

CHINESE President Xi Jinping on his third visit to France – the first two were in 2014 and 2019 – held trilateral talks in Paris with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. While Macron and der Leyen talked about the need for a fair trade balance with China, Xi said that for China Europe was an important part of its foreign policy with Chinese characteristics.

He emphasised that China and Europe should hold strategic talks with each other and they should be partners. Ursula von der Leyen wanted China to use its influence with Russia to end the war in Ukraine, and she also expressed concern about China's selling dual technology equipment to Russia which ends up on the battlefield against Ukraine. She said that it impacts China's relations with Europe. Xi said that the longer the Ukrainian war continues, greater will be the loss to Europe. He promised to cooperate with Europe to find a solution to the Ukrainian issue. The more substantial issue between France and China was trade. France is the third largest trade partner with China, but there are tensions and pin-pricks in the trade relations. While France is investigating whether China is indulging in dumping cheap products into French markets, China has been imposing higher tariffs on French brandies. According to experts, there would not be a major breakthrough in the trade talks, but the two sides will continue to talk with each other.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the opening of diplomatic relations between France and China. France was one of the early Western powers to have opened up to Communist China, when the rest of Europe was caught in the throes of the Cold War, which was essentially a fight against Communism. The United States opened diplomatic relations in 1972, eight years after France.

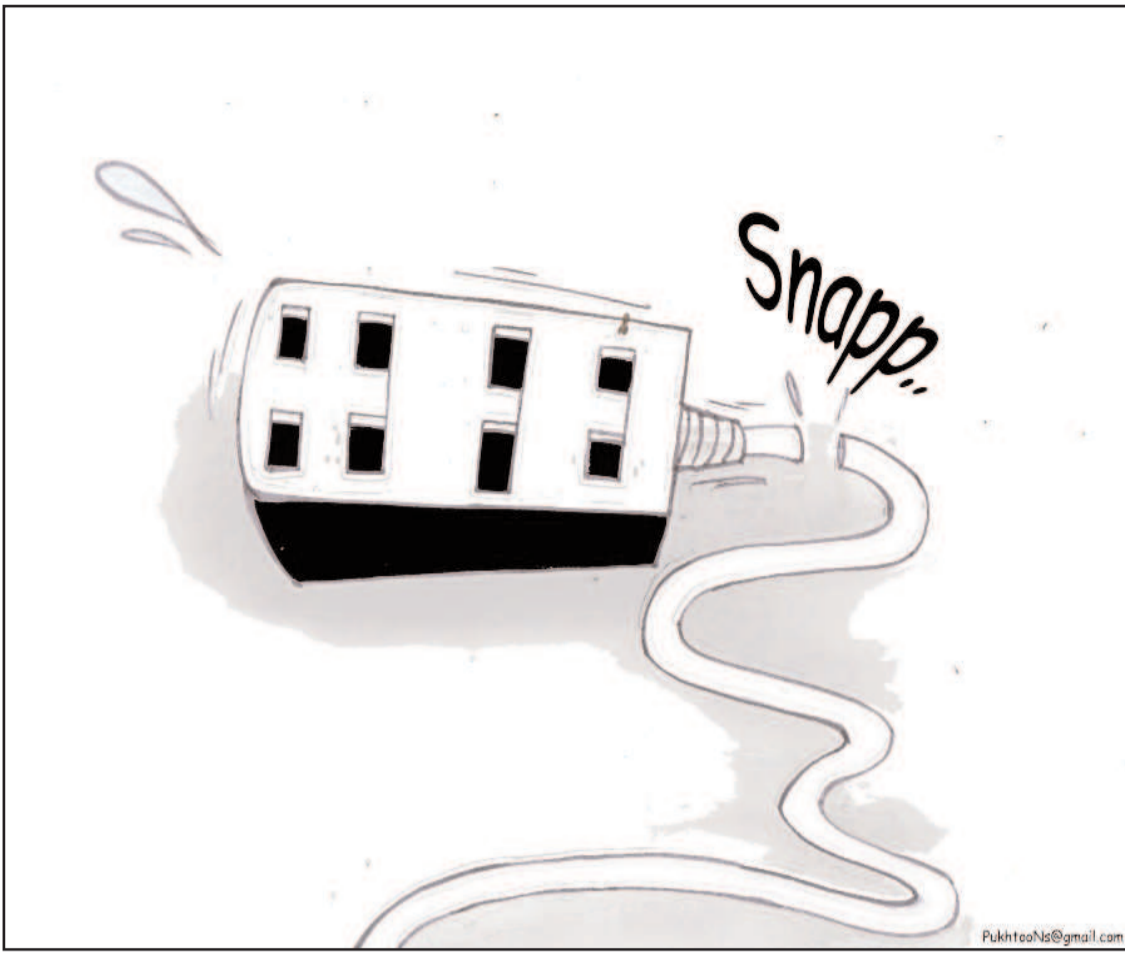
France had always forged its own foreign policy, and it did not believe in following the US. So, the mood and temper of Franco-Chinese talks are quite different from that of the Sino-US dialogue, whether it relates to trade or to security. France is much more pragmatic in dealing with China and it does not have the same ideological compulsions that the US displays in its foreign policy.

There is also a difference between the stance of the European Union (EU) and France, which is reflected in the approach of Macron and von der Leyen. Macron is more conciliatory in his approach to China, while von der Leyen's position is quite belligerent. But France is not yielding any ground to the Chinese compared to the Germans. Germans are willing to take a softer stance towards China because of Berlin's trade compulsions. German vehicles of branded manufacturers like Mercedes depend on the Chinese market, and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is not keen to rock the boat as it were. It is evident that Xi does not feel pressured by the European demands for fair trade and in balance of trade. He explained the Chinese point of view in the matter. He said China does not feel that there is overproduction on the part of China. Beijing feels that there is enough global demand for its goods. In many ways, China and Europe cannot do without each other, and both sides are aware of the situation. Xi and his colleagues are prepared for tough trade negotiations, and they are not afraid of dealing with the demands of their European, and even American, trade partners. China is confident that it is negotiating from a position of strength.

Many of the Europeans, like their American counterparts, still have a keen appetite for investing in China, a position not shared by their governments. China too is aware that it is dependent on the Western markets, especially that of Europe, to maintain the momentum of its economic growth.

Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



Palestine is a state waiting to be recognized

Yossi Mekelberg

ONCE again, as a matter of routine, the US has vetoed a Palestinian request to the UN Security Council for full UN membership and, by that, prevented the only global political body with the power to bestow such a recognition from doing so.

This was a reflection of another of Washington's contradictions regarding the Israeli-Palestinian issue, as its foreign policy chiefs, including President Joe Biden, are repeatedly expressing their support for a two-state solution, the logical conclusion of which is an independent Palestinian state.

However, this has not meant recognition of Palestinian statehood prior to a peace agreement with Israel, but highlighted that there is broad international support for such a recognition and brought to the fore the question of whether recognition would accelerate peace between the Israelis and Palestinians, slow it down or make no difference. In Europe, the discourse around this question is rapidly changing, much of it because of the war in Gaza, and Spain is leading a move to recognize Palestinian statehood, as last week affirmed by EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on the sidelines of a World Economic Forum special meeting in Riyadh.

It can be argued that Palestine is already a state, with or without a formal recognition by the UNSC.

It has governing bodies of sorts and its pre-June 1967 borders are, generally speaking, internationally recognized. And, of the UNSC's 15 members, 12 voted in favor of the recent resolution on recognizing Palestinian statehood.

The US opposed it and two countries (the UK and Switzerland) abstained, but it is not exactly a secret that these

three countries also support a two-state solution but, for their own reasons, have not yet crossed this Rubicon.

Furthermore, Palestine has already been accepted as a nonmember observer state of the UN General Assembly — in November of 2012, by a vote supported by 138 countries and opposed by only nine member states. In many countries, Palestinian diplomatic delegations are treated on equal footing with embassies. Eight of the 27 EU members have already recognized Palestine as a state, as have most African, Asian and Latin American countries.

In practical terms, it can be argued that this raises the question of whether a formal UNSC recognition would be merely symbolic, as important as it might be.

However, whatever merit there is to claiming that recognition of its statehood would be merely gestural, the more persuasive argument is that it would mean a substantial departure from the current situation, which disadvantages the Palestinians because of the very asymmetric nature of the conflict. It would create a different dynamic in relations between the Palestinians and the general international approach to the nature of the negotiations.

There is a marked difference in relations, especially in the context of negotiations, between one side that is a recognized state with all the symbols of one, let alone territorial integrity, recognized borders and military and economic power, and the other, which is an entity that is mostly under occupation, with many of those it represents living in the diaspora and whose security and economy are at the mercy of the occupier.

This puts the latter at a severe disadvantage, but international recognition could considerably close

the power gap between the two.

As it stands, recognition — or, more accurately, the prevention of such a recognition — is a tool misused by Israel to demand concessions from the Palestinians.

For Palestinians, recognition should serve as an incentive to unite and reform their system of governance and, just as importantly, transform their discourse from that of a liberation movement to one that has responsibility for the security and well-being of all its people.

Past and present Israeli administrations, including those that supported the Oslo Accords, have opposed recognizing Palestine as a state because this would deprive the former of key pressure points on the Palestinians. And, as during the Netanyahu years, this is part of their wider policy of obstructing a peace agreement based on a two-state solution.

For the international community to present Israel with Palestinian statehood as a fait accompli would be to send a clear signal of intent, forcing Israel to adjust accordingly or find itself isolated.

It is far from guaranteed that Tel Aviv will draw the right conclusions from the horrific experiences post-Oct. 7, but one of these lessons is that preventing Palestinian statehood through meddling in Palestinian affairs only empowers those Palestinian elements who are least conducive to living peacefully side by side with Israel.

Decades of delay over recognizing Palestinian statehood have not advanced by one iota the cause of peace negotiations, let alone a peace agreement. On the contrary, this issue has become a bottleneck and a distraction that has prevented the sides from progressing on other outstanding issues.

Now, there is certainly

the danger that one or both sides might reach the wrong conclusion from such a recognition. Israel, due to its ingrained distrust of the international community, would probably see it as another deliberate move to undermine its security and its survival.

The Palestinians, meanwhile, might conclude that the tide has turned in their favor and against Israel, feel that there is no urgency to conclude a peace agreement and consequently harden their position. If that were the case, it would be for the international community to ensure that this thinking is nipped in the bud.

The last few months have dramatically changed the domestic and international discourse over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and highlighted the understanding that avoiding any proactive approach to resolving it comes at an intolerable price whose impact goes well beyond Israel and Palestine. But it is impossible to envisage Washington leading a radical change to this intractable conflict, especially in an election year.

So, this makes it imperative that the EU, both as individual members and as one of the more powerful and influential political bodies in international affairs and which has deep-rooted interests in the region and its stability, not to mention its historical connections, takes the lead and the initiative in recognizing Palestine as a state. This would send a clear message to Washington that America either joins Europe in recognition or remains almost isolated from its friends by not doing so.

Simply recognizing Palestine as a state will not be a complete panacea, but it will be an essential turning point toward a just and viable resolution to one of the most protracted and volatile conflicts in modern history.

Israel is testing the West's most fundamental values

Osama Al-Sharif

THE student protests that are roiling US universities and colleges — and now spreading into Europe — over Israel's war on Gaza are testing the Western world's long-held principles and values. Images of police cracking down on largely peaceful gatherings have shaken the foundations of the American republic, its Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The attacks on elite universities for not clamping down on protesting students are being led by vehemently pro-Israel Republican lawmakers. They have called on President Joe Biden to send in the National Guard and suppress what they call pro-Hamas, liberal-funded antisemitic infiltrators.

The fact that Jewish organizations are involved in the antiwar protests has carried little weight with the conservative mainstream media and the Zionist lobbies that have sought to demonize them. Professors as well as students have been arrested, some beaten and manhandled, amid calls by lawmakers to terminate federal funding to colleges that either refuse to call in state police or have reached an agreement with protesters to divest from companies supplying weapons to Israel.

The crisis has raised questions about the fundamental individual freedoms that are protected by law and considered sacrosanct in Western societies. It has polarized an already divided American society over Israel's war on Gaza and the gross human rights violations committed there, in addition to the horrific human toll on the Palestinians.

The Biden administration is already under fire from both sides: from the left for enabling Israel's genocidal war and from the right for not doing enough to help Israel finish the job in Gaza. Biden is caught in the middle. His support among the Democratic youth and Arab and Muslim voters is waning and may play a vital role in him losing his reelection bid in November.

The president's Republican foes, including Donald Trump, refuse to give him a free pass. Despite his long history as a self-proclaimed Zionist and ardent supporter of Israel, he is being blamed for helping Hamas buy time, weakening the Netanyahu government, and ignoring a steep rise in antisemitism at US colleges and universities.

There is one clear message that US politicians on both sides of the aisle are sending to the rest of the world: when it comes to Israel, there are special sets of rules that do not apply elsewhere. Forget about Israel's excessive use of US-supplied firepower against civilians, the accusations of genocide and war crimes, and the breaches of international laws and conventions. Israel gets special treatment all the time. It is not only the politicians that are involved; it is also the mainstream media, the lobbies, the CEOs of the tech giants and the military-industrial complex, the evangelicals and many of the special interest groups.

And it is not only the US institutions that the pro-Israel lawmakers are pressuring. This week, Zetop revealed that 12 GOP senators informed the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, that any attempt by the court to hold Netanyahu and his colleagues to account for their actions in Gaza would be interpreted "not only as a threat to Israel's sovereignty but to the sovereignty of the United States." "Target Israel and we will target you," the senators told Khan, adding that they would "sanction the ICC employees and associates and bar you and your families from the United States." Somewhat ominously, the letter concludes: "You have been warned."

Pro-Israel lawmakers have lambasted the UN, its organizations and officials, including Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, numerous times after the body criticized Israel or

called for independent investigations into possible war crimes committed by Israel in Gaza and the West Bank. In the 1990s, Congress enacted a law that mandates the withdrawal of US funding if the UN or any of its agencies recognizes the Palestinian state as a full member.

Europe is not much better. Despite massive weekly demonstrations calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the punishment of Israel, most European governments have taken hasty steps to contain such protests. In the early days of the war on Gaza, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin threatened to arrest anyone participating in antiwar marches and rallies. That threat did little to stop tens of thousands of people from taking to the heart of Paris in support of Palestine. Critics called Darmanin's protest ban an attack on civil liberties.

In the UK, the Conservative government tried to demonize pro-Palestine marches. Pro-Israel Home Secretary Suella Braverman was sacked after drawing anger for accusing police of being too lenient with the protesters.

More recently, the German government banned British-Palestinian surgeon Ghassan Abu Sitta from entering the country to deliver testimony about his experiences in Gazan hospitals. On Saturday, he was also refused entry to France due to a German ban affecting all Schengen Area countries. Before him, former Greek finance minister and anti-Israel activist Yanis Varoufakis was also banned from entering Germany, where he was due to participate in an antiwar conference.

These and other examples have struck deep into the very fabric of Western societies. Israel's automatic impunity in the eyes of Western governments and the ruling elite is gnawing at the foundations of fundamental individual freedoms and rights, not to mention raising legitimate questions about the undue influence that Zionist bodies have over Western politicians.

The reverberations of Israel's war on Gaza will go deep into Western societies long after that horrific war is over. The link will linger for many years. Israel will have to face a reckoning if the international rules-based order is to survive. Failing that, a new order is already in the making. It coincides with the visible decline in US global hegemony as it battles internal tests about its commitment to its fundamental principles, which were meant to protect the interests of the American people first and foremost.

Israel has become a severe liability to the West and it is using its last reserves of support among politicians who will, at the end of the day, have to answer to voters. Vibrant democracies have a way of correcting themselves. Israel's credit line among politicians is coming to its inevitable conclusion.

In the end, Israel will have to fight its own battles at the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice and other forums. The stigma of its atrocities in Gaza will not go away. The Global South, an emerging power, observes the unfolding calamity. Gaza is no longer about Palestine, even though that cause persists, but about the fidelity of a world order that is designed for all members with no exceptions.

Israel is the last of the 19th-century colonial projects and it has outlived its expiration date. Historical Palestine/Israel needs to coexist to prevent a recurrence of genocidal wars like the one in Gaza. International law and the tenets of what the West has been preaching all these decades are being tested, both in the West and beyond. The credibility of the West is at stake. The road ahead leads to a fork and making the wrong choice will be detrimental. Europe should know better: the line between fascism and democracy can be invisible thin.

Big city diseases should be cured one at a time

Kang Bing

CHINA has nearly 20 cities with a population of more than 10 million, with Chongqing, Shanghai and Beijing being the top three — each has more than 20 million residents. However, China's urbanization rate is only about 67 percent, which means nearly 500 million people still live and work in rural areas.

The government is pursuing urbanization to ensure the rural population leads a better life. China's urbanization rate had been increasing by about 1 percentage point a year for the past few decades, with even cities with a population of more than 10 million being required to open their doors wider to rural migrants. Only Beijing and Shanghai have been exceptions. The shortage of resources, and increasing traffic jams and pollution have prompted the two cities to strengthen city regulations.

Besides, reports say nearly 70 percent of the water consumed by Beijing residents is diverted from southern China through a number of channels, and the 7.54 million

vehicles in Beijing are causing massive traffic jams while rising human activities are harming the local environment and increasing air pollution.

To treat the big city diseases, a decision was made about 10 years ago to move some non-capital functions out of urban Beijing. A modern sub-center has been built in eastern Beijing to accommodate local municipal departments and institutions, and by the end of last year some 30,000 municipal staff members had been moved there.

Besides, a new city, Xiong'an New Area, about 100 kilometers south of Beijing is being built to accommodate the headquarters of big companies, branches of universities, research institutions and other organizations, and house about 1 million people in the early stage. Over the past decade, more than 1,000 logistics centers and wholesale-cum-retail markets have been moved out of Beijing, including the well-known Zoo Wholesale Market, whose original site has

been turned into a scientific innovation center.

These measures have worked because Beijing has managed to keep its population at 21 million for some years. In fact, the moves to relocate non-capital functions out of Beijing, along with other measures such as building more subways and encouraging the use of electric cars, have eased the city's traffic problem and improved its air quality.

But now that other cities are luring talents with preferential policies, the capital should try to maintain its luster by introducing more policies that are attractive to both domestic and overseas talents.

Having lived in Beijing for more than four decades and being used to the hustle and bustle of the city, I cannot afford to imagine a day when I, as an old man, am walking alone in a street, trying to find someone to ask my way back home. This is something I actually experienced in the Australian capital of Canberra.

I hope that doesn't happen in Beijing.

The local elections’ two strong messages

Eyad Abu Shakra

DESPITE the government and the party leadership’s haughty denials, last week’s wholesale defeat of the ruling Conservative Party at the local elections in England was predictable.

All the opinion polls conducted over the past few months, without exception, predicted that the Conservatives would suffer heavy losses. However, analysts disagreed on whether these losses would be “catastrophic” enough to pressure Prime Minister Rishi Sunak into resigning before the general election or if they would be “tolerable” and allow the party to catch its breath and choose its fourth leader in three years without panic.

Prior to the announcement of the final results on Saturday afternoon, it seemed that the outcome would be catastrophic. The Conservatives lost control of 10 local councils and lost 474 seats. Moreover, the Conservatives failed to unseat Labour London Mayor Sadiq Khan, who had been strongly criticized by some car owners and drivers for expanding the city’s Ultra Low Emission Zone, leaving many Labour supporters worried he would lose.

On the flip side, the Labour Party wrested control of eight councils, raising the number of councils under its control to 51. In terms of seats, Labour gained 186, increasing its total to 1,158, but these figures do not paint a full picture of the result. They do not shed light on important details, with the most prominent being the following.

Firstly, not all of the councils the Conservatives lost went to Labour. The Liberal Democrats also made strong gains. The centrist party seized control of two additional

local councils, bringing its total to 12 and allowing it to surpass the Conservatives. In terms of seats, it won 522, adding 104, meaning that it also has more seats than the Conservatives. The Green Party won 74 new seats, raising its total number to 181, but it failed to win any councils.

Secondly, independent candidates from various backgrounds and regions managed to make breakthroughs and influence the results to varying degrees.

Thirdly, the anti-European Reform UK (formerly the Brexit Party) has reportedly cut into right-wing support for the Conservatives, especially in rural regions and affluent suburbs. However, Reform only won two seats.

And finally, despite doing better than any other party, Labour only secured about 35 percent of the vote. This figure does not suggest that it will, as some have predicted, win a landslide victory in the upcoming general election like that of former Labour leader Tony Blair in 1997, which effectively ended the Thatcherite era. A landslide typically requires winning more than 40 percent of the vote, with the remainder distributed reasonably favorably among competing parties.

Accordingly, it can be said that the first thing these results tell us is that the Conservative Party, under its current right-wing leadership, has suffered a severe blow, making it highly unlikely that this leadership will remain in place for much longer. The Conservatives’ problem is made more difficult by its regular changes of leadership since the Brexit referendum in 2016. This instability has left the party suffering

from internal bleeding, consuming leaders to the same extent that it has undermined its credibility and limited its options.

It is worth noting that, before embarking on his Brexit adventure, former Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader David Cameron, who is now the UK’s foreign secretary, believed that he would win the referendum on leaving Europe, allowing him to “crush” the extremist, isolationist wing of the party and root out its populists. That is why he voluntarily committed to holding the referendum. However, his assumption about the outcome was unfounded. Thus, Cameron resigned (after remaining in power between 2010 and 2016) and was succeeded by a transitional “moderate,” Theresa May (2016-2019).

However, when the economic and political repercussions of the country’s exit from the EU began to emerge, the growing faction of defiant right-wing extremist Conservatives rushed to double down and push on. As a result, the leadership of the party and the government changed hands three times in just four years, from May to Boris Johnson (2019-2022), then Liz Truss (for a month and a half) and finally Sunak (2022-present).

Today, there is no real indication that a sensible, moderate Conservative faction can push back against the extremists and seize control of the political arena. For Labour, the results of the local elections — despite their positivity — sent a message that was no less serious or perilous.

The results reminded the current leadership to avoid underestimating

the voices of dissent that have been demonized by the Israeli lobby in recent months. Interestingly, this lobby was the driving force behind the election of Keir Starmer as the successor to Jeremy Corbyn, who represented the radical left of the party.

The stance adopted by Starmer, who has close links to Labour Friends of Israel, on the displacement war in Gaza has shocked a broad segment of the party’s electorate, not only Arab and Muslim voters, but leftists from across the spectrum as well.

However, the Labour leader and his clique stuck to their unwinnable bet of compensating for the loss of dissenting votes by adopting Conservative policies and strongly supporting Israel and the Likud right. More importantly, they underestimated the scale at which these voters would choose not to vote or to vote tactically for the Liberal Democrats or the Greens.

Indeed, that is exactly what happened in several areas of England, including neighborhoods and suburbs with significant Muslim populations, such as the Birmingham suburbs and Manchester suburbs like Oldham, where Labour lost absolute control of the council because of the activists’ opposition to the Gaza war. It is worth noting that the UK’s largest urban centers, in terms of population, are Greater London, Birmingham (in the West Midlands) and Greater Manchester (in the northwest).

In conclusion, the Muslim vote first, and the Arab vote second, have had an impact on the Labour Party in major urban centers. Thus, neglecting these voters in the upcoming general election would be a real gamble.

Girls in Africa have every right to be children

Tafi Mhaka

I cannot imagine how a 63-year-old high priest could possibly marry a 12-year-old girl in a lavish ceremony and proudly pose for the cameras while doing so.

It seems inconceivable to me that a man could publicly express undying affection to a child who is five decades younger than him, but Nuomo Borkeley Laweh Tsuru XXXIII did just that a couple of months ago, on March 30. He “married” the unnamed girl in a traditional wedding ceremony attended by scores of people in Accra, Ghana.

It was seemingly a done deal for the amoral spiritual leader, at least until photographs and videos of the so-called “wedding” appeared on social media.

They sparked public outrage and widespread condemnation. However, prominent members of the Nungua Indigenous community claimed any disapproval of the marriage emanated from a “point of ignorance” as the girl would only fulfil a “customary” role.

In Ghana, the legal minimum age to get married is 18. In fact, child marriage was explicitly criminalised as part of the Children’s Act of 1998. So the predatory and shameless priest had no right to “marry” this child in whatever shape or form.

Fortunately, the police later intervened, and placed her in protective custody. Stories like this are common throughout Africa.

In 2022, I was devastated by the story of eight-year-old “Nairesia” from Samburu County, Kenya, who was nearly subjected to female genital mutilation and married off to a 72-year-old predator with three other wives, on the orders of her own father.

Thankfully, she managed to run away from home, and after spending three terrifying days and nights alone and hungry in the forest, found help and protection at a police station.

I have a nine-year-old daughter myself. She is just a child. That she would marry anyone, let alone a septuagenarian with multiple wives, now or in three years’ time, is unimaginable to me. I know she wouldn’t be able to cope with the trauma of being separated from us or the trauma of being robbed of her childhood and becoming the “wife” of a grown man. I would never allow this, under any circumstances, to happen to my child. And it pains me immensely that it is still happening to countless children

across Africa. I was disgusted, and heartbroken, by the news of that 12-year-old girl being married off to an elderly man in Accra, but, to be completely honest, I was not in any way surprised.

Making brides out of small children is a shamefully widespread practice with a long history in many African countries.

A long time ago, my own family was offered a child bride as compensation for my grandfather’s murder. He was murdered by a group of men one ill-fated evening on his way home from Watsomba, a shopping centre in rural Manicaland in eastern Zimbabwe.

Years later, the relatives of his killers offered us a young girl as compensation for his violent and untimely death. Fortunately, our family elders refused to accept their immoral offer.

If not, that young girl’s life would have been completely ruined, and my relatives and I would be forever overwhelmed with immense shame and guilt. Sadly, the practice of “girl child compensation” has persisted in many parts of Africa, despite many efforts to stamp it out.

Throughout Africa, in many traditional communities girls are either overtly sexualised, to satisfy the whims of contemptible old men, or treated as plain commodities. There clearly remains a widespread reluctance to free young girls from the debilitating consequences of regressive cultural practices and traditions.

One woman of three in Zimbabwe between the ages of 20 to 49 was married before the age of 18.

Four of every 10 girls in Nigeria are married before the age of 18.

And most worryingly, six of the world’s 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are in West and Central Africa.

Child marriages mostly stem from gender inequality, poverty, social norms, cultural and traditional practices, as well as teenage pregnancy. Girls who enter marriage at a young age often experience serious socioeconomic hardship afterwards, including limited opportunities in education, domestic violence, and serious health challenges.

Young adolescents face a higher risk of complications and death as a result of pregnancy than other women.

Despite these mortal dangers, many societies throughout Africa seemingly remain strongly committed to unfair, destructive and outdated practices.

Girl children should not be sexualised, no matter what the traditions and customs of a particular community are. They should not be forced to become partners, caregivers or mothers while they, themselves, desperately need parental love, guidance and support.

All girls deserve a happy and carefree childhood, filled with love, play, curiosity and learning, much like their male counterparts.

Change, however, does not appear yet to be on the horizon.

According to UNICEF, “Sub-Saharan Africa – which currently shoulders the second largest global share of child brides (20 per cent) – is over 200 years away from ending the practice at its current pace”.

That means at least 200 more years of oppression, violence, trauma and premature death for Africa’s girl children. Let us remember that the police cannot save every child bride.

And that many 12-year-old girls, thrust into womanhood prematurely, cannot survive the dire complications linked to pregnancy and childbirth.

All African men – myself included – must hang their heads in shame at the continued prevalence of this multifaceted violence against girls in Africa.

It takes a whole society to create the conditions for an underage girl to be proudly wedded to a filthy old man in a lavish ceremony in front of many cameras.

What happened in Accra was not an extraordinary, one-off evil. Child marriages take place in our communities quite openly and many seemingly “upstanding” individuals in society, both male and female, condone or at least conveniently turn a blind eye to them.

It is thus critical to ensure that state authorities vigorously enforce national laws, policy agendas and instruments to protect and promote the rights of girl children. The African Union says, “Africa shall be an inclusive continent where no child, woman or man will be left behind or excluded, on the basis of gender ... or other factors.”

Nonetheless, there is plenty of evidence to suggest the girl child has certainly been left behind.

Every child must enjoy equal protection and rights not only in law but also in practice. Girls in Africa have every right to freely play, explore, learn and grow in safety.

Girls in Africa have every right to be children.

EU should not give in to Lebanese blackmail over refugees

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

EUROPEAN Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited Lebanon along with the Cypriot president last week. The EU offered the country a package of 1 billion (\$1.08 billion) to be disbursed through 2027. Though the package is supposedly to help Lebanon, it is in fact to buy its leaders’ acquiescence in keeping 1.5 million Syrian refugees in the country.

The Lebanese political class has been very skillful in using the refugee issue to blackmail the international community and extract funds. The political class has its back to the wall. The country defaulted on its debt service in March 2020, meaning it can no longer issue bonds to finance spending. The tax collection system is plagued with inefficiencies. The meager taxes cannot cover government spending. Of course, the political class is not willing to conduct reforms, as it thrives on corruption and clientelism. The only thing left is to blackmail the international community. The Lebanese political class is very good at doing that.

Whenever they need money, these Lebanese leaders start using incitement against refugees. They increase the abusive security measures against refugees, as well as the public rhetoric. The more they squeeze the refugees, the more they try to leave the country. Given that going back to Syria is impossible, the only way out is to cross the Mediterranean. This is a threat to Europe, so the Europeans cave in to the political class and relinquish their demand for reforms in exchange for funds and grants.

However, what the Europeans do not understand is that they are not solving the problem and are actually making it worse by feeding the political class’s predatory behavior. They are opting for the easy way out. The solution they offer is only a temporary one that, in the future, will aggravate the problem. If blackmail works, the political class will use it whenever it needs a new cash injection. By giving the Lebanese political class money, Europe is neither helping the Lebanese nor the Syrians. The Lebanese need the international community to help them get rid of the corrupt political class. But the cash injection will give it a lifeline and allow the political class to avoid conducting reforms. On the other hand, keeping the Syrians in Lebanon is not a solution to the Syrian problem. The solution to the Syrian problem is pressuring the Assad government to make concessions and allow the return of refugees.

So far, Assad has skillfully used his allies in the Lebanese political class to pressure the international community. Jamil Al-Sayyed, a pro-Syrian political figure, attacked the political class for accepting the EU’s money in return for keeping the refugees in Lebanon. He said that, instead of taking the money, the Lebanese government should have pressured the Europeans to mend their relations with Bashar Assad. This is the mantra of the pro-Syrian, or “mumanaa,” political camp. It is using the refugees as a pressure point on the international community on behalf of Assad. It alternates between doing this and using the refugees to milk cash.

Though the Europeans realize they are being blackmailed, the specter of illegal migration looms large. According to the Cypriot Interior Ministry, between Jan. 1 and April 4, 2,140 migrants arrived on the island by boat, as opposed to 78 during the same period in 2023. The vast majority were Syrians who had crossed from Lebanon. If this trend continues, it will create a threat to Europe. Europe can no longer accommodate new refugees. Europe is inundated with those who have fled Ukraine. To add to the economic burden, there is the cultural aspect of migration. The influx of Syrians in 2015 led to a wave of electoral gains for extreme-right parties. Such migration has even placed a question mark over the European project.

During last week’s visit, Najib Mikati, Lebanon’s caretaker prime minister, reiterated the pro-Assad line by saying that the Syrians fled their country for economic reasons. This is not true, as the refugees mainly fled because of the security situation and Assad and his allies’ butchery. The Syrian president is also using refugees as a negotiating card with the international and Arab communities and has no real intention of allowing them to come back. Even last year’s Arab normalization with Assad did not result in a return of refugees.

The Europeans are putting a sticking plaster on a deep wound that needs surgery. They do not want to tackle the issue of Assad properly and are merely trying to somehow contain the spillover. Faced with his support from Iran and Russia, the international community has been unable to remove Assad. At the

same time, the Syrian president is not showing any flexibility — he is not willing to make any concessions in order to be accepted and reintegrated into the international community. As a result, the international community just tries to accommodate the refugees indefinitely without a real plan for their future.

The refugees are a convenient scapegoat for the Lebanese political class. They blame refugees for all the calamities facing the country. They keep hyping up the cost of the refugees to the Lebanese economy. They fail to mention that the allowances refugees get from the UN Refugee Agency pour into the Lebanese economy. They fail to say that the support Lebanon gets for its public schools is driven by Europe, as the international community wants to keep refugee children in schools. Hence, the Lebanese teacher receives a salary because Syrian refugee children are learning in public schools alongside Lebanese students.

There is an agreement that the refugees are weighing down the country and its decaying infrastructure and that Syrian labor is competing with the Lebanese in a limited market amid a financial crisis. However, the Lebanese political elite are not seeking to solve the problem. On the contrary, they want to benefit from it. Of course, for Europe, immigration is a clear and present danger, but its leaders should recognize that, by caving into the demands of the Lebanese political elite, they are only making themselves prone to more blackmail. Any aid to Lebanon, regardless of the presence of refugees, should be conditioned on tangible reforms.

Trump is taking a victory lap, he might live to regret it

Ahmed Baba

Donald Trump seemed to be riding high while heading into court on Monday morning to testify in his civil fraud trial. Over the weekend, a poll was dominating the news cycle. A poll which apparently filled him with this confidence. The New York Times/Siena College results found Donald Trump leading President Joe Biden in five of six key battleground states. Trump held leads in Arizona (+5%), Georgia (+6%), Michigan (+5%), Nevada (+11%), Pennsylvania (+4%). Biden led Wisconsin with +2%. Of course, we have to take all polls with a grain of salt, especially this far from election day. Remember the 2022 red wave that never hit our shores? I prefer to look at real-world, recent election results for insight into where the electorate stands.

In any case, Donald Trump clearly felt emboldened. Trump has long held the belief that his legal troubles would help his 2024 campaign, and his team likely looked at the new poll as vindication of that belief. But if we scrutinize his approach and look deeper into the results, there are flashing red warning lights for Trump. As he took the stand, Trump again sought turn his courtroom appearance into a campaign event. The Independent’s Alex Woodward, who was inside the Manhattan courtroom, reported that a “red-faced” Trump raged as he was questioned about the inflation of his assets. “You ruled against me, and you said I was a fraud,” Trump said, not looking directly at the judge. “He called me a fraud, and he didn’t know anything about me.”

Judge Arthur Engoron repeated-

ly admonished Trump and his lawyers for Trump’s meandering speeches: “Can you control your client? This is not a political realm.” While Trump may be attempting to bait Judge Engoron into making a mistake that Trump’s lawyers can exploit in an appeal process, there is another tactic at play. Trump is clearly running a political strategy, not a legal one. The way he’s behaving indicates he simply wants to show his base he’s “fighting.” Monday’s testimony will surely make it into Trump’s fundraising emails. The false idea that he is the victim of a weaponized justice system is a key part of his campaign. He doesn’t seem to care that he’s antagonizing the singular figure who already decided he’s liable for fraud and will soon decide his punishment.

Trump and his team clearly think that the way he has approached this testimony and all his legal cases is gaining him support. But what Trump may see as short-term political wins could prove to be long-term political and legal losses.

This New York civil fraud trial is not a jury trial. Judge Engoron is going to decide the fate of Donald Trump’s business, so repeatedly using his testimony to antagonize that very same judge won’t help his case. When you look at the substance of Trump’s testimony, it gets even worse.

Donald Trump made admissions his sons, Eric Trump and Donald Trump Jr, refused to make. Trump’s kids attempted to distance themselves from the accounting process while Trump openly admitted to being involved in the valuations.

“I would look at them, I would see them, and I would maybe on occasion have some suggestions,” Trump said on the stand, under oath. Not only did he admit to being involved in the valuation process, but he also admitted to lowering the value of his Seven Springs property because he “thought it was too high.” This civil fraud trial goes to the very heart of Donald Trump’s persona as a successful businessman, and his punishment in this trial could be paying up to \$250m in damages and losing his New York businesses. While on the stand, Trump also lambasted the entire process: “This is a very unfair trial... And I hope the public is watching.” Trump should be careful what he wishes for. The public is watching his legal developments very closely, and if he continues to lose in court, evidence indicates they will punish him for it.

On the flip side of his polling lead, there’s also a little-discussed cross-tab within the NYT/Siena poll that shows Trump’s legal troubles could prove to be his downfall. When asked if Donald Trump is convicted and sentenced in one of his criminal trials, an average of 6% of registered voters across those same six battleground states said they would switch their vote over to Biden, with 4% opting for another candidate and 4% choosing to sit out the election. This would put Biden in a large lead in all six battleground states, handing him the 2024 election. Donald Trump faces 91 criminal charges across four indictments, and his 2024 calendar is stacked with trial dates.

January 15, 2024: Second E

Jean Carroll defamation trial. March 4, 2024: DOJ trial over 2020 election subversion. March 25, 2024: NYC Hush Money trial. May 20, 2024: DOJ classified documents trial.

The most damning of these trials is undoubtedly Special Counsel Jack Smith’s 2020 election subversion case, currently set for March and overseen by Judge Tanya Chutkan in DC. Fani Willis, Fulton County, Georgia DA, is also currently seeking a March 2024 trial for her 2020 election subversion RICO case. DA Willis has already secured multiple guilty pleas from Trump’s former attorneys, which is not good news for Trump. Given the sheer number of criminal cases Donald Trump faces and the voluminous evidence laid out in each of them, the chances of a conviction are high. If the NYT/Siena poll is any indication, voters would overwhelmingly reject Trump if that happens.

The majority of Americans typically don’t fully tune in to the presidential race until well into the election year. When they do tune in, they are going to learn about Donald Trump’s increasingly unhinged promises and the authoritarian agenda of the Republican Party. President Biden also has a lot of time to change course and potentially repair the support he’s lost due to his handling of the Israel-Hamas war.

A lot can happen in the next year, including multiple Trump convictions. Trump shouldn’t take a victory lap just yet. He may look back and wish he had focused more on his legal strategy than his campaign. His freedom could be at stake.

— Gulf Today



Promotion of mutual trade, industrial and economic activities

SCCI, US Deputy Chief of Mission agreed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Fuad Ishaq, president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Andrew Schofar, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy Islamabad have agreed to take initiatives for promotion of investment, Pak-Afghan bilateral trade, resolution of cross border trade issues along with enhancing demand and export of Pakistani products to US markets and improvement of primary-level education and women's social and economic empowerment.

The agreement was reached during a dinner hosted by SCCI president Fuad Ishaq in honour of Andrew Schofar, Deputy

Chief of Mission, US Embassy Islamabad and his team in his residence, said in a press release issued here on Tuesday.

The dinner was also attended by US Consul General in Peshawar Shante Moore, Political/Economic Officer of US Consulate Peshawar James Pershing and Gender Advisor, INL US Embassy Islamabad Andrea Hillyer.

Businessmen Forum leader former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, leading businessmen Senator Mohsin Aziz, Senator Nauman Wazir, former presidents Adeel Rauf, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, and Nooruddin Daud, Dr Akhtar Ali Shah, Engr Shahab Khattak, Muhammad Shafiq, Dr Tariq Jabbar, Saboor Sethi,

Ammad Rashid, Bilal Fuad Azeem, Abbas Fuad Azeem, Shagufta Malik, Mahwish Ali Khan, Sharaf un Nisa Khattak, Zara Babar and Raibal Riaz also present during the dinner program.

Fuad Ishaq, president Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq and Andrew Schofar, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy Islamabad during the dinner discussed bilateral trade, favorable and enabling environment for investment, industrialisation, improvement in primary education/schooling through US assistance, women economic and social empowerment, enhancement of Pakistan's products demand and export to

US markets, promotion of Pak-Afghan trade, border related issues, establishment of peace and stability through generation employment opportunities in KP.

Both sides reaffirmed commitment toward bringing economic progress, prosperity and enhancement of industrial and trade activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa besides resolution of the business community, and hurdles in cross border trade through joint initiatives.

Earlier, in his initial remarks, Fuad Ishaq welcomed Andrew Schofar, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy Islamabad and his team and thanked US team, dignitaries and guests for their participation in the dinner.



SIALKOT: SVP SCCI Wahab Jahangir presenting a shield to DG Labor Punjab Syeda Kulsoom Hai at Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

PSX witnesses mixed trend

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed mixed trend on Tuesday, with a nominal loss of 3.04 percent, closing at 72,761.20 points against 72,764.24 points the previous trading day.

A total of 621,826,404 shares valuing Rs 24,970 billion were traded during the day as compared to 578,388,643 shares valuing Rs24,518 billion last day.

Some 377 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 200 of them recorded gains and 154 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 23 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Pak Electron with 64,150,303 shares at Rs 26.90 per share, Fauji Cement with 40,146,219 shares at Rs 10.10 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 29,971,602 shares at Rs 1.28 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed an increase of Rs 100.45 per share closing at Rs 19,547.95, whereas runner-up was Hecchst Pakistan Limited with Rs 92.54 decline to close at Rs 1,326.41.

Hallmark Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 71.10 per share closing at Rs 906.62, followed by Mari petroleum Company Limited with Rs 36.22 decline to close at Rs 2,719.20.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where a containers ship 'MSC Archimidis' berthed at Container Terminal on Monday. Meanwhile 3 more ships, Maersk Yorkton, MH Sandef Jord and Ionic Artemis scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice and Mogas also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Majestic Noor, African Loon and Gaslog Geneva left the port on today morning. Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Archimidis, Clyde4 and White Peachare expected to sail today afternoon.

Cargo volume of 171,231 tonnes, comprising 127,174 tonnes imports cargo and 44,057 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,810 Containers (1,240 TEUs Imports and 1,570 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. There are 03 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, MH Sandef Jord, Ionic Artemis and Maersk Yorkton& another ship, Wide Alpha scheduled to load/offload Rice, Mogas and Container are expected to take berths at MW-1, FOTCO and QICT on today 07 May, while two more container ships, Maersk Cape Town and MSC Roma are due arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.

3 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, MH Sandef Jord, Ionic Artemis and Maersk Yorkton& another ship, Wide Alpha scheduled to load/offload Rice, Mogas and Container are expected to take berths at MW-1, FOTCO and QICT on today 07 May, while two more container ships, Maersk Cape Town and MSC Roma are due arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.

Simplification of tax procedure stressed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Zia ul Haq Sarhadi has laid stress on making tax collection procedure simpler and for increasing liaison between business community and officials of Income Tax department.

He expressed these views while talking with newly posted Chief Commissioner Regional Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar, Zafar Iqbal Khan.

Coordinator PAJCCI, Zia Sarhadi called on Zafar Iqbal Khan to felicitate his appointment and for apprising him about some issues pertained to business community.

During the meeting, Commissioner In-Land Revenue Mardan, Shahid Mehmoood, Commissioner In-Land Revenue

Corporate, Syed Fazle Malik, Commissioner In-Land Revenue Withholding Zone, Syed Khalid Shah, Commissioner In-Land Revenue Peshawar Zone, Dr. Farooq Jamil and Commissioner In-Land Revenue D.I.Khan, Irfan Aziz were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi expressed the hope that the newly appointed Commissioner will take measures for betterment of trading community of the province.

He also apprised participants of the meeting about different measures taken by Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah (recipient of prestigious Hilal-e-Imtiaz and Sitara-e-Imtiaz awards) about different measures taken for resolving different problems being faced by business community of the country.

It merits a mention here

that Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi is also performing as honorary Coordinator Media Affairs in Federal Tax Ombudsman.

He also presented different suggestions for bringing reforms in tax collection procedure, simplification of tax collection and for redressal of difficulties faced by tax payers.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Commissioner RTO Peshawar, Zafar Iqbal Khan held out assurance of his cooperation in coordination with business community of the province.

He said business community can approach him at any time for bringing into his notice any issue causing inconvenience to them.

The RTO office and its officials will take every possible step for providing relief to business community of the region, Zafar Khan reiterated.

HABIBMETRO and GoRead.pk collaborate to promote literacy

F.P. Report

KARACHI: HABIBMETRO continues to support social initiatives that are focused on children's literacy and development. The Bank has joined hands with GoRead.pk for the publication of The Memory Box, a children's book written by Nusser Sayeed and illustrated by Saleha Ghani.

GoRead.pk's major initiatives include Kahaani Sawaari, a unique programme that mobilizes children from less fortunate communities for storytelling sessions in outdoor spaces. The organization has also placed hanging libraries with cloth-made bookshelves in areas such as Lyari and Shah Faisal Colony, Karachi.

"We are pleased to part-

ner with GoRead.pk and support its unique initiative of promoting literacy and storytelling in underprivileged communities to nurture children's intellectual capabilities. GoRead.pk's dedication to empower children through the power of reading has inspired us and we hope it continues to inspire children across Pakistan." Said Khurram Shahzad Khan, President & CEO of HABIBMETRO.

HABIBMETRO's collaboration with GoRead.pk promotes storytelling and awareness among underserved communities and develops positive character traits in children. Through literature, children are inspired to embrace beneficial habits and empowered to play constructive roles in society and contribute to its development.

"GoRead.pk is proud to partner with HABIBMETRO, a socially responsible organization whose support has allowed us to effectively expand our library programme for children. Thank you HABIBMETRO for joining our movement and allowing us to move closer to our collective vision of a Pakistan where one day all children will love to read." Said Nusser Sayeed, author of The Memory Box and Founder & CEO of GoRead.pk.

This partnership with GoRead.pk furthers HABIBMETRO's mission to create opportunities for the growth and development of children in Pakistan.

As a trusted institution in Pakistan's financial landscape, HABIBMETRO

serves millions of customers through a nationwide network of over 525 branches, including 208 dedicated Islamic banking branches in more than 200 cities. HABIBMETRO is a subsidiary of Habib Bank AG Zurich, which operates in 11 countries across four continents.

As a reputable organization in Pakistan's education landscape, GoRead.pk is providing thousands of primary school children with access to high-quality and engaging storybooks, which are read aloud to them via sessions of joyful storytelling led by caring adults. These sessions help children grow their vocabulary, acquire strong character qualities, and develop socio-emotional learning and a lifelong love of reading for pleasure.

Telecommunications merger could reduce choice for consumers: CCP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: An investigation by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has provisionally concluded that M/s. Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited's (PTCL) proposed acquisition of M/s.

Telenor Pakistan (Private) Limited (TP) and Orion Towers Private Limited (OT) could lead to a substantial lessening of competition in the telecommunication industry.

PTCL is a public-listed company and specializes in providing various telecom-

munication services such as cellular mobile telephony service, Wireless Local Loop service, Direct-to-Home television service and financial services through its subsidiaries across Pakistan, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB).

Telenor Pakistan (Private) Limited and Orion Towers Private Limited are wholly-owned subsidiaries of M/s. Telenor Pakistan BV (TPBV) and are engaged in providing cellular mobile and allied services in Pakistan, AJK and GB.

PTCL, which was founded in 1995, has already been declared as a Significant Market Power (SMP) Operator in Wholesale Domestic Leased Lines, Wholesale IP Bandwidth and Retail LDI Fixed-Line Telecommunication market by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). With existing overlaps, the CCP found that, should the deal go

ahead, the merger is likely to reduce choice, options, and competition in markets where there are only very few competitors and could lead to worse outcomes for the customers.

M/s. Pakistan Mobile Telecommunications Limited acquisition of M/s. Warid Telecom (Private) Limited reduced the number of network operators in 2016.

Through the proposed merger, one out of remaining four players would also be eliminated from the industry.

The CCP is concerned that this lessening of competition may result in higher prices or a reduction in choice or quality for customers hence, the transaction will be referred for an in-depth Phase 2 analysis.

The CCP aims to provide better services and product to the consumers of Pakistan by increasing competition in the telecommunication industry.

Pakistan's dairy and beef sector need to transform through precision farming

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Despite being 4th largest milk producer in the world and major sub-sectors of agriculture, contributing, along with livestock, over 60% of value-added agriculture and 11.7% of the total GDP contribution, the dairy sector faces persistent challenges that hinders its optimal potential.

With a population of 240 million people to meet their protein and dairy needs, Pakistan's dairy and beef industry is largely underperforming, which requires huge efforts to improve it.

These views were expressed by industry experts while speaking at an event that marked the partnership between Cloud Agri Pakistan, with NASNA, an Australian livestock company, one of the leading exporters in live animals, and Denkavit Nederland, the Dutch global leader in feed for young animals with over 90 years of knowledge and experience in the field of young animals' feed solutions.

Dr. Rana Shaukat Hussain, CEO of Cloud Agri Pakistan & Global Business Director of Cloud Agri Group said, by joining forces with NASNA and Denkavit, we are not only facilitating the introduction of superior livestock and nutrition solutions but also fostering a platform for knowledge exchange and the implementation



of international best practices to Pakistan dairy and beef farmers.

The collaboration is poised to bring unprecedented benefits to the Pakistani dairy and beef sector. NASNA will serve as the exclusive provider of high-quality Australian dairy and beef animals, while Denkavit will supply state-of-the-art calf rearing solutions to meet the diverse needs of Pakistani livestock farmers.

By supplying superior cattle breeds from Australia and introducing advanced calf nutrition solutions, the partnership aims to elevate Pakistan's dairy and livestock sectors to global standards going forward. This strategic alignment is set to empower local farmers and stakeholders with the

tools and knowledge necessary to enhance the production, improve animal health, and drive overall industry advancement.

Ms. Henny Fokel de Vries, Dutch Ambassador to Pakistan, hoped that partnership between Dutch and Pakistani company Cloud Agri will lead to developing Pakistani livestock sector on modern lines. She said over 50 Dutch companies are operating in Pakistan, including in Dairy and Agriculture sectors.

She assured her full support for Pakistani and Dutch companies operating in the Dairy Sector.

She said Pakistan and the Netherlands have been engaged in what she calls historic cooperation in the dairy and livestock sector.

SCB facilitates Finance Minister's meeting

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Standard Chartered Pakistan hosted an exclusive meeting between a delegation of international investors representing renowned Asset Management Funds from different parts of the world and the Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, in Islamabad. The meeting aimed to foster collaboration and explore potential investment opportunities in Pakistan's economy.

Standard Chartered has a rich history in Pakistan, having worked closely through its onshore presence and global network. The bank continues to facilitate foreign participation in Pakistan's local and foreign currency debt and capital markets by engag-

ing with high-profile international investors. The Minister was accompanied by senior officials from the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). During an insightful discussion with international investors, the Minister highlighted the government's tax initiatives and macroeconomic stability, marked by reduced inflation and a surge in the stock market, reflecting growing investor confidence.

The Minister also discussed the potential of key sectors, including infrastructure development, privatizations, IT and technology, agriculture, and energy. These sectors present opportunities for growth and investment, and the government is committed to supporting their development.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is published through this notice that I Haider Khan Son of Nadir Khan Resident of House no. 31 Sector-II, Phase-II, KDA Kohat is the owner of Plot no. 142 Size one kanal Sector B-2. Phase-II, K.D.A Kohat. He has requested that the transfer deed of the said Plot has been lost somewhere and now Issuance of Duplicate Transfer Deed is Desired The Plot is Not Mortgaged There has been Appointed no Attorney and Not Sold to Anybody if Any Bank /Institution/Firm or Person has any objections He /She Should Contact The Housing officer UADA Kohat Within 15 Days of Publication of This Notice in Writing With Proof otherwise Duplicate Transfer Deed Will Be Issued and no objection Will be Accepted (Director Urban Area KDA Kohat)



In brief

Match officials named for FIFA Qualifier

ISLAMABAD (APP): FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifiers are just around the corner, and Pakistan is gearing up to face Saudi Arabia in Round 2. According to details, the match is scheduled to take place on June 6 here at the Jinnah Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex. FIFA has announced the match officials for the match, with Bahrain's Hassan Mhofoud set to be the referee while Kemel Tokabev from Kyrgyzstan will serve as the match commissioner. The Jinnah Stadium is all set to host this exciting encounter, and football fans from across the country are eagerly looking forward to cheering on their team.

Pakistan team leaves for Ireland

LAHORE (PPI): Pakistan cricket team landed in Dubai on Tuesday morning on their way to Ireland to play a three-match T20I series beginning on May 10. The team left Lahore for Dubai early Tuesday morning from Allama Iqbal International Airport from the National Cricket Academy. Mohammad Amir couldn't travel with the team due to visa issues but would join them later. Acting Punjab Governor Mohammad Ahmed Khan met the team members at Lahore Airport VIP lounge and bid them farewell, expressing good wishes for the T20I series. Pakistan is set to play three T20 matches against Ireland, with the first match on May 10, the second on May 12, and the third on May 14 in Dublin. After completing the series against Ireland, Pakistan's cricket team arrive in England to play four T20 matches. The national team's first match with England would be played on May 22, the second on May 25, the third on May 28, and the fourth on May 30.

Gauff on the alert

ROME (AFP): Coco Gauff said on Tuesday she was dedicating training time prior to her second-round start at the ATP and WTA Italian Open to cleaning up her serve. The American third seed was plagued by multiple double-faults in a fourth-round defeat last week to compatriot Madison Keys in Madrid. And the reigning US Open winner said she plans to fix that delivery problem in Rome before heading to Roland Garros from May 26. "I had like 14 double-faults - that's four or five games," she said. "(If I) just fix that detail, it will save me. "Maybe those matches would turn into winning in straight sets instead of losing in three sets." She added: "For me it's just serving better than I did last week. Honestly, I feel the other parts of my game are improving in the right direction. "If I can work through, it will set me up for a very good Roland Garros." Both Gauff and defending champion Elena Rybakina expressed pleasure at returning to the Foro Italico and preparing for the last big event prior to Paris. "It's nice to be here. (I've seen) some improvements on-site," the Kazakh said. "I'm looking forward to this event. "I didn't practice for three, four days (after a Madrid semi-final loss to Aryna Sabalenka). Today I managed to hit a bit. "That's the way to keep on going because it's not easy with our schedule." Gauff paid tribute to Rafael Nadal, who is likely playing his final Rome event as he nears retirement sometime this season.



CHATTOGRAM: Mohammad Saifuddin struck twice in the powerplay, Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe, 3rd T20I.

Bangladesh seal T20 series with nine-run win over Zimbabwe

CHITTAGONG (AFP): Bangladesh survived a late onslaught from Faraz Akram to beat Zimbabwe by nine runs in the third Twenty20 international and seal the five-match series 3-0 in Chittagong on Tuesday. Playing his first match in the series, Faraz hit an unbeaten 34 off 19 balls, a record for any Zimbabwean batting at number 10, but the visitors still finished short at 156-9.

Faraz and Wellington Masakadza put on 54 for the ninth wicket to lift the side from 91-8. The visitors needed 21 runs from the final over but Mohammad Saifuddin bowled Masakadza in the first ball to put Bangladesh back on top.

Saifuddin, who made 3-42, held his nerve to concede only three runs from the last three balls. Towhid Hridoy earlier scored his maiden Twenty20 international with 57 off 38 balls, helping the hosts recover from a sluggish start after they were put in to bat first.

Jaker Ali provided Towhid ample support with 44 off 34 balls as the pair shared 87 for the fourth wicket. Blessing Muzarabani claimed 3-14 for Zimbabwe, his career best figure, but his teammates struggled to contain the innings. Muzarabani bowled

Liton Das for 12 as the opener shuffled across to play a paddle sweep, only to miss the line of the ball. Skipper Sikandar Raza bowled his counterpart Najmul Hossain Shanto for six to leave Bangladesh 29-2.

Jaker joined Towhid after Faraz scalped opener Tanzid Hasan for 21 to help Bangladesh shift gear. Muzarabani bowled Towhid and Jaker in the space of three balls in the penultimate over. Bangladesh won the opening two matches to lead the five-match series 2-0.

The final two matches of the series will be played in Dhaka on Friday and Sunday.

Aamir Atlas achieves World Squash Level 2 Coaching Certification

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former squash player Aamir Atlas has once again achieved milestone, as he has become a World Squash Level-2 certified coach. Atlas, who has had an illustrious playing career, winning 65 medals and reaching a World Ranking of 14, is now ready to share his expertise with the next generation of squash players.

Talking to APP, Atlas expressed his excitement and commitment to serve the country and the game of squash as a coach. "I'm thrilled to have achieved this landmark, and I'm eager to give back to the game that has given me so much," he said.

"Now I feel myself in a position to introduce and teach budding players how to play this great sport. Being a World Squash Level 2 Coach I believe I will be instrumental in nurturing a player's lifelong love for the game," he said. Atlas, who beat Kuwait's Abdullah Al Mezayan in three sets and became the first Pakistani in 14 years to claim the Asian Squash Championship 2013 title, believes that Pakistan has been lagging behind in squash due to a lack of adaptation to modern scientific changes in the game.

"We need to adopt international standards and modern techniques if we want to succeed in the game," he emphasized. With his wealth of experience and expertise, Atlas who remained Pakistan No. 1 for almost nine years, is well-positioned to make a significant impact on the development of squash in Pakistan.

He expressed his willingness to offer his services to players and the government to promote and encourage squash in the country. This achievement is a testament to Atlas's dedication and passion for the game.

Pakistan, Japan match ends in a draw

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's hockey team played a thrilling match against Japan in the ongoing 30th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, with the game ending in a 1-1 draw at Ipoh, Malaysia.

Pakistan scored a penalty corner in the last quarter of the game, with

Rana Waheed Ashraf scoring the equalizer in the 59th minute. Japan had taken the lead in the 33rd minute with a penalty corner goal by Ken Nagayoshi. The match was a crucial one for both teams, with Pakistan and Japan now tied on seven points each

on the points table. Pakistan won the bronze medal in the 29th Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Cup. The event features six teams, including host team Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and Canada. Pakistan will play their fourth pool match against Canada.

Pak squad named for Asian Volleyball League

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) on Tuesday announced a 14-member squad for the Engro Central Asian Volleyball League starting from May 11 to 17 here at Liaquat Gymnasium of the Pakistan Sports Complex.

According to Pakistan Volleyball Federation Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob, after rigorous training sessions and thorough evaluation, head coach Ruben Wolochin from Argentina has selected players to compete in the highly anticipated event.

The team was ready to showcase their skills and sportsmanship in the League. The league would feature teams from six countries including Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan

and host Pakistan. "The Volleyball League promises to be a thrilling competition, bringing together top teams from the region to compete for glory and recognition," said Yaqoob, adding that fans and supporters were invited to come and cheer for all the participating teams as they strive for victory in this prestigious tournament.

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

Argentine Ruben Wolochin would be the head coach of the team while Saeed Ahmed Khan Sady and Ehsan Iqbal were named as assistant coaches. Brazilian Lucas Rodrigues, will be with the team as a physical trainer, while Muhammad Ismail Khan, Muhammad Sulaiman Amin and Juan Cobucci, a Scoutman from Argentina will join the Pakistan Volleyball team as Assistant Scoutman.

According to draws of Engro Central Asian Volleyball League, Pakistan would play an opening match against Turkmenistan on May 11 followed by Afghanistan on May 12, Kyrgyzstan on May 13, Sri Lanka on May 15, against Iran on May 16. The final of the Central Asian Volleyball League will be played on May 17.

Milan nets Giro 4th stage, Pogacar retains lead



ANDORA (AFP): Italy's Jonathan Milan emerged a popular home winner of the Giro d'Italia fourth stage on Tuesday with race favourite Tadej Pogacar retaining the overall lead.

The 190km ride from Acqui Terme to Andora on the Italian Riviera was marred by the race-ending crash of Eritrea's Biniam Girmay. While the man who created history as the first black African to win a Grand Tour stage, in the 2022 Giro, was taken off in an ambulance, Pogacar was safely in the peloton hunting down a two-man breakaway.

Pablo Munoz and Stefan de Bod had forged to the front early in the stage, but their time in the spotlight was numbered with the peloton relentlessly reeling them in. They were duly swallowed up with 5km to go.

Filippo Ganna of Ineos Grenadiers was the first to attack, and he led over the final hill and down into the day's final destination, the

port of Andora. But it was to be Milan (Lid-Trek) who took the bunch sprint honours, ahead of Australian Kaden Groves (Alpecin-Deceuninck) and German Phil Bauhaus (Bahrain Victorious).

"I have so many emotions now. I said from the beginning we came here with one goal for everyone so today the guys did an amazing job and it was such an amazing sensation to win here again at the Giro d'Italia," said Milan, who was adding to his stage win last year. All the top riders in the overall standings finished in the main pack and the general classification remained unchanged.

Pogacar, who crossed in 30th, holds a 46second cushion over his main title rival Geraint Thomas, with Daniel Martinez a further second back in third in the GC ahead of stage five, over 178km from the port of Genoa down the coast to Lucca in northwest Tuscany.

Girmay frustration One man who will be a frustrated onlooker is Girmay. The Eritrean, third in the stage 24 hours earlier, took a heavy fall on a descent ahead of the final intermediate sprint on a wet right-hand bend around 67km from the finish.

Nursing what appeared to be his right hip he rode off gingerly only to dismount from his bike shortly afterwards and was taken away in an ambulance.

He was one of his Interimarche-Wanty team's best hopes for a stage win on this year's Giro. The 24-year-old is the first black African to win one of cycling's classics - in the Gent-Wevelgem in 2022, and a stage on one of cycling's three big Tours, in the Giro the same season. His Giro achievement was marred by a freak accident on the podium when a cork from a bottle he opened to celebrate his victory flew into his eye and he had to withdraw from the race the following day.

WAPDA taste first final defeat in tennis in 42 years after falling to PAF

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Air Force (PAF) etched their name in the annals of tennis history as they secured a resounding 2-0 victory against Pakistan WAPDA in the 1st Inter-Department Tennis Trophy at PTF-SDA Tennis Complex on Tuesday.

The PAF team showcased remarkable skills and determination to hand over formidable WAPDA their first defeat in the final of any national tennis tournament in 42 years.

PAF's Yousaf Khalil emerged victorious in the first singles match, overpowering Muhammad Abid of WAPDA with a masterful performance. Yousaf's strategic brilliance and unwavering resolve sealed the match with a score of 6-2, 6-4, igniting celebrations amongst PAF supporters.

The momentum continued for PAF as the 23-year-old Muhammad Shoaib stunned seasoned Aqeel Khan in a thrilling showdown that lasted for one hour and 36 minutes. Shoaib earned a hard-fought victory in the epic battle, clinching the title for his department with a score of 7-5, 6-4. In the last round matches, SNGPL emerged victorious against Pakistan Navy.

Ahmed Babar of SNGPL displayed his prowess, clinching a commanding 6-2, 6-3 win over Faizan Khan of Pakistan Navy. Saqib Hayat of SNGPL fought hard against Asad Zaman of Navy, but ultimately emerged triumphant after a grueling encounter. The PTF President

Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and Senator Salim Saifullah Khan attended the closing ceremony besides witnessing the matches. Aisam commended the exceptional talent on display and expressed his vision to expand the tournament in future by also including players from all PTF units.

Senator Salim Saifullah Khan, Patron of PTF, hailed the success of the inaugural event and congratulated all participating departments, especially PAF, for their historic victory. The event concluded with the distribution of prizes and medals. A total of Rs.300,000 was distributed amongst the winners, runners-up, and third position-holders with the break-up Rs.150,000 Rs.100,000 and Rs.50,000 respectively.

Rejuvenated Amir back for 'unfinished work' at T20 WC

KARACHI (AFP) : Rejuvenated fast bowler Mohammad Amir said he has "unfinished work" at next month's T20 World Cup, 15 years after dazzling as a teenager when Pakistan last lifted the trophy.

The 32-year-old, who was jailed for spot-fixing in 2011, came out of retirement last month and is grateful to have another crack at the World Cup. "It's a great feeling to be playing for Pakistan again," Amir told AFP by phone from Lahore this week ahead of the tournament in the United States and the West Indies beginning on June 2.

"I want to complete the unfinished work and, for me, the short-term goal is to win the World Cup." The young Amir impressed in all formats after breaking into the Pakistan side in 2009 and playing at the T20 World Cup.

Within a year he was one of the hottest young talents in cricket, but his precocious career then crashed to an infamous halt in 2010. Amir was one of three Pakistan players banned from cricket for five years for spot-fixing during a Test match in England after being caught in a newspaper sting. He was later jailed in the UK for six months. Pakistan captain Salman Butt, who was deemed the ringleader, and fellow quick bowler Mohammad Asif were also banned and the pair were jailed for 30 and 12 months respectively. Amir returned after his ban to



play for Pakistan in 2016 but announced a shock retirement in December 2020 after poor form kept him from being selected.

He will form a potent pace bowling attack with spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi, Naseem Shah and Haris Rauf that sees Pakistan ranked among the World Cup favorites. "The Pakistan Cricket Board and the team management have shown trust in me so I have to fulfil that trust," said Amir. "I have come back after four years and when you play for your country the feeling cannot be described."

Amir played three of the four T20 home matches against New Zealand last month, taking three wickets in a 2-2 drawn series, and said he felt part of the attack again.

"To be honest I felt fitter than in 2019 and until you are fit you cannot express yourself, so I am ready to do better and better," said Amir.

He will be in action when Pakistan travel to Ireland for three T20s in Dublin on May 10, 12 and 14. Pakistan then move to England to

play the defending T20 world champions in Leeds (May 22), Birmingham (May 25), Cardiff (May 28) and London (May 30).

Brought up in Changa Bangial village in Punjab province, some 60 kilometers from the capital Islamabad, Amir was determined to make his name in cricket after his five older brothers introduced him to playing. He was picked out at the age of 15 by none other than great left-arm Wasim Akram at a fast-bowling camp and within two years grew in height and overcame a stress fracture of the back.

Amir said now he only wanted to remember the good events in his career. "The 2009 Twenty20 World Cup winning memories are special and excite me to this day," said Amir, who took six wickets in seven matches in the tournament.

They included the prize dismissal of Sri Lanka opener Tillakaratne Dilshan — the player of the tournament — in Pakistan's eight-wicket final victory. "I was selected for the first time and then became part of a champion team."

"When I landed (back) at Rawalpindi airport to go to my village there were so many cars and they were showering flowers on me," he recalled. "I am lucky that I am still playing. When I came, I was the youngest in the team, so here I am having another chance to win the World Cup and that is the target for me and my team."

West Indies star, Pakistan spinner big winners in latest rankings update

LAHORE (PPI): Hayley Matthews continues to dominate the T20I rankings, while Pakistan's Sadia Iqbal closes in on England's Sophie Ecclestone at the top of the list for T20I bowlers.

West Indies star Hayley Matthews has made further ground on the latest ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings, while a Pakistan spinner has closed in on No.1 spot for T20I bowlers following the latest update.

Matthews was named Player of the Series during West Indies' recent 4-1 victory over Pakistan in their five-game T20I series, with the talented all-rounder now sitting inside the top five in all three T20I rankings categories. The 26-year-old moves up one place to third

on the updated T20I batter rankings, gains one spot to be fifth on the latest bowler rankings and maintains her healthy lead at the head of the all-rounder category following a superb series against Pakistan that netted 205 runs and seven wickets.

West Indies teammates Shemaine Campbelle (up 16 spots to 70th for batters) and Afy Fletcher (up 16 places to 25th for bowlers) made ground in their respective categories, while Pakistan will be buoyed by the performances of a pair of their players who made inroads in the T20I bowler rankings.

Women's T20I Batter Rankings Shemaine Campbelle brings up a crucial half-century Left-arm spinner Sadia

Iqbal gains one place to move to third behind England's Sophie Ecclestone following her seven wickets for the series, while pacer Fatima Sana rises seven spots to 26th after her five scalps against the West Indies.

Women's T20I Bowler Rankings

There also some movement from players from India and Bangladesh, following the first four matches of their ongoing series in Sylhet. Hard-hitting right-hander Shafali Verma moves up three places to 12th on the list for T20I batters after her 84 runs from four innings, while teammate Radha Yadav improves 16 spots to equal 30th for T20I bowlers following her seven wickets at an average just greater than 10.



In brief

Nehal stresses reforms for speedy justice

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League (N) Senior Leader Nehal Hashmi Tuesday stressed the need for introducing judicial reforms in the country to provide speedy justice and support to the deprived sections of society. Talking to a private news channel, he said that our vision should be of such a improved judicial system in which there is easy justice, speedy justice, and justice for all. PML-N government would bring in drastic and much-needed improvements in the judicial system, he added. He further emphasized that the country was facing economic challenges and collective efforts were needed to steer the country out of current challenging situation. He also called for taking positive steps, saying harmony among state institutions is the need of the hour to pave the way for the development of the country. Replying to a question, he said that his leadership always believes in rule of law and supremacy of the constitution, adding, every institution need to work in their constitutional domain as it was imperative to strengthen system in the country.

One more dengue case reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): One more dengue case was reported in Rawalpindi during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to five in the district. District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood, Tuesday said that the district administration had lodged 65 FIRs, sealed 82 premises, issued tickets to 170 and imposed a fine of Rs 318,000 on violations of dengue SOPs during the ongoing year. Dr Sajjad informed that during indoor surveillance, the teams checked 1,492,128 houses and found larvae in 3,289 homes in 2024. Similarly, he added that while checking 386,329 places, the teams found larvae at 780 sites during outdoor surveillance. He said the district health authority had devised an effective micro plan to control the spread of dengue keeping in view the previous year's statistics, adding dengue spread situation was under control while intensive efforts were in place to screen every nook and corner of the district so that dengue could not become an epidemic this year.

ANF recovers liquid methamphetamine

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting a raid at Badruddin Yard, Karachi managed to recover a huge quantity of liquid methamphetamine being smuggled to Japan through an Afghan transit shipment. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF in a major operation at Badruddin Yard, Karachi seized a huge quantity of drugs recovered from a suspicious Afghan shipment. He informed that ANF foiled a drug smuggling attempt being sent to Japan by labeling "pomegranate juice" through cargo. After a detailed inspection, 360 liters of liquid methamphetamine (Ice) concealed inside juice cans were recovered. He informed that the seized cargo was being sent to Bengo Port in Japan. According to the preliminary investigation, the seized consignment was sent from Afghanistan to Karachi. The exploitation of the trade routes by drug trafficking networks highlights a serious threat, he said.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council, Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi addressing a Press conference at Maaz bin Jabal (Markazi Jamia Masjid) I-8/3.

Randhawa directs to complete construction work of Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Randhawa Tuesday directed that the ongoing development and construction work on the Expressway should be completed by the end of July without any further delay. During his visit to the Islamabad Expressway, he said that the construction work on the Islamabad Expressway project should be needed to expedite.

Chairman CDA was briefed that 75 per cent of the work on package one, from Korang Bridge, of the Islamabad Expressway project has been completed. The briefing also included information about the inclusion of the construction of a railway bridge in package one of the project.

Muhammad Ali directed that package one of the Islamabad Expressway must be finalized by July 15. The briefing to Chairman CDA covered the components of the Islamabad Expressway project, including the T-Chowk intersection with two major bridges and an underpass. Chairman CDA emphasized that any further delay in the Islamabad Expressway project will not be tolerated at any cost.

Muhammad Ali instructed the Assistant Commissioners to supervise developmental projects. He directed all the Engineering Wing officers to ensure their presence at the project sites.

Chief CDA emphasized that there will be no compromise on the quality and pace of work on the project.

ects. Muhammad Ali also inspected other developmental projects of the federal capital and urged to accelerate work on delayed projects for their timely completion.

He evaluated the ongoing development efforts for the expansion and enhancement of Park Road.

Chairman CDA underscored the imperative of finishing the Park Road expansion and enhancement project by June 15, regardless of any obstacles.

The briefings revealed that 85 per cent of the work on the Western Carriageway of the Park Road improvement initiative has been accomplished. The progress is being made on the Eastern Carriageway of the Park Road development project.

PCRWR declares 19 brands

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) has declared 19 brands of bottled mineral waters unsafe for human consumption due to microbiological or chemical contamination.

PCRWR collected 185 samples of mineral/bottled water brands from 21 cities for examination during the 1st quarter (January to March) of the current year 2024 and it was revealed that 19 brands were unsafe for human consumption, said a report issued here Tuesday.

Six brands including Hensley Pure Water, Pure Life, Natural Pure Life, Klear, Am Mughal Pure Water, Nero were found to be unsafe due to presence of higher levels of sodium while one brand (Nero) was found unsafe due to presence of high level of TDS than the permissible limit.

Similarly, three brands namely Cleana, Orwell, Still were found unsafe due to presence of high level of Arsenic than the permissible limit, the report further said.

Moreover, 13 brands including Starlay, Al-Faris Water, Nestle Healthy Water, Nesspure, Pure Life, Natural Pure Life, Nesspak, Geo Max Premium, Cleana, Splash, Karakorum, Heavenly, 7 Bro were found contaminated with bacteria and thus were also unsafe for drinking purpose PCRWR carries out quarterly monitoring of bottled water brands on the directives of government and publicizes the results for awareness of public health.

Interior Minister orders crackdown against electricity theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday ordered to speed up crackdown to stop over-billing and electricity theft.

He ordered an indiscriminate action should be continued against the officers who burden the citizens through over billing. Zero tolerance policy on over billing will continue, said Mohsin Naqvi adding that it is absolutely unacceptable to punish citizens for the incompetence and negligence of DISCOs.

He said, it is a priority to give relief to

electricity consumers in over-billing.

He also ordered an action be taken against government personnel involved in electricity theft.

The Minister was chairing a meeting at FIA Lahore Zonal Office to review the progress on action against over-billing and electricity thieves. Mohsin Naqvi reviewed the progress on the instructions given during the last visit. Director FIA Lahore Sarfraz Vark gave the briefing. DG FIA Ishaq Jahangir attended the meeting through video link.

PNCA starts registration in music, arts classes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has started registration in music and arts classes to be arranged under the supervision of professional musicians and artists.

According to an official of PNCA, the music and art classes are being arranged to provide an opportunity to the art and music lovers of all ages to discover their hidden talent and creativity with the help of expert instructors.

The aspiring learners will

get a new skill, nurture their passion and become a part of PNCA's vibrant arts community, the official said. The music and art classes will be arranged in different categories including Guitar, Keyboard, Singing, Harmonium, Violin, Drawing and Painting, Calligraphy and Acting. The music and art classes have been designed for the learners of all ages including for beginners as well professionals. The experienced instructors will guide the learners through every step of the way.

As per the schedule, the Acting and Guitar classes will be held on Tuesday and Thursday while the classes of Violin and Drawing and Painting will be held on Wednesday and Thursday. The classes of Singing/Harmonium and Calligraphy will be held on Monday and Friday.

The registration fee for the courses will be Rs. 2000/- while the monthly fee for any class will be Rs. 5000/- per head. The timings of the classes are from 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm.

Exhibition featuring creative interpretation of Iqbal's poetry to be opened on May 09

ISLAMABAD (APP): An exhibition featuring a joint creative interpretation of Iqbal's Urdu and Persian poetry "...tar-e-harir-e do rang" by the talented artists duo Shah Abdullah Alamee and Amna Manzoor will be opened at Tanzara Art Gallery on May 09.

The ten-day long exhibition titled "...tar-e ?arir-e do rang" (the silk twine of dual hues) presents a captivating exploration of Allama Iqbal's profound poetry through the rich tapestry of visual art, crafted by the talented artists Shah Abdullah Alamee and Amna Manzoor.

Drawing inspiration from Iqbal's poetry in Persian and Urdu, the artists embark on a collaborative journey to unravel the nuanced layers of his timeless verses.

According to the Curator, Noshi Qadir, "Alamee and Manzoor skillfully blend their unique artistic perspectives, weav-

ing together a symphony that resonates with the essence of Iqbal's poetry. Through their creative harmony on canvas and imaginative compositions, they invite viewers to delve deep into the mystical realm of Iqbal's philosophical musings, where themes of spirituality, humanism, and existential contemplation converge.

Each painting in this exhibition serves as a visual ode to Iqbal's poetic legacy, offering a glimpse into the profound depth of his literary genius, capturing the fleeting moments of life's journey, echoing Iqbal's exploration of the duality of existence and the eternal quest for meaning, Noshi Qadir said.

According to the artists statement, "As artists engaged in a transformative exploration of Iqbal's poetry, our collaboration transcends mere illustrations to create a unique language that bridges tradition with

contemporary art".

"Moving beyond the cosmic imagery often associated with Iqbal's verses, we dare to delve deeper, recognizing the universality of themes such as empathy and social justice, tolerance, self-reliance and self-discovery and the evolving human identity that reverberates beyond spatial and temporal canines", the said.

"Our artistic approach probes into the philosophical depths of Iqbal's poetry through abstraction, creating a nuanced balance of revealing and concealing layers of meaning. Each brushstroke on our canvases invites viewers to embark upon their own journey of contemplation and to uncover unique facets of Iqbal's words with every encounter. This collaboration is not a static destination but a dynamic exploration, fostering a continuous dialogue with Iqbal's philosophical wellspring", the artists revealed.

Thai university announces undergraduate scholarships in economics

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Faculty of Economics of Chulalongkorn University, Thailand has established the "Undergraduate Scholarship Program for International Students" to provide financial assistance to qualified non-Thai students who wish to study in Thailand through the competitive international EBA program.

According to the Higher Education Commission (HEC), the EBA program is Thailand's most important and innovative program in the field of economics. "With a vision to be an internationally competitive program that aims to produce economists who are highly qualified to contribute to society with ethical and social responsibility", its primary objective is to produce outstanding undergrad-

uates. To fulfill its vision, the EBA program pursues the mission of equipping students with excellent and in-depth knowledge that meets international standards of excellence.

It was also intended to emphasize the development of basic competencies for lifelong learning, such as skills and personal attitudes, and to consider this as an integral part of a high-quality undergraduate education in economics.

The latest curriculum in the EBA program focuses on private-sector economics, a field that meets students' general interests and career goals. Multilateral and bilateral exchange agreements with several leading institutions in the European Union and Asia have provided excel-

lent opportunities for EBA students to study abroad for one or two semesters. The EBA program was awarded the AUN-QA (ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance) certification in 2015.

Furthermore, EBA is increasing the number of its partner institutions in every corner of the world. Our exchange number of incoming and outgoing students has been raised to promote an international atmosphere in the program, the sources added. For further information regarding the funding, application procedure, deadline, and eligibility criteria please visit the below mentioned link <http://www.eba.econ.chula.ac.th/about/eba>.

Experts on World Asthma Day stresses public awareness drives at grassroots level

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health experts on World Asthma Day stressed public awareness to empower people for well-management of disease and to take all protective measures to remain safe from any painful situation as changing lifestyles, increasing pollution and smoking are the main contributors factors of this disease.

Pulmonologist & Experienced Medical Professional Dr Rizwan Uppal talking to PTV news channel, explained that asthma is a common chronic lung disease with two main causes: inflammation and tightening of the muscles surrounding the airways.

World Asthma Day is an annual event organized by the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) to improve asthma awareness and care around the world, he added.

"Inhalers are the best and safest way of treating asthma but in Pakistan, people have serious reservations about using them," he said. Its early symptoms include shortness of breath, wheezing, chest tightness and coughing, he mentioned. According to experts, asthma can be controlled if treated properly, however, unfortunately majority of the people in Pakistan are unaware of its treatment and the rising levels of air pollution are leaving more patients prone to the disease. Worldwide deaths from the disease have reached over 300 million people worldwide annually, he added. The first step towards managing asthma is to identify and reduce exposure to triggers, he said, adding, that doctors should check the inhaling techniques of their patients on every visit to the clinics.

"Asthma can be hereditary or may result from environmental pollution, indoor pollutants and household allergens, etc.," he said.

A Senior Consultant Chest Physician Dr Waqas Rasheed added that in our society some people consider asthma as a communicable disease and avoid the company of people who are suffering from it, adding, that around 12 per cent of school-children are suffering from asthma in Pakistan.

Asthma is not curable, but it is a controllable disease. A lot of people visit quacks in the hope of getting cured, but they would get only strong doses of oral steroids only to add their serious side effects to the disease, he added. Replying to a Question, he said that industrial workers are at great risk of occupational asthma due to the non-availability of proper ventilation, masks, clean workplaces and environment, etc.

He expressed fear that the ratio of patients can increase further in the coming years if air pollution is not controlled, he added. To another question, he said that Asthma is a serious global health problem affecting all age groups, adding, it is increasing rate of disease in our country which is affecting the lungs of the people. Experts are also called upon to increase their awareness of the continuing preventable morbidity associated with this common disease despite the existence of highly effective controller treatments and to increase their efforts to ensure that environmentally friendly inhaled medications are made available in all countries.



ISLAMABAD: UNFPA Representative, Dr. Luay Shabaneh addressing to Media briefing on EUNFPA launched the annual report on the State of the World Population 2024 under the theme "Interwoven Lives, Threads of Hope: Ending Inequalities in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights".

ARCS help children treatment

KABUL (BNA): 40 children diagnosed with congenital heart defects have been specifically referred to four hospitals in Kabul, where they will receive the necessary medical interventions and treatments. ARCS reported that it had facilitated the referral of 40 children with congenital heart defects to four hospitals in Kabul for treatment. The organization further disclosed that over the past 21 months, it has successfully facilitated the referral of 3,068 children to various hospitals.

10 contracts signed

KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan and Turkmenistan companies have signed more than 10 contracts and two MOUs on construction materials, including iron bars, paint, marble and food materials. The contracts were signed during the trip of a Turkmen business delegation to Herat province. "There is excellent opportunity for the expansion of trade and economic relations between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, which both sides should take full advantage of," Azizi said.

Hibatullah happy with ministers

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada said on the last day of a three-day seminar on the coordination and regulation of specialist and religious universities in Kandahar that after the establishment of the Islamic Emirate, all the opponents were forgiven and they now live together like brothers.

Speaking at the seminar, Akhundzada added that he is satisfied with the performance of his acting ministers as they always obey him.

"I am happy with my ministers and they are good people and always obey me. Obey, value and honor them because honor and obedience are not exclusive to the

Amir [leader], but include all the commanders," Akhundzada said.

He also said that the world wants to separate politics from religion, so that even in Islamic countries, scholars do not have a role in politics; but according to him in Afghanistan, scholars should have access to politics.

He asked scholars to follow the orders of the Islamic Emirate to encourage the nation to implement and obey the orders.

Ziaullah Hashimi, the spokesman of the Ministry of Higher Education, says that the three-day seminar brought together department heads, deputies and professors of the General Directorate of Specialist and Religious Universities of the Ministry of Higher Education.

Minister meets head of Afchin company, discusses work plans

KABUL(BNA): Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar, the Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, held a promising meeting with the heads of the Afchin company along with their accompanying delegation.

According to the Ministry's statement, the head of the Afchin company discussed work plans and agendas for 2024, including settling accounts and completing the survey of 140 square kilometers for three-dimensional geological maps.

They continued to provide comprehensive updates on various subjects, including sharing the company's challenges and offering suggestions to the attention of the acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum.

After receiving updates on the company's accomplishments, activities, and challenges, Acting Minister Delawar reaffirmed full cooperation, stressing the significance of progress and transparency in their efforts. He also offered necessary guidance to enhance operations.

World powers trying to prevent IEA's economic, political progress

KABUL (Ariana News): Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, deputy prime minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) for economic affairs, has said that the great powers of the world are seeking to prevent the economic and political progress of the IEA.

Baradar made the remarks at the graduation ceremony of troops from the 201 Khalid Ibn Walid Corps training academy.

"The great powers of the world view the Islamic Emirate with suspicion and are still trying to prevent our economic and political progress, but we must be wise and alert," he said.

No country has yet officially recognized the IEA government, almost three years after their take over. Sanctions imposed on



Afghanistan's banking sector have meanwhile had negative effects on the country's economy. The international community has set conditions

for the recognition of the Islamic Emirate, including ensuring of women's rights and forming of an inclusive government. However, the Islamic

Emirate claims that women's rights are ensured according to Sharia law and that there are representatives of different ethnic groups in the cabinet.

Local Badakhshan officials visited Argo district to hear demands



drug production centers there, must be eradicated," said Abdul Hamid, a religious scholar.

Meanwhile, local officials in Badakhshan have assured that they are addressing the demands of the protesters.

"We traveled with some military and civil officials, and the meeting took place with tribes, scholars, and influencers, and the result of the meeting was very good and satisfied the people," Said Mohammad Amin Taib, the deputy governor of Badakhshan.

Hamdullah Fetrat, the deputy spokesman for the Islamic Emirate, about the situation in Badakhshan said, "The situation is

Production of honey increased

L A S H K A R G A H (Pajhwok): The production of honey in southern Helmand province doubled last year compared to the previous year but the apiarists complained about the lack of markets.

Amir Khan Nasiri, director of the Helmand Bee Farms Union, told Pajhwok Afghan News, last year honey production was doubled compared to the previous year's production but due to the shortage of markets they failed to sell the stock of the previous years, currently 160 bee forms were registered with union.

Nasiri said: "Due to the availability of cheap imported honey in domestic markets, the apiarists still have about 40 tonnes of honey in their stores to sell."

The apiarists' union members also ask the government for their products to be marketed at home and abroad.

Haji Mullah Mahmood, the owner of a bee's farm in Nawa district, said: "We make no money from our honey production, it is all because of lack of markets for our honey and the import of similar commodity from other countries froze the markets of domestic products."

The honey consumers of Lashkargah city prefer cheap foreign honey, because of its low prices, he added.

A honey seller Haji Abdul Aziz said: "The domestic honey is more pure and organic, each kilogram is sold for 600 afs, but people demand cheap foreign honey therefore local honey is not sold."

According to Abdul Aziz, 40 shops in Lashkargah city sell domestic honey products, but this product remains stalled for months in the shops because of its low sales.

Shah Mohammad Khan, the provincial Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Department Director told Pajhwok Afghan News the 15 tonnes of honey was produced in 2022 but the production of honey reached to 30 tonnes in 2023.

Museum showcases rich cultural heritage

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ethnographic Research Museum in Kabul houses nearly two thousand ancient artifacts from various periods. Officials at this museum say that some of the artifacts in this museum date back over a hundred years, and thousands of people visit this museum annually.

This museum is built in the palace of Shah Babo Jan (the palace of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan's sister, Shah Babo Jan), the emir of Afghanistan (1880–1901), which was once the residence of this queen in the heart of the capital, Kabul.

According to officials,

the Ethnographic Museum, which is built in a European architectural style with more than forty rooms and various corridors, now displays the customs and traditions of the country's thirty-four provinces, and each corridor of this museum represents different narratives of the country's culture. Chief Researcher Ketab Khan Faizi, head of the Kushani International Research Center, said, "This museum was a palace, the palace of Shah Babo Jan that Amir Abdul Rahman Khan built for his sister Shah Babo Jan. Indeed, it was designed in a European Baroque system by Austrian engineers

and constructed by engineers from Kabul, and this palace has two floors and forty rooms."

This museum, has also drawn foreign tourists. A Polish tourist, along with his wife and friends, has come here to learn about the history of Afghanistan.

Vivian Kalbash, a tourist from Poland, said: "About this museum, I think it's the best museum in Kabul. It's different from anything I've seen before. If I were to give one opinion or suggestion, it would be great if, in addition to the textual explanations in Pashto and Dari, there were also in English.

Kazakhstan Trade House opens in Herat

HERAT (Ariana News): Kazakhstan Trade House in Afghanistan has officially opened in Herat province with the aim of increasing the volume of trade exchanges between the two countries.

Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce Noorudin Azizi called the opening of the Kazakhstan

Trade House in Afghanistan a "positive and effective step" in strengthening and expanding trade relations between the two countries. He stated that as a result of the trip of an Afghan delegation to Kazakhstan, Afghanistan's exports to Kazakhstan have increased. Meanwhile, Arman

Yusintayev, head of the Kazakhstan Trade House in Afghanistan, highlighted that the aim of opening a trade house in Afghanistan is to increase the volume of trade exchanges between the two countries, adding Kazakhstan is interested in expanding trade relations with Afghanistan.

Turkmenistan delegates express interest in Herat marble

HERAT (TOLONews): During a visit to the Herat Industrial Park, Turkmenistan's trade and industrial delegation expressed interest in importing marble, paint, and steel rods from Afghanistan.

Local officials in Herat mentioned that following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the private sectors of Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, the export of some domestic products to Turkmenistan will commence.

Chariyar, a member of the Turkmenistan private sector delegation, stated: "The aim of our visit is to tour the marble factories and building material production plants. We want to closely inspect Afghanistan's products and import the goods

Turkmenistan needs from Afghanistan's offerings." Hamidullah Khadem, the head of the Herat Chamber of Industries and Mines, said: "This trip will lead to a long-term marble sales contract with Turkmenistan. There have also been visits to iron smelting factories that produce steel rods, as well as to paint production facilities. The delegation's focus is particularly on these three sectors."

Bashir Mohammad Sirat, the head of Herat's Industry and Trade, commented: "There is significant interest in the building materials sector, especially in products like steel rods. Our effort is to facilitate coordination and agreements between the private sectors of both countries to help grow our domestic

production and enable its export internationally."

According to the Herat Chamber of Industries and Mines, nearly eight hundred factories are operational in the province's industrial park.

Some of the products from this park, including marble, non-alcoholic beverages, sanitary equipment, food items, and carpets, are exported to many countries including the United States, Europe, Central Asia, and Arab countries.

Several owners of manufacturing factories in the Herat Industrial Park claim that the domestic products are of high quality.

ErsHAD Ghoryani, deputy of the Western Region Miners' Union, said: "We have the capacity to process 4 to 5,000 tons of marble monthly. These stones are

processed using machinery imported from some of the most reputable brands worldwide, including from Italy. Here, we fully process raw marble materials."

"Starting to export is a very important step in the growth of the country's industry. With this step, we anticipate the opening of new factories in the future and the creation of comprehensive employment opportunities for the people," said Ehsanullah, the deputy of an iron smelting factory in the Herat Industrial Park.

The Turkmenistan private sector delegation, consisting of businessmen and industrialists, came to Herat on a three-day trip to expand trade cooperation and initiate the import of Afghan goods.

Turkmenistan's industrialists keen to buy Herat-made construction material



HERAT (Ariana News): Union of Turkmen industrialists is interested in a contract with Herat industrialists in the field of construction materials. The economic delegation of

Turkmenistan, which has been in Herat for the past three days, has visited various plants including marble and iron and also paint manufacturers.

The delegation, which is

from Turkmenistan's private sector, says that their goal is to expand economic relations between the private sectors of the two countries.

They said they are hop-

ing to buy hundreds of tons of construction materials from Afghan industrialists every year.

Contracts for the sale of marble, paint and iron bars between the two countries are expected to be signed soon.

"During this trip that we were in Herat and the products that we saw in the factories and especially the works that were handicrafts in the field of marble and onyx, these are really amazing, naturally, in the world of industries handicraft is said to be one of the most expensive and popular products, so we were surprised by the products we saw here," said a member of the delegation from Turkmenistan.

that there is now the capacity in Herat Industrial City to produce enough goods in various sectors to export abroad. At present, there are about 40 companies operating in the marble processing sector.

An agreement with the Turkmenistan union for construction materials could be a valuable step for Herat business owners.

Some factory owners also believe that the production of construction materials has improved in recent years, and that the capacities in the production and processing of marble and iron bars have also increased.

Herat Chamber of Industries and Mines says that currently more than 800 factories are active in the industrial town of this province.

<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Bilal with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Rubina Jan citizen number 4230121091404 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Muhammad Bilal (Son) 2.Muhammad Iqbal (Spouse) (Brother)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Zahoor Afridi with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Riaz citizen number 2120170761043 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Muhammad Shoab (Brother) 2.Shameena Bibi (Sister) 3.Muhammad Zahoor Afridi (Brother) 4.Saeed Khan (Brother)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Ajmal Khan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Naeheed Begum citizen number 16101726306050 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Zakira Naz (Sister) 2.Ajmal Khan (Brother) 3.Gulrukh Begum (Sister)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MARDAN-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Abi Waqas with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Sabit Khan citizen number 1620239977621 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Wajeeha Naz (Daughter) 2.Abi Ilyas (Son) 3.Abi Alghas (Son) 4.Anwar Khatoun (Spouse) 5.Abi Waqas (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA SWABI-SFU</p>	
<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Naem Khan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Tariyan Begum citizen number 1730143352356 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Zarin Khan (Son) 2.Musam Khan (Son) 3.Salman Khan (Son) 4.Naem Khan (Son) 5.Naem Khan (Son) 6.Nazia Bibi (Daughter) 7.Kahlida Ferman (Daughter)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Syed Azhar Shah with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Syed Farman Shah citizen number 1350314507685 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Bibi Shaheen (Spouse) 2.Bibi Khan (Daughter) 3.Syed Tasawar Shah (Son) 4.Syed Azhar Shah (Son) 5.Rafiq Bibi (Daughter) 6.Shamaila Bibi (Daughter) 7.Toshiba Bibi (Daughter) 8.Saima Bibi (Daughter)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Raja Shahzad Sarwar with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Raja Mohammad Sarwar Afandi citizen number 1310109122311 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Imtiaz Bibi (Spouse) 2.Raja Shahzad Sarwar (Son) 3.Raja Naveed Sarwar Afandi (Son) 4.Kinza Sarwar (Daughter)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Umar Javed with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Javed Khan citizen number 1730151011033 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Muhammad Ashraf Khan (Father) 2.Maria Bibi (Daughter) 3.Umar Javed (Son) 4.Junaid Javed (Son) 5.Uzair Khan (Son) 6.Hayam Bibi (Daughter) 7.Rubina Bibi (Spouse)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU</p>	
<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muhammad Khuzaila with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Tajriyan Begum citizen number 1730150931767 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Muhammad Uzair (Son) 2.Muhammad Saeed (Son) 3.Roaida (Daughter) 4.Umar Ahmad (Son) 5.Bilal Ahmad (Son) 6.Zia Ur Rahman (Son) 7.Muhammad Khuzaila (Son) 8.Gul Huda (Daughter) 9.Naseema (Spouse)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Khajista Bibi with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Abdul Rahman citizen number 135013444697 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Kaloom Bibi (Daughter) 2.Zainab Bibi (Daughter) 3.Shamshad Bibi (Spouse) 4.Khajista Bibi (Daughter) 5.Haleema Bibi (Daughter) 6.Sadia Bibi (Daughter)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Latif Rahman citizen number 1110186819599 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Zarat Bibi (Spouse) 2.Jaili Ur Rahman (Son) 3.Sam Ur Rahman (Son) 5.Sadia Gul (Daughter) 6.Fahim Ur Rahman (Son) 7.Zahida Bibi (Daughter)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA BANNU-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Amir Mumtaz Afridi with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Shamim Bano citizen number 6110162879656 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Amir Mumtaz Afridi (Son) 2.Mumtaz Khan Afridi (Spouse)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA RHO PESHAWAR-SFU</p>	<p>PUBLIC NOTICE</p> <p>Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Saeed Ashraf with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Bileges Begum citizen number 135044492564 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.</p> <p>1.Sobha Kamran (Daughter) 2.Irum Mazhar (Daughter) 3.Saeed Ashraf (Son) 4.Mehreen Musthaq (Daughter) 5.Muhammad Saleem (Daughter) 6.Fahem Ashraf (Son)</p> <p>On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.</p> <p>INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU</p>

PID () No.6744/23



KARACHI: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi floral wreath at Mazar-e-Quaid.

Modi votes as India’s marathon election heats up

AHMED ABAD (AFP): Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi cast his ballot Tuesday in India’s ongoing general election after giving several inflammatory campaign speeches accused of targeting minority Muslims.

Turnout so far has dropped significantly compared with the last national poll in 2019, with analysts blaming widespread expectations that Modi will easily win a third term and hotter-than-average temperatures heading into the summer. Modi walked out of a polling booth early morning in the city of Ahmedabad while holding up a finger marked with indelible ink, flanked by security personnel and cheered by supporters.

“In the grand ritual of democracy, everyone contributing their share deserves congratulations,” Modi told reporters. “Once again, I tell Indians... to come in huge numbers to vote and celebrate the festival of democracy.” The Indian premier’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is expected to win the election convincingly, but since the vote began on April 19, Modi has stepped up his rhetoric on India’s main religious divide in a bid to rally voters.

He has used public speeches to refer to Muslims as “infiltrators” and “those who have more children”, prompting condemnation from opposition politicians, who have complained to election authorities. Modi has also accused Congress — the main party in the disparate opposition alliance competing against him — of planning to reallocate the nation’s wealth to Muslim households.

“This is the first time in a long time that he is so direct,” said Hartosh Singh Bal, executive editor at news magazine The Caravan. “I haven’t seen him be this directly bigoted, usually he alludes to bigotry,” he added. “The comments on wealth redistribution are targeting something from the Congress manifesto that just does not exist and that is frankly quite unfortunate.”

Modi remains widely popular a decade after coming to power, in large part due to his government’s positioning the nation’s majority faith at the centre of its politics, despite India’s officially secular constitution. In January, the prime minister presided over the inauguration of a grand temple to the deity Ram, built on the site of a centuries-old mosque razed by Hindu zealots decades earlier. Construction of the temple fulfilled a long-standing demand of Hindu activists and was widely celebrated across India, with extensive television coverage and street parties.

Modi’s brand of Hindu-nationalist politics has made India’s 220-million-plus Muslim population increasingly anxious about their future in the country. “The government is blatantly doing sectarian politics,” Munna Usman, a Muslim travel agency owner in the city of Agra, told AFP. Usman, 48, said the result was that every Hindu in India was now “suspicious of anyone with a beard”.

The election commission has not sanctioned Modi for his remarks despite its code of conduct prohibiting campaigning on “communal feelings” such as religion. India’s elec-

tion is conducted in seven phases over six weeks to ease the immense logistical burden of staging the democratic exercise in the world’s most populous country.

Much of southern Asia was hit by a heatwave last week that saw several constituencies vote in searing temperatures. In the city of Mathura, not far from the Taj Mahal, temperatures crossed 41 degrees Celsius on polling day, and election commission figures showed turnout dropping nearly nine points to 52 percent from five years earlier. A turnout data analysis published by The Hindu newspaper concluded it was too early to determine whether hot weather was impacting voter participation.

But India’s weather bureau has forecast more hot spells to come in May and the election commission formed a taskforce last month to review the impact of heat and humidity before each round of voting. Modi told reporters after leaving the polling station that he encouraged voters to drink “as much water as possible”. “The more water you drink, the better your health and energy levels are maintained,” he said.

High temperatures were forecast for several locations voting on Tuesday including the states of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Years of scientific research have found climate change is causing heatwaves to become longer, more frequent and more intense. More than 968 million people are eligible to vote in the Indian election, with the final round of polling on June 1 and results expected three days later.

FBR’s move to block non-filers’ SIMs in doldrums

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Cellular Mobile Operators (CMOs) declared the Federal Board of Revenue’s (FBR) move to block SIMs of the non-filers as a violation of the Pakistan Telecommunication Act.

The telecom companies have penned a letter to the Ministry of Information Technology and Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), highlighting concerns and legal constraints regarding the blocking of 500,000 SIMs of non-filers. The letter emphasizes that telecom companies are mandated to provide uninterrupted services to consumers under the Telecom Act. It underscores that the sudden blocking of mobile SIMs contravenes legal provisions, potentially inviting legal action from affected customers.

They assert that the decision lacks a comprehensive review of constitutional and legal aspects, posing a threat to taxpayers’ rights and the telecom industry. The letter advocates for compliance with prevailing legal requirements before the termination of SIMs, urging for transparency in implementing tax laws. Additionally, it calls for a mass media campaign to raise awareness about the ban on non-filers, emphasizing the importance of informed public discourse.

The telecom industry emphasizes the need for adherence to legal procedures and transparency in enforcing tax laws, urging the FBR to reconsider the implementation of the Income Tax General Order (ITGO) in light of legal complexities and consumer rights.

The recent Saudi delegation comprising private sector companies had termed their meetings with the Pakistani counterparts as very productive and they were very impressed with the progress made in this regard, he said, adding that the present government would facilitate such like processes in the economic sector.

The deputy PM and foreign minister further said that Pakistan wanted stability and peace in the region and was desirous to have good friendly relations with all including the neighbouring country Afghanistan. He said that in recent terrorism incidents including an attack on Chinese nationals, reports confirmed that the ‘masterminding, planning and triggering took place from the Afghan soil’.

To another question regarding restrictions on social media platform X, he said that Article 19 of the Constitution guaranteed freedom of expression and speech but subjected to relevant laws and boundaries. It did not give blanket freedom to anyone to taint and raise slur with baseless allegations against the national interests and state institutions, he added.

The minister also noted that in Pakistan there were defamation laws but he had seldom witnessed any proceedings on the relevant legal provisions. Earlier, briefing the mediemen about his participation in the World Economic Forum along with the

‘Israel attack on Lebanon rescuers was unlawful’

BEIRUT: Human Rights Watch on Tuesday said an Israeli strike in Lebanon that killed seven first responders was “an unlawful attack on civilians,” and urged Washington to suspend the sale of weapons to Israel.

“An Israeli strike on an emergency and relief center” in the southern village of Habbariyeh on March 27 “killed seven emergency and relief volunteers,” constituting an “unlawful attack on civilians that failed to take all necessary precautions,” HRW said in a statement. It said the massacre was committed against “a civil society association that provides emergency services, ambulances, first-aid training, and primary care and relief services in Lebanon.”

Furthermore, HRW said it “did not find any evidence of the presence of military targets at the site that was targeted with the acknowledgment of the Israeli army, which did not take possible precautions to ensure that the target was military ... which makes the raid illegal.” Ramzi Kaiss, HRW’s Lebanon researcher, said: “Israeli forces used a US weapon to conduct a strike that killed seven civilian relief workers in Lebanon who were merely doing their jobs.”

He said the Israeli army used US-made ammunition to carry out the raid. HRW said it “sent a letter containing the results of reviewing the photos and videos of the site before and after the raid, including a video of the remnants of the ammunition found at the site, and questions to the Israeli army and the US State Department on April 19, but did not receive any response.”

The rights group said it found a metal fragment at the site of the bombing with “MPR 500” written on it, confirming that it is from a 500-pound general-purpose bomb made by Israeli company Elbit Systems, and the fragments and fins are part of a joint direct attack munition set manufactured by American company Boeing. HRW urged the US to “immediately suspend arms sales and military assistance to Israel given evidence that the Israeli military is using US weapons unlawfully.”

The organization asked Lebanon’s Foreign Ministry to “take immediate action by submitting a declaration to the International Criminal Court, allowing it to investigate crimes falling within its jurisdiction committed on Lebanese territory since October 2023, and prosecute the perpetrators.” — Aljazeera

Govt to take decisions in national interests: Dy PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday said that Pakistan was a sovereign country and the present government would take decisions in the best national interests to meet its energy requirements and fulfill international obligations.

Addressing a press conference at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister, to a query regarding Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline, said that the government would take the decisions in the national interests and would not allow interference into its international obligations. He also termed the Iranian President’s visit to Pakistan as very productive.

To another query, he replied that Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman would undertake a bilateral visit to Pakistan soon and they would receive a date in this regard, in the current month. Earlier, initial and business to business meetings had taken place which helped in finalizing the groundwork for the top Saudi leadership’s visit to Pakistan, he added.

The recent Saudi delegation comprising private sector companies had termed their meetings with the Pakistani counterparts as very productive and they were very impressed with the progress made in this regard, he said, adding that the present government would facilitate such like processes in the economic sector.

The deputy PM and foreign minister further said that Pakistan wanted stability and peace in the region and was desirous to have good friendly relations with all including the neighbouring country Afghanistan. He said that in recent terrorism incidents including an attack on Chinese nationals, reports confirmed that the ‘masterminding, planning and triggering took place from the Afghan soil’.

To another question regarding restrictions on social media platform X, he said that Article 19 of the Constitution guaranteed freedom of expression and speech but subjected to relevant laws and boundaries. It did not give blanket freedom to anyone to taint and raise slur with baseless allegations against the national interests and state institutions, he added.

The minister also noted that in Pakistan there were defamation laws but he had seldom witnessed any proceedings on the relevant legal provisions. Earlier, briefing the mediemen about his participation in the World Economic Forum along with the

SRO for wheat procurement issued during PTI govt: Kakar

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Former caretaker prime minister and Senator Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said the allegations of corruption against the caretaker government regarding wheat procurement were baseless and contrary to the facts.

“The procurement was conducted in accordance with prevailing laws and SROs (Statutory Regulatory Orders). The SRO for wheat procurement was issued during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, and no additional permits were given by the caretaker setup,” he clarified.

Senator Kakar, while talking to the media, noted that speculations in the media arose due to ignorance of national import policies and prevailing laws. Wheat procurement was conducted through a legal process where not even a single penny of corruption could be committed.

He regretted the media trial of the caretaker government on the basis of misinformation, which, he said, was due to a lack of knowledge and understand-

ing of laws and procedures pertaining to government affairs. Regarding the procedure for wheat procurement from abroad, the former prime minister said, “It is carried out under wheat import policies and national laws. The relevant authority issues notifications and holds deliberations on taxation and other matters before final approval.”

Pakistan, he said, “produces around 27 million metric tons of wheat annually, with a shortfall of three to four million metric tons, which is addressed through its procurement following a formal legal process”. After the 18th Constitutional Amendment, he said, all the provinces sent their wheat requirement details to the Food Security and Research Department.

He said the Federal Government, based on the recommendations of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) and the provinces’ needs, “takes a decision regarding wheat procurement”. In line with the recommendations of ECC during the PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement) government,

the caretaker government, under his command, facilitated the private sector to meet the requirement of ordinary citizens and mitigate the possibility of wheat shortfall in the country, he said while clarifying the “misconception about the wheat import”.

The SRO for wheat procurement was issued during the PTI government, and the caretakers did not give any special approvals, he reiterated. It was a legal matter which was being presented as illegal through baseless media trial and causing confusion, the former PM deplored.

Senator Kakar criticized the media for creating stories based on speculation. “It is against the norms of journalism to report a story without any knowledge,” he lamented. He said there was a dire need for a healthy debate in the media on the issues of national importance and their solutions. “We have stifled healthy debates on national issues and wasted our energy on tarnishing the image of the caretaker government by distorting the facts,” he deplored.

WB team, KP govt officials discuss public welfare plans

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A large number delegation of the World Bank led by its Regional Vice President for South Asia Martin Raiser, called on higher authorities of the provincial government here at Peshawar on Tuesday and discussed with them matters of mutual interest with special focus on public welfare projects being executed in the province with the financial assistance of the World Bank. Prospects of mutual cooperation in the various social sectors including education, road infrastructure projects, human capital, climate change and other important sectors also came under discussion.

The dignitaries on this occasion, agreed to further enhance cooperation in the different sectors including education, health, social welfare, agriculture, tourism, road communication and technical education. Country Director World Bank Najy Benhassine was

also among the delegates, whereas on behalf of the Provincial government, Advisor to Chief Minister Syed Fakhar Jehan, MNA Faisal Amin Gandapur, Additional Chief Secretary, administrative secretaries of concerned departments and other relevant officials attended the meeting. Speaking on this occasion, provincial government’s high ups said that World Bank is playing an important role in executing public welfare projects in the province.

They said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa specially merged areas had been affected badly during the war against terrorism; and that’s why, the government also need special cooperation from its International development partners in the fast track development of war affected areas of the province, adding that infrastructure development, revival of business activities and providing employment opportunities to the youth of merged districts is one of the

priority areas of the provincial government. They maintained that multiple initiatives are underway, through which youth of the province especially the merged areas would be imparted with market based technical skills, thereby enabling them to get job opportunities.

“Youth of this province are highly talented and a large part of the population; they just need to train in accordance with the needs and requirements of modern markets and for this purpose, the government is taking steps on priority basis”, they said and added that an initiative regarding provision of soft loans to the youth for promoting self-employment, is under consideration.

The delegation was further informed that the Billion Tree Plus project would be reflected in the upcoming Annual Development Plan (ADP) with the purpose to reduce negative impacts of climate change.

Ukraine claims it foiled Russian plot to assassinate Zelenskyy

KYIV: Ukrainian counterintelligence investigators claim to have foiled a Russian plot to assassinate President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) said.

On Tuesday, the SBU said in a statement it had exposed a network of agents run by Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) whose aim was to assassinate Zelenskyy and other senior Ukrainian political and military officials. Two colonels in the State Guard of Ukraine, which protects top officials, were arrested on suspicion of treason to enact the plan drawn up by Russia, the SBU said.

Russia had worked to identify individuals close to Zelenskyy’s security detail, the statement said, adding that the colonels were recruited before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The two were tasked with finding someone close to the presidential guard who would take Zelenskyy hostage and later kill him, the SBU statement said. It did not elaborate on when the alleged plot had been foiled.

The statement quoted SBU head Vasyl Maliuk as saying the plot foresaw an attack before Russian President Vladimir Putin’s inauguration for a fifth term on Tuesday. “The terrorist attack, which was supposed to be a gift to Putin for the inauguration, was indeed a failure of the Russian special services,” Maliuk said on the agency’s Telegram channel.

Maliuk said he personally oversaw the top-secret operation to track the plot. There was no immediate comment from Russia. There was also a plan to “eliminate” Maliuk and Kyrylo Budanov, the military intelligence agency’s head, the SBU said. Budanov’s assassination was supposed to take place before May 5, the Orthodox Easter Sunday, it added. — Aljazeera

Police break up pro-Palestine protests at Berlin, Amsterdam

BERLIN: Police have broken up a protest by several hundred pro-Palestinian activists who occupied a courtyard at Berlin’s Free University, the latest such action by authorities as protests that have roiled campuses in the United States spread across Europe.

The move on Tuesday came after activists had put up about 20 tents and formed a human chain around them to protest against Israel’s war on Gaza. Most had covered their faces with medical masks and had draped keffiyah scarves around their heads, shouting slogans such as “Viva, viva Palestina.” Police called on the students to leave the campus at the university in the German capital.

Police could also be seen carrying some students away and some scuffles erupted between police officers and protesters. Authorities used pepper spray against some of the protesters. “The demands of the people were pretty clear, basically saying that

it’s time that Germany should take part in the protest movement around the world,” said Al Jazeera’s Dominic Kane.

“They demand that the genocide they say is taking place in Gaza be stopped. They also say that students who take part in these protests should not be banned from doing so and should not lose their status as students — that is something that many students who’ve taken part in protests are afraid of,” Kane said, reporting from the scene. The school’s administrators said in a statement that the protesters had rejected any kind of dialogue and they had therefore called in police to clear the campus. “This form of protest is not geared towards dialogue. An occupation is not acceptable on the FU Berlin campus,” university President Guenter Ziegler said. FU is the abbreviation for Free University. “We are available for academic dialog — but not in this way.”

The administrators said

some protesters attempted to enter rooms and lecture halls at Free University to occupy them. Earlier on Tuesday, police arrested about 140 activists as they broke up a similar pro-Palestinian encampment at the University of Amsterdam.

Amsterdam police said on social media that their action was “necessary to restore order” after protests turned violent. There were no immediate reports of injuries. Video from the scene aired by national broadcaster NOS shows police using a mechanical digger to push down barricades and officers with batons and shields moving in, beating some of the protesters and pulling down tents. Protesters had formed barricades from wooden pallets and bicycles. NOS reported. After clearing the Amsterdam protest by early afternoon Tuesday, police closed off the area by metal fences. Students sat along the banks of a nearby canal. — Aljazeera

UN pushes Iran for ‘concrete’ cooperation on atomic programme

TEHRAN: The head of the United Nations nuclear body has called on Iran to increase its efforts to make cooperation tangible and “concrete”. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Rafael Grossi urged Tehran on Tuesday to adopt “concrete” measures to foster collaboration. The UN is seeking to re-establish oversight of Iran’s atomic activities but has met various setbacks over how to implement a deal struck last year.

However, officials on both sides suggested that there is some distance between their positions. At a news conference in the Iranian city of Isfahan, Grossi said he had proposed in talks with Iranian officials that they focus on “very practical and tangible measures that can be imple-

mented in order to accelerate” cooperation.

“What we are looking at is concrete measures that could make this [the deal] operational,” the IAEA head said. Mohammad Eslami, the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran insisted that the talks with Grossi had been positive and productive. “We continue interactions over unresolved issues,” he remarked. “The important point is that Mr Grossi takes the necessary actions to settle the problems that are mainly political.”

While both men said there would be no immediate new deal during Grossi’s visit, they pointed to a March 2023 joint statement as a path forward for cooperation. That statement included a pledge by Iran to resolve issues around sites

where inspectors have questions about possible undeclared nuclear activity, and to allow the IAEA to “implement further appropriate verification and monitoring activities”. Iran and IAEA have often clashed over the UN agency’s task of monitoring a nuclear programme that Western nations suspect is aimed at eventually developing a nuclear weapon. Tehran denies wanting to build nuclear weapons.

Iran is enriching uranium to up to 60 percent purity, close to about 90 percent of weapons grade. If that material were enriched further, it would suffice for two nuclear weapons, according to an official IAEA yardstick. No other state has enriched to that level without using it to produce weapons. — Aljazeera