

Two killed, one abducted
F.P. Report

KHAIRPUR: A gang of armed men launched a violent assault in the katcha area of Khairpur district, resulting in the deaths of two people and the abduction of another, local police said on Wednesday. The attack unfolded in Faiz Muhammad village near Pir Jo Goth, where the farmers working in agricultural lands became targets of the armed assailants.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 106

Regd. No. 241

SHAWWAL 30 1445 -- THURSDAY, MAY 09 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

Shehbaz declares education emergency

26 million out-of-school children to be enrolled

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday declared an 'Education Emergency' across Pakistan to enroll around 26 million out-of-school children and promote literacy to make the country regain its lost space and develop it as one of the most educated societies in the world.

"Today, with iron conviction, and the support of provinces, we will handle the challenge of 26 million out-of-school children. We will bring them back to school...I declare from this moment an Emergency in Education all over Pakistan...The way we did it in Punjab, we will do it in Pakistan," the prime minister said addressing the National Conference on Education Emergency.

He told the gathering of federal ministers, parliamentarians, vice-chancellors, diplomats, and development partners that he would personally supervise the programme and meet all the chief ministers, setting aside political affiliations, with a vision to march in unison, expressing the hope that the provinces too would extend their support.

"This is about our children and our future... This is a very challenging task, no doubt. But nations which had faced difficulties and defeat in the past arose from the ashes of defeat. Germany and Japan are the examples. Why can't Pakistan be? I guarantee, if we move in unison to find our space, Pakistan will emerge as one of the most educated societies one day," he remarked.

The prime minister, recounting the achievements of the Punjab Government during his chief ministership, highlighted the boosted enrollment rates, especially for girls, through initiatives like the Zevar Taleem Programme, and rescuing 90,000 boys from brick kilns to sending them to schools.

He also mentioned outsourcing of 10,000 poorly performing schools to

PM reiterates commitment to complete trade, connectivity projects with Uzbekistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated that Pakistan was committed to working with Uzbekistan to speed up and complete all bilateral trade and connectivity projects. The prime minister, in a meeting with Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov, who is currently on a two-day visit to Pakistan, reaffirmed Pakistan's readiness to provide access to Uzbekistan to Pakistani Ports, a PM Office press release said.

He also emphasized the importance of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project and Pakistan's commitment to its early completion. The two sides discussed enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and Uzbekistan in the fields of trade and economy, security and defense, connectivity and people-to-people contacts. The importance of peace and development in Afghanistan for regional connectivity was also discussed. Congratulating the prime minister on his re-election, the Uzbek foreign minister also conveyed the invitation of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev for Prime Minister Shehbaz to undertake an official visit to Uzbekistan at his earliest convenience. The prime minister expressed gratitude to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and said that he was looking forward to meeting him.

improve education quality and established Daanish Schools which offered free high-quality education and boarding for underprivileged children. The Punjab Education Endowment Fund provided scholarships to hundreds of thousands of deserving students based on merit.

He said the enrollment of 26 million out-of-school children and stunted growth were major challenges facing Pakistan which required huge financial resources. "But the real challenge is the will to do," he commented and recalled Pakistan's manifestation of the commitment to become a nuclear power despite international pressures, and eliminating terrorism by sacrificing around 80,000 lives to establish peace in the country as well as the globe.

In his address, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said the education sector needed immediate actions and urgent responses as Pakistan stood at the crossroads of destination with no option to lose.

"The statistics of education in

Pakistan are disturbing, alarming and disheartening. More than 26 million children are out of school. This number is greater than the population of 150 countries in the world," he commented. Unicef Representative in Pakistan Abdullah A. Fadil said over 70% of children of age 10 in Pakistan could not read or understand text. Despite constitutional guarantees, education in Pakistan was neither yet compulsory nor free.

He said through enhanced investment in education and young people, Pakistan could regain its lost stature as the first Nobel Laureate in Physics belonged to Pakistan and that the country also recently sent a space mission to moon. British High Commissioner in Islamabad Jane Marriott said that Pakistan with 60% population under 30 years of age was at a crossroads to make tough choices. She said the conference called for urgent actions like enhanced funding, inclusivity, multiple shifts schools and retaining the children, and assured her country's all-out cooperation to make Pakistan achieve the goal.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing the National Conference on Education Emergency.

KP Governor visits Bhutto family mausoleum

F.P. Report

GARHI KHUDA BAKSH: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi visited mausoleum of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, Garhi Khuda Baksh during his visit to Sind and offered fateha.

He also visited graves of Mir Murtaza Bhutto, Mir Shahnawaz Bhutto, Begum Nusrat Bhutto and Ameer Begum and offered fateha. He laid floral wreaths on graves of Bhutto family members and prayed for grating eternal peace to them. Provincial Minister for Culture, Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah, MPA, Jamil Ahmad Soomro, Deputy Commissioner Larkana, Sarjeel Noor were also present on the occasion.

Later KP Governor went to Shewan Sharif and visited mausoleum of Sindhi Sufi poet Sakhi Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. He laid floral wreath, offered fateha and prayed for progress and prosperity of the country. The governor was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Jamshoro, Ali Zulfikar Memon and concerned officials.

Faisal Karim Kundi also met with Sind Governor, Kamran Khan Tessori and matters of mutual interest. Senior Minister, Sharjeel Inam Memon was also present during the meeting. Later they went to I T Marquee and interacted with students. He also appreciated efforts of Sind governor for betterment and welfare of students.

Six terrorists killed in operation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Six terrorists were killed by security forces in two separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

An intelligence based operation was conducted in Dera Ismail Khan District on reported presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, five terrorists were successfully neutralized by the security forces and sent to hell. In another fire exchange in North Waziristan District, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which another Terrorist Inam Ullah was killed.

Weapons, ammunition & explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as innocent civilians. Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorist found in the area as the security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

Electricity price hiked by Rs2.83 per unit

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has jacked up the power tariff by Rs2.83 per unit for the month of March 2024, on account of monthly fuel adjustment, increasing the burden on inflation-hit consumers.

An official notification for the price hike stated that the tariff has been jacked up on account of fuel charges adjustment, which will be reflected in the bills issued in May. It stated that the said adjustment of Rs2.8372/kWh will be applicable to all the consumer categories except the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) and lifeline consumers.

Moreover, the said price hike will also not be applicable to K-Electric consumers. "The adjustment will be shown separately in the consumers' bills on the basis of unites billed to the consumers in the month of March 2024," it added. Nepra directed all the Distribution Companies (Discos) concerned to strictly comply with the orders of the courts notwithstanding this order.

Last month, the Ministry of Power Division announced that the power consumers were likely to get another relief of Rs4.12 per unit in the electricity bills in the month of May as a petition seeking price cut from Rs2.94 to Rs4.92 per unit in terms of fuel cost adjustment had been submitted to Nepra. The higher proposed FCA for March is apparently mainly due

to higher domestic coal and gas prices, although the use of imported fuels like coal, diesel and furnace oil remained zero. LNG was relatively cheaper, and the exchange rate remained stable.

In a petition, the CPPA, acting as commercial agent of Discos, demanded an additional FCA of Rs2.94 per unit in the May bills for electricity consumed in March. It claimed that the reference fuel cost for March was Rs6.44 per unit, but the actual fuel cost rose to Rs9.38 per unit. The average fuel cost in February also stood at about Rs9.42 per unit. It said about 8,023-gigawatt-hour (GWh) of electricity was generated at an estimated fuel expenditure of Rs66.7bn (Rs8.3 per unit) in March, of which 7,756 GWh energy was delivered to Discos at the cost of Rs72.67bn (at Rs9.38 per unit). The data showed declining consumption trends. The consumption in March was also 8.3pc lower than the same month (8,459Gwh) last year. The Rs2.94 per unit FCA for March sought this year was more than double the Rs1.17 per unit FCA of the same month last year.

Earlier in March, Nepra okayed a hike of Rs2.75 per unit in power tariff for the current quarter of the fiscal year 2023-24, putting an additional burden in exorbitant electricity bills for consumers. This was approved in terms of quarterly adjustment for the second quarter of FY2023-24, having a uniform impact Rs2.75 per unit on each consumer.

Do not drag military into politics: PTI founder

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founding chairman Imran Khan has turned down the military's demand to apologise for the May 9 events and distanced his party from the violent protests that broke out in the country last year soon after his arrest.

"Why should I tender apology, it should be sought from me," the deposed prime minister said during an informal conversation with journalists in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail on Wednesday where he has been incarcerated since August last year after he was booked in a number of cases ranging from corruption to violating Official Secrets Act.

The PTI founder was responding to a question related to Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Tuesday's press conference wherein he demanded "those involved in the May 9 violent protests to apologise" and shun politics of "anarchy" before holding any dialogue. In the hours-long presser, the chief military spokesperson had also ruled out any dialogue with those who attacked military installations and insulted the nation's martyrs.

He had also said that the May 9 accused and perpetrators would have to be punished as per the Constitution and law. The May 9 events refer to violent protests triggered by the arrest of former PM Imran Khan in a corruption case from the premises of

Islamabad High Court (IHC) last year.

In Wednesday's interaction with journalists, the PTI founder distanced his party from the violent protests, saying that the party never resorted to violence in its history of 27 years. He further said that he only came to know about the May 9 riots when he was presented before then-chief justice Umar Ata Bandial in the Supreme Court. "I condemned the May 9 incidents in front of [former] chief justice Umar Ata Bandial," he added.

Referring to the DG ISPR statement linking dialogue with the apology, the ousted premier said: "If you don't want to talk, then don't. I am asking for holding dialogues for the sake of Pakistan." Khan said neither he was interested in striking any "deal" nor wanted to go abroad and flee the country. He also referred to the Capitol riots in the United States in 2021, saying that suspects involved in the Capitol attack were sentenced after being identified through CCTV footage.

"While here [in Pakistan] the CCTV footage disappeared," he said pointing towards the investigation into the May 9 violence. Khan also backed DG ISPR Maj Gen Chaudhry's call to hold the judicial inquiry into the 2014 sit-in staged by the PTI against the alleged rigging in the 2013 general elections. "I am ready for inquiry into the 2014 sit-in. I will be happy to appear before an inquiry committee. All allegations against

me related to the 2014 sit-in are false," he added. "The army is ours and we have no problem with the army," the PTI founder said in the same interaction. "For God's sake, do not drag the military into politics."

Bushra Bibi transferred to Adiala Jail

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has ordered to transfer PTI founder Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi from sub-jail at her residence in Banigala to Adiala Jail, where her husband is also imprisoned.

Pronouncing its reserved verdict on Wednesday, IHC's Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb approving Bushra Bibi's request also declared null and void Islamabad administration's notification regarding declaring Imran Khan's Banigala residence as a sub-jail. The IHC had reserved its verdict on Bushra Bibi's petition last week.

Soon after the IHC's verdict, the former first lady was shifted to Adiala jail from the Banigala sub-jail. Bushra Bibi was sent to jail on January 31 after an accountability court in Islamabad had sentenced her and Imran Khan to 14 years in prison in the Toshakhana case. While the IHC had on April 1 had suspended their sentences in the Toshakhana reference, she remained in custody in the Iddat case.

PTI terms May 9 riots 'conspiracy to target Imran'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Responding to critics targeting his party for planning and executing the May 9, 2023, riots, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan has termed the incident "a conspiracy to target party founder Imran Khan".

Ayub, speaking to a seminar related to the protection of the Pakistani Constitution on Wednesday, said that his party has a one-point agenda "which is the supremacy of the Constitution and law" in the country. He went on to say that the incarcerated PTI founder assured the nation not to make any compromise on the supremacy of the Constitution and law. The politico added that the "Constitution also restricts the armed forces not to interfere in political affairs".

Ayub, the leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, censured the registration of a plethora of cases against the PTI top leader, saying that former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser was booked in an X-ray machine theft case while another party leader faced an old motorcycle theft case besides several cases of murder, abduction and terrorism.

The NA opposition leader also said that they crossed a sea of fire to take forward the former ruling party's political struggle. He also alleged that the filing of hundreds of cases against the PTI's top leadership was part of the "London plan" — which ousted former prime minister Imran Khan. He also claimed that the May 9 riots were executed to keep the PTI founder away from national politics via sedition laws for at least 10 years.

Ahead of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit this month, the PTI senior leader said that his party "welcomes its Saudi brethren, as well as encourages foreign investments in the country". Speaking at the same event, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that "public movements take pace at a time when martial laws are imposed and the Constitution is suspended".



GARHI KHUDA BAKSH: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi showering flowers at the grave of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto.

Newspaper industry issues to be addressed: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government firmly stands for the promotion of print media and the issues confronted by newspapers will be amicably addressed," stated Mr. Attaullah Tarar, the Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting. Tarar was addressing a meeting of the Executive Committee of the All-Pakistan Newspapers Society at Islamabad chaired by its President Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani, Mr. Sarmad Ali, Secretary General APNS welcomed the Minister and apprised him about the problems being faced by the print media. These included long pending notification of 35% increase in the government advertisement rates approved by the Prime Minister in his last tenure.

He reminded that the Prime Minister during his last meeting with APNS office bearers had given an assurance that an amount of Rs. 50 crore will be released to newspapers before Eid as initial payment of outstanding dues of the print media against advertising released by the federal government. However, the print media was paid Rs 4.6 crores only.

The APNS office bearers also explained the hardship faced by members in getting renewal of their registration by the Press Registrar office due to a highly complicated procedure practiced by the Press Registrar and requested

that the procedure be made hassle free and that the registration be made one time as stipulated in the law.

The APNS members requested that the regional quota be implemented in letter and spirit and no publications other than regional newspapers be given advertisements from this quota. They also requested that in the forthcoming budget GST, custom and import duties on imports of newspaper consumables like ink and printing plates be exempted. Atta Ullah Tarar assured that the issues being faced by the newspaper industry will be addressed to the satisfaction of the print media's. He stated that he would take up the issue of increase in the government advertisement rates with the Finance Ministry for its incorporation in the next fiscal budget. He reiterated that the Ministry of Information had disbursed an overall amount of Rs.1.3 billion to media outlets before Eid.

He stated that he has asked the ministry to evolve a mechanism for future budgetary arrangements for payment of advertisement expenses. He assured that the old liabilities will be cleared in the first quarter of next financial year. Mr. Tarar proposed a joint committee of Information Ministry and APNS to evolve a system for registration of newspapers. He stated that the newspapers played a pivotal role in countering fake news and disin-

formation. In order to promote newspaper readership, the Federal Minister stated that he would ask the Information Ministry to suggest to the Ministry of Aviation and other government ministries and departments to subscribe to newspapers as in the past. In this respect he proposed to initiate a pilot project with the Ministry of Education to promote newspaper readership at the school and college levels in the ICT.

Earlier the Executive Committee, on the recommendations of the Advertising Committee, granted provisional accreditation to M/s. Starcrest Communications (Pvt.) Ltd Karachi, M/s. SAP Communications (Pvt.) Ltd. Islamabad and M/s. URS Digi (Pvt) Ltd. Islamabad. The members expressed condolence to Mr. Ahmed Baloch, Publisher Daily Kainat Bahawalpur on the sad demise of his mother.

The meeting was attended by the following. Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani, President, Mr. Imtihan Shahid, Senior Vice President, Mr. Sarmad Ali, Secretary General, S.M Munir Jillani, Joint Secretary, Mr. Waseem Ahmed, (Daily Awam, Quetta), Mr. Mohsin Bilal, (Daily Ausaf), Mr. Humayun Tariq, (Daily Business Report), Mr. Ansar Mahmood Bhatti, (Monthly Centre Line), Mr. Muhammad Waqaruddin, (Daily Dunya) and others.



12 dead, 1,426 injured in Punjab road accidents

LAHORE (APP): At least 12 people were killed and 1,426 others injured in 1,332 road traffic crashes in Punjab during the last 24 hours. As many as 609 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 817 with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by the rescue medical teams.

The statistics show that 289 accidents were reported in Lahore, which affected 312 persons placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by Multan 100 in with 109 victims and at third Faisalabad with 91 accidents and 93 victims.

According to the data, 1,182 motorbikes 86 autorickshaws, 132 motorcars, 32 vans, eight passenger buses, 28 truck and 104 other types of auto vehicles and slow-moving carts were involved in these road traffic accidents.

ETPB recovers Rs 38B in properties, Rs 600M in dues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) has efficiently reclaimed properties worth Rs 38 billion and retrieved outstanding dues a totaling of Rs 600 million from defaulters since December 2023, to date, under the guidance of chairman Arshad Farid Khan. According to ETPB spokesman, the special teams, constituted by the board chairman, have successfully recovered Trust Board's land and commercial properties in various locations, including Pakpattan, Mahant Darshan, Okara, Sahiwal, Divalpur, Hasan Abdal, Karachi, and Lahore.

In Nankana Sahib, he said security personnel and other staff were deployed to conduct an operation against the land grabber mafia. As a result, thousands of acres of land were reclaimed, and illegal constructions were demolished. Additionally, thousands of kanals of departmental land, previously withheld due to pending cases, reached resolution, thereby incorporating them into the trust pool.

The revenue has been boosted to Rs 429 million through the modernization of the billing system for urban properties. Rigorous monitoring has led to the issuance of WhatsApp numbers to deter any forms of corruption and bribery, he added.

'No change in roti, naan prices'

LAHORE (APP): A spokesperson for the district administration has issued a statement denying any changes in the pricing of naan and roti. The current official rates remained at Rs 16 for roti and Rs 20 for naan.

The spokesperson stated that there had been several rounds of negotiations with the Naanbai Association to discuss the pricing structure in accordance with the fluctuating costs of flour. However, no consensus has been reached to alter the pre-established prices. The district administration warned that action would be taken against any violations of the agreed pricing.

Environmentalists say coastal cities are at risk due to increasing sea level

KARACHI (APP): Noted environmental journalist Sheema Siddiqui on Wednesday said that sea level was increasing day by day, hence in future our coastal areas along with coastal cities including Karachi, Dhaka and other will be at risk.

She said this in a seminar which was organised by Sindh Madressatul Islam University's Department of Environmental Sciences in collaboration with the Directorate of Students' Affairs and Counseling on hazardous of plastic and environmental challenges at the Senate Hall of SMIU.

She said soil erosion by sea was posing great threat to our agriculture lands and human lives. Also, the Indus Delta is dying due to increased sea level. Hence, we must make the environ-

CM reviews health reforms

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presided over a special meeting to review health reforms, here on Wednesday.

The chief minister expressed her dismay over the previous government not paying any attention to the public health issues. She expressed her severe indignation over the loss of Rs. 4 billion caused to the government exchequer in the Murree hospital project. The meeting decided that legal action would be taken against those who caused huge losses to the government exchequer by delaying the project. The CM said it was highly heart-rending and deplorable to impede provision of health facilities to people during the previous government's tenure. "It is our duty to safeguard people's money and we cannot permit its loss. We want to establish state-of-the-art health facilities for people in every district. We will provide high quality treatment facilities to the common man."

The proposal to establish a medical college with the help of public-private partnership in Attock, Mianwali, Vehari, Bhakkar and Jhelum was reviewed. A comprehensive briefing was given on the construction, rehabilitation of hospitals: 'Clinic on Wheels', free medicines and other matters, along with undertaking health reforms and other affairs were reviewed during the meeting.

The CM ordered early completion of 2,500 BHUs and 300 RHCs upgradation projects. She ordered to undertake prompt measures for establishment of a new hos-

pital in Murree. She ordered to ensure provision of angiography machines in Jhelum, Attock, Mianwali, Murree, Sahiwal and Sialkot hospitals.

Senator Perviaz Rashid, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information Minister Azma Zahid Bokhari, Provincial Ministers for SHC&ME Khawaja Salman Rafiq, P&SHC Khawaja Imran Nazir, MPA Sania Ashiq, Chief Secretary and other officials participated in the meeting.

CM discusses investment opportunities with Turkmen ambassador: Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan Atadjan Nuryevich Movlamov called on Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, here on Wednesday.

The CM discussed with the ambassador various possibilities of increasing cooperation between Punjab and Turkmenistan for promotion of trade and investment. "Turkmenistan is Pakistan's brotherly country, we want Turkmenistan to benefit from Punjab's rewarding investment opportunities in energy, industry, livestock and agriculture," she said. The CM said that trade in textile, pharmaceutical, agriculture and livestock sectors can be increased. She also reviewed various suggestions to strengthen bilateral relations between Punjab and Turkmenistan both at governmental and people-to-people levels. The ambassador congratulated Maryam Nawaz on being elected the first female chief minister of Punjab, and appreciated her vision for promotion of bilateral trade and investment relations.

CCPO urges Lahore police to adopt open door policy to redress public grievances

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Police Chief Bilal Siddique Kamyana has urged the Lahore police to keep their doors open to redress public grievances, ensuring no barriers for citizens seeking assistance at police stations and other offices.

He was presiding over a meeting at the Capital City Police Headquarters on Wednesday to review performance of Cantonment and Model Town divisions.

Kamyana announced grant of rewards for police officials excelling in various departments of Lahore Police. He emphasised the need to boost morale of Lahore Police officers, demonstrating exemplary performance. The CCPO issued directives to expedite intelligence-based operations against elements involved in heinous narcotics trade and to ensure better coordination among the relevant institutions for the eradication of drug-peddlers. Additionally, orders were issued for effective actions

against motorcycle theft and snatching gangs. Officers were instructed to devise comprehensive strategies to curb thefts and snatching incidents along with targeted operations planned in hotspot areas.

Bilal Siddique Kamyana issued directives for implementation of robust operational procedures to combat crimes such as murder, robbery, kidnapping and others. He emphasised the need to adopt effective modern policing in crime control. He underscored that the provincial police force should function as a role model institution. DIG (Investigations) Zeeshan Asghar, DIG (Operations) Faisal Kamran, SSP (Admin) Atif Nazir, SSP (Operations) Syed Ali Raza, SSP (Investigations) Anosh Masood Chaudhry, SPs, ASPs, Circle Officers, SHOs, and In charges Investigation from Cantt and Model Town divisions were also attended the meeting.

Climate resilient Pakistan's top priority of govt: Chairman PMYP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan on Wednesday reiterated the government's commitment to support youth-led initiatives and foster collaboration between academia, development programs, and GYM Clubs to drive sustainable urban development in Pakistan.

Addressing a seminar titled "Green Solutions for Cities" organised by COM-SATS University, he highlighted the importance of empowering youth to address environmental challenges and drive positive change in their communities through initiatives such as the Green Youth Movement (GYM) Clubs, adding GYM clubs were established by the prime minister's youth programme in 137 public universities to sensitize youth

on the matter of climate change and related eco-innovation required to tackle the challenge of climate change.

Emphasizing the critical role of the PMYP in fostering sustainable urban development and promoting green initiatives, Rana stated that "The Prime Minister's Youth Programme is committed to providing young individuals with the necessary skills and opportunities to lead the transition towards nature-inclusive and climate-resilient urban environments. Our partnership with academia and initiatives like the GYM Clubs are instrumental in achieving this goal."



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Reza Amiri Moghaddam, Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan called on Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Federal Minister for Housing and Works at his office.

Marriyum orders swift completion of CM's 33 special projects

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has issued directions for swift completion of Punjab chief minister's 33 special projects, and prioritising health development initiatives on an urgent basis. In a statement issued here on Wednesday, she said that according to the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, seven mega projects in the health sector, worth Rs. 145 billion, were nearing completion.

She disclosed that the first phase of the Nawaz Sharif Cancer Institute in Lahore would be completed in a year, while the opening of the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology in Sargodha was scheduled for December 2025.

Additionally, the first phase of construction and renovation of rural and basic health centers will be completed by October, with the vaccination of major hospitals to be completed by June.

Furthermore, Expressways on key routes will be constructed with an investment of Rs. 176 billion, she added.

The senior minister announced establishment of a dedicated complaint number for all departments, as per directives of CM Maryam Nawaz. Under the Punjab Daycare Fund Society, daycare centers would be established in government offices, she added.

She outlined various

developmental plans, including infrastructure expansion on Multan, Wahdat Road, Chichawatni to Chowk Azam, Sahiwal, Samundri, Bahawalpur to Jhang Road, Faisalabad, Chinot, and Sargodha Road, establishment of wildlife centers, formation of Wildlife Rescue Force, Veterinary doctors' recruitment, and tackling food shortages through aquaculture shrimp and fish farming and trading.

To combat smog permanently, the Environmental Protection

Authority is being established along with initiation of a multi-sector smog action plan and measures to regulate plastic use, she added. Marriyum said that construction of a three-storey Safe City Hospital with 204 beds in Lahore would commence this month, while Smart Safe Cities in districts would become functional by January 1. Implementation will begin on checking sixty million trees planted in Punjab.

A wildlife survey and Global IT Certificate Programme are ongoing.

Under the CM's Skills Development Programme, 4,000 youths would undergo IT courses. The target for completing the Social Registry Survey under the Punjab Database Authority is June.

The Air Ambulance service will be operational by June, while the Motorway Ambulance service will start by December, she added. She stated that 300 electric buses would operate in Lahore and 330 in other cities, adding that preparations for the proposal of local-level electric buses are underway.

Sports are essential for the development of a happy, healthy & vigorous society

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF SPORTS

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

PESHAWAR SPORTS COMPLEX, PESHAWAR CANTT.

PH# 091-9212767, FAX# 091-9212766

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Directorate General of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar invites sealed bids from Service Providers / Event Management Firms registered at relevant forums i.e. registrar of firms / Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan, Federal Board of Revenue and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authorities for taxes etc and having Active status on ATL, having relevant experience in providing similar nature of Services as detailed below under rule 14(2) (b) "Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding" of KPRA Rules 2014.

- Arrangements for Accommodation approximately 1600 players / officials
- Arrangements for Local Transport approximately 1600 Players / officials

Bidding documents containing bidding procedure terms, & conditions, scope of works and items specifications can be obtained from Directorate General of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on a written request and payment of Rs. 2000/- till one day before closing date during office hours.

Bids complete in all respect along with presentation must reach the office of DG Sports by **11:00 hrs on 24-05-2024**. The technical proposal will be opened on the same day at **11:30 Am** while financial proposals of only qualified bidders will be opened after technical evaluation.

Competent Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the bids as per provisions contained in Rule 47 of KPRA Rules 2014.

DIRECTOR (OPERATION)

INF(P)897/24

بے حرمتی انکی گوارا نہیں
ہونے دینا اب دوبارہ نہیں

#9MayNeverAgain

وزارت اطلاعات و نشریات
حکومت پاکستان

f t i /GovtofPakistan www.moib.gov.pk

Remodeling of the Warsak Canal System

Minister for using all resources for timely completion of project

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a recent meeting with a delegation representing the construction firm tasked with the remodeling of the Warsak Canal System, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Irrigation Minister Aqibullah Khan reiterated the utmost importance of the project and pledged to utilize all available resources to ensure its timely completion.

The delegation, comprising Project Manager Ren, Deputy Team Leader Wang, Project Director Ruhul Amin, and Deputy Project Director Muhammad Amir, engaged in a comprehensive discussion with Minister Aqibullah Khan regarding the progress and challenges associated with the remodeling of the Warsak Canal System.

Minister Aqibullah Khan emphasized the significance of the project for irrigation and clean drinking purposes within the province.

He affirmed that proactive measures are being taken to expedite the project's completion within the designated timeframe.

During the meeting, Minister reassured the delegation of his commitment by personally coordinating with relevant authorities, including the Finance Advisor, Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Finance Secretary, to ensure a continuous and uninterrupted supply of funds for the project.

The project, involves the construction of a five-kilometer long tunnel.

Once completed, the tunnel will facilitate the extraction of 700 Kiosk water, with 300 Kiosk allocated for drinking purposes and 400 Kiosk for irrigation.



PESHAWAR: An open drain outside Yakatoot area may cause any mishap and needs the attention of authorities concerned.

First International Dental Conference concluded

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The inaugural international dental conference at Khyber College of Dentistry concluded on a high note, marking a significant milestone in the field of dentistry in Pakistan.

Over the course of four days, esteemed international dentists and leading experts from across Pakistan convened to share insights and experiences, fostering collaboration and innovation in dental care.

More than 20 workshops were conducted during the conference, offering attendees valuable opportunities to delve into various aspects of dental diseases and treatment modalities.

The event culminated in a ceremony graced by distinguished guests, including Prof. Dr. Ziaul Islam, Chairman of the Policy Board of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chairman BoG Dr. Umar Ayub Khan, Dean KMC Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, Dean KCD Prof. Dr. Syed Nasir Shah, Prof. Dr. Sahibzada Mehmood Noor, and Chairman Conference Prof. Dr. Muslim Khan.

In his address, Prof. Dr. Zia-ul-Salam commended the organizers for their efforts in orchestrating a successful conference and underscored the importance of advancing medical and dental education in alignment with evolving healthcare needs.

He pledged unwavering support for the continued growth and development of Khyber College of Dentistry.

The conference was lauded for its role in not only enriching the knowledge of young doctors but also in fostering awareness of modern treatment methodologies among the wider medical community.

Speakers emphasized the pivotal role played by institutions like Khyber Medical College and Khyber College of Dentistry in producing healthcare leaders for Pakistan and beyond.

As a token of appreciation, shields and accolades were presented to participants, acknowledging their contributions to the success of the conference.

With its resounding success, the first international dental conference at Khyber College of Dentistry sets a promising precedent for future collaborations and advancements in dental care.



PESHAWAR: Trustee of Fatmid Foundation Dr Tufail Muhammad Khan presenting shield to chief guest Dr Kaleem Ullah at the end of a ceremony to mark World Thalassemia Day. — F.P. photo

First phase of Tajir Dost Scheme limited to only registration: FBR

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue, Regional Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar, Zafar Iqbal Khan has said that the first phase of the Tajir Dost Scheme is limited to only registration of new taxpayers and urged the leaders of the trading community to persuade retailers in their respective areas to registration.

He was addressing a meeting regarding the Tajir Dost Scheme here at Tax House on Wednesday. Those who attended the meeting were included Malik Mehr Elahi, president of Tanzim-e-Tajirgan, Shehzad Ahmad Siddiqui, Shaukat Ali, Shehzad Arif, Bakht Said Jan Durrani, Haji Amjad Khan, Waheed Khan, Malik Inam, Ali Jehangir Khan and others.

The Chief Commissioner said that the development of the country is linked with depositing taxes, saying it is taxes that strengthen the country on the economic front.

He said that the first phase of the scheme is limited only to the registration of new taxpayers. Therefore, the leaders of the trading community persuade the retailers for the purpose.

The scheme launched on April 1 will continue till June 30, 2024. Under the scheme the taxpayers have to get 25% concession on depositing the whole amount of the outstanding tax. On filing the tax-returns for the year 2023, the non-filers will also get 25% concession in head of monthly advance tax and 50% concession for those depositing annual advance taxes in single installment and filing of tax returns. Otherwise, those failed in registration will face legal proceedings including a cash penalty.

On this occasion, Commissioner Peshawar Zone, Dr Farooq Jamil highlighted the utilities of Tajir Dost Scheme and explained its salient features. For the guidance and facilitation of the traders, he also distributed the pamphlets of the scheme among the participants of the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Malik Mehr Elahi assured full cooperation to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). During the meeting, the Chief Commissioner and his team answered the apprehensions and questions of the participants.

The participants of the meeting termed the meeting welcoming for mutual contacts between tax authorities and taxpayers.

Federal Ombudsman team inspects services at Bacha Khan airport

PESHAWAR May 08 (APP): The Federal Ombudsman Office inspection team here Wednesday inspected various services at Bacha Khan International Airport in order to help facilitate passengers.

In line with the directions of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Regional Office, Peshawar inspected Bacha Khan International Airport here Wednesday.

The team comprising Bakhtiar Gul, Deputy Advisor, Ms. Anjum Bibi, Assistant Registrar and Muhammad Alamzaib, Private Secretary inspected domestic and international lounges of immigration, other counters and one window facilitation desk.

The team also interacted passengers about their problems and also discussed the issues with local heads and focal persons of all concerned Agencies.



PESHAWAR: A young vendor displaying colorful dolls to attract the customers at his roadside setup near Gulbahar GT Road. — APP photo

IPMG advocates women's rights and equality

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), UNWOMEN, and the Embassy of Germany in Pakistan.

These partnerships underscored the commitment to addressing the current situation concerning women's rights in Pakistan.

Lansana Woneh, the country representative for UNWOMEN, reiterated the organization's dedication to supporting Pakistani women towards economic excellence and gender equality.

Chairperson NCSW, Nilofar Bakhtiar, emphasized the significance of the meeting in advocating for the rights of women in Pakistan. She underscored the collaborative efforts aimed at fostering equality and economic opportunities for women nationwide.

Chief Guest of the event Aftab Alam, the Law Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, pledged to appoint chairperson for the commission in KP and to present the Child Marriage Restraint Act at the provincial assembly, aligning with the objectives set forth by Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar.

In her address importance of empowering women to make informed decisions about their futures. During the closing session representatives from federal and provincial women machineries, women commissions, social welfare departments, planning divisions, and women development departments engaged in constructive dialogue.

They shared achievements to date and crafted recommendations for future endeavors aimed at enhancing the welfare of women in Pakistan. The timely appointment of chairpersons for all provincial commissions.

Advocacy for the inclusion of women ministers in all cabinets to set a precedent for gender parity at the highest levels of governance was demanded collectively. A commitment to advancing the rights and opportunities for women across Pakistan.

Through collaborative efforts and sustained advocacy, stakeholders aim to create a more inclusive and equitable society where women can thrive and contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress.



PHC issues notices in suspension of Mashal Yousafzai advocacy license case

PESHAWAR (APP): A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asad Ullah on Wednesday heard a petition challenging the suspension of advocacy license of Advisor to the Chief Minister for Social Welfare, Mashal Yousafzai by the PHC Bar.

The counsel for the petitioner, Qazi Anwar told the bench that on 3rd January, police allegedly maltreated Advocate Alamzab at the gate of PHC and the same was highlighted by the petitioner Mashal on social media as a witness of the incident.

Following her post, he said, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council suspended the license of Mashal Yousafzai, adding that on a request of the petitioner, Chairman KP Bar Council reinstated her license however, the KP Bar filed an application with Pakistan Bar Council that again suspended her license.

The Chief Justice inquired whether the language used in the post was appropriate for a lawyer? Advocate Qazi Anwar replied in negative and said he had already denounced the language of the post. The bench asked Qazi Anwar that which would be the responding party in this case. In reply the counsel said both the parties should be the respondents. Later, the PHC bench issue notice to both the parties and adjourned the hearing for May 14.

Fast fashion and textile waste in Pakistan

Amna Bibi

FAST fashion companies prioritize producing and delivering inexpensive and trendy clothing quickly to meet consumer demand.

Fast fashion brands are gaining popularity and becoming a go-to choice for many people due to their greater accessibility, cheap prices, and fast-changing fashion trends.

Fast fashion has contributed to Pakistan's water pollution through its intensive use of chemicals during textile production and dyeing processes.

Textile Waste

Pakistan is one of the dumping grounds for post-consumer textile waste. In 2021, used clothing worth 46 million dollars was discarded annually from the EU.

The production of synthetic fibers commonly used in fast fashion, such as polyester, releases microplastics into water sources during washing, aggravating water pollution.

The exploitation of workers working in these factories is not just in terms of low wages, but also poor working conditions, lack of job security and increasing health concerns.

Environmental Impact

In 2019, it was estimated that the fashion industry accounts for 10% of global

greenhouse gas emissions.

It is anticipated that the global apparel industry's greenhouse gas emissions will increase by 50% by 2030.

In terms of waste alone, it is estimated that about 92 million tonnes of garments end up in landfill sites every year.

In Pakistan, it is estimated that about 87,000 tons of solid waste is generated every week, with approximately 2% consisting of textiles and leather accounting for another 1%.

The fashion industry is responsible for 20% of all industrial water pollution worldwide.

In Pakistan, fast fashion significantly contributes to water scarcity and pollution.

Solutions

Adopt sustainable fashion practices: buy second-hand, rent, or invest in quality, eco-friendly garments.

Support circular economy initiatives: recycling, upcycling, and repurposing textiles.

Encourage slow fashion: prioritize timeless designs, repair, and maintain garments.

Demand transparency and accountability from fashion brands and policymakers.

Remember, every small change counts, and collective action can drive significant positive change in the fashion industry!

Eight drug addicts transferred to rehab center

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the directives of Advisor to Chief Minister Mashal Azam Yousafzai, during the operations in Peshawar and Mardan, eight children suffering from drug addiction were transferred to rehabilitation center in Mardan.

According to details, Various actions were taken in Peshawar and Mardan on the directives of Advisor to Chief Minister for Social Welfare Mashal Azam Yousafzai. Taking Notice on video that went viral on social media, showed that four children with mother were at danger at Shadi Pir Chowk Hasht Nagri Peshawar. Advisor Mashal Azam Yousafzai has issued instructions to the concerned authorities to immediately move the children and mother to a safe place. Director Social Welfare Rafiq Mohmand along with District Officer Social Welfare Peshawar, police and related departments rescued the children and took them into custody with their mother and shifted them to a safe place.

In Mardan, District Officer Social Welfare Mardan Jamal Shah was directed to crack down on the presence of beggars and children using drugs. District Officer Social Welfare Jamal Khan along with Additional Assistant Commissioner Junaid Khalid conducted raids at different places of Mardan city at night. operation was conducted against professional beggars and drug addicts.



In brief

Solution of problems sought
F.P. Report

BUNER: An important meeting of all the stakeholders related to Buner marble industry has been held in favor of their demands under the chairmanship of Haji Syed Ahmed Shah alias Haji Changai at Anhapur Pump. The meeting has been attended by leaders of the associations of truck owners, marble factories, lease holders and lease owners. Talking to the media after the meeting, the leaders of the association have expressed serious concerns about the step-mother treatment of the marble industry by the district administration and the government and have taken a stand that the marble industry is on the verge of destruction due to this negative attitude of the administration and the government. He has further said that the installation of scales on the roads has fed up the marble industry with power outages and unnecessary fines and they cannot bear any more. They have also formed a ten-member committee which includes representatives of all stakeholders and this committee will meet the Deputy Commissioner Buner in the presence of the elected representatives of Buner district and inform the district administration of their legitimate demands so that the marble industry stakeholders do not have to bear any more losses. They said that the marble industry provides the livelihood of thousands of laborers in Buner district and according to an estimate, provides more than 50% of different types of marble to the entire country and aiding huge taxes to motherland. They demanded of the concerned quarters that importance should be given to marble industry stakeholders so that people can be provided with employment instead of extinguishing the stoves of poor workers.

Two bike lifter gangs busted

MURREE (INP): The police busted five members of two bike lifter gangs and recovered eight stolen motorcycles here on Wednesday. According to details, Murree police arrested three members of 'Fadi' bike lifter gang including Fawad, Shehryar and Saif besides recovering five stolen motorcycles from their possession. In another action, two members of 'Shani' gang including Shan and Abdul Hadi were arrested and three stolen motorcycles were recovered from their possession. The recovered motorcycles were taken into custody and the detainees were being investigated after registering separate cases against them.

Thalassemia Day observed
F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Speakers at a function held here on Wednesday have asked healthy people to donate blood and let the patients suffering from thalassemia share their joys with the rest of the world. The Al-Khidmat Foundation (AKF), a charity, arranged a seminar and awareness walk at the district headquarters hospital Timergara to observe World Thalassemia Day here on Wednesday. The event was attended by doctors, paramedics, Thalassemia patients, patients' relatives, social and political activists. The hospital medical superintendent Dr Ali Asghar, surgeon doctor Bakht Sarwar, spine orthopedic Dr Wiqar Alam, AKF district vice president Haji Majidullah, AKF Blood Society in-charge Muhammad Zeb and others spoke on the occasion.

Murad vows to fulfill all promises

F.P. Report

MIRPURKHAS: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah addressing the party workers of Mirpurkhas division said that the promises Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari made with the people of Sindh would be fulfilled in true letter and spirit.

"We are committed with you [people] and the cause is to eradicate poverty, usher in new vistas of development and create job opportunities to bring in prosperity in the province." The meeting was attended by Sindh PPP President Nisar Khuro, General Secretary Waqar Mahdi, MNAs Mir Munawar Talpur, Aftab Shah Jilani, MNAs Pir Ameer Ali Shah, Dr Mukesh Malani, MPAs, Local bodies representatives, local party leaders and workers.

Issues: The workers of Tharparkar told the chief minister that several RO plants in Thar were non-functional. The CM said that he has prepared an umbrella scheme to repair all the out-of-order RO plants functional in the larger interest of the people of Thar.

The workers pointed out that HESCO resort prolonged load shedding in the villages from Naukot to Mithi. Due to prolonged load-shedding, the villagers couldn't The load shedding they could not provide water to their cattle. The CM instructed Minister for Energy Nasir Shah to talk to the HESCO authorities to resolve the load-shedding issue of the people of Thar. "The people producing cheapest coal-fired energy for the entire Pakistan cannot be rendered with energy," he said.

The female workers of Thar told the CM that there was a single Girls college in Mithi where girls of the entire Tharparkar district were receiving education. The girls have no option but to resort to out-back daily. The CM said that the would talk to Minister Education Syed Sardar Shah to prepare a scheme for the hostel so that Girls students could avail the facility.

The party workers of Sindh complained against the completion and remod-

elling of LBOD as it was flooding the lands of Jhudo and Sindhri. It was also pointed out that Sindhri needed a drainage system so that rain and saltish water (used agricultural water) could be disposed off. The CM said that LBOD has problems for which his government has been working to resolve its issues.

The workers of Thar also proposed the construction of more check dams in Tharparkar so that water could be accumulated for agriculture. They pointed out that more than 70 check dams constructed in Thar have irrigated the water-starved lands and produced onions and other crops. These dams have proved to be a source of agro-activity and brought prosperity. The CM directed the irrigation minister to survey the area where check dams could be built.

The party workers of Mirpurkhas told the chief minister that Mirpurkhas to Mirwah road was in dilapidated condition which caused accidents daily. It is hardly a 16-km road that needs to be reconstructed on priority. The people also demanded the lining of Jamrao and Mithrao canals to save water and control water logging.

The chief minister was requested to order the desilting of Nara Canal along with removing its barriers to improve its flow so that small growers could receive water to irrigate their lands. He added that the drainage scheme of Sindhri has been worked out and would be carried out shortly with the help of the World Bank.

Murad Shah said that on the demand of the people of Mirpurkhas workers have posted a new medical superintendent in its hospital, and posted specialists so that necessary medical treatment could be provided at the local level. The chief minister addressing the party workers of three districts of Mirpurkhas Division said that he has already given proforma to the party workers to seek their suggestions for development initiatives. He announced for the establishment of Public School in Mirpurkhas.

Prisoners' Sports Festival inaugurates at Mardan Jail

Anees Takar

MARDAN: A three-day Prisoners' Sports Festival was inaugurated at Central Jail Mardan on Wednesday, under the supervision of the Provincial Government, District Administration, and Jail Administration. The festival aims to provide a platform for prisoners to engage in healthy activities and promote their physical and mental well-being.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Superintendent Jail Muhammad Arif Khan, Deputy Superintendent Jail Amjad Ali Khan, Deputy

Superintendent Jail Riaz Ahmed, Assistant Superintendent Jail Ziauddin, and District Sports Officer Saeed Akhtar.

The festival will feature various sports and games, including cricket, badminton, volleyball, tug-of-war, carrom board, chess, and sack race. The event is part of the jail administration's efforts to provide recreational facilities to prisoners and help them reform and rehabilitate.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Superintendent Jail praised the efforts of the Sports Department, District Administration, and Jail

Administration for organizing the festival. He emphasized the importance of such programs in improving the mental and physical health of prisoners and helping them become productive members of society.

The festival is being held in accordance with the 2022 prison reforms, which aim to use the prison term as a means of rehabilitation and reform, rather than just punishment. The event will continue for three days, providing a much-needed opportunity for prisoners to engage in healthy activities and showcase their talents.



NAWABSHAH: Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah and Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon exchanging views during interactive session with party workers.

Anti-merging gathering held in Jamrud

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: The tribal elders rejected the merging of the ex-tribal region into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a gathering held here at Bab-e-Khyber, Jamrud on Wednesday.

Organized under the banner of FATA Qaumi Jirga, a large number of anti-merging protesters from Waziristan to Bajaur participated in the protest moot. Addressing on the occasion speakers including chairman of FATA Qaumi Jirga Bismillah Khan Afridi and others said that on 31, May, 2018, the then government decided merging of the ex-tribal region without consent of the tribal was injustice to them.

"Merging is contrary to our will, rites and customs therefore it is unacceptable to us," they argued. The founder of the Nation granted them the right to decide their own way of future however later on the rulers negated the Qauaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah pledge and imposed

They went on that instead of providing relief, merging had multiplied miseries of tribal they added and said lack of basic facilities further deteriorated the social status of the tribesmen. They maintained that the tribesmen had rejected police and Patwar systems and the alien judiciary system, imposed on merged tribal districts, failed to provide justice to the applicants they added and said neither the government had materialized promises of provision of three percent share in nor made permanent 25000 Khasadar and Levies force personnel, they remarked.

The participants approved pro-tribal welfare decisions taken out in a three days seminar, organized in Peshawar by Mehsud tribesmen from South Waziristan. The speakers blamed that the spirit of the abolition of FCR and merging was to usurp the minerals of the former tribal agencies. They demanded the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court to form a

larger bench in the writ filed in the Court against the merger to decide it.

Iqra appointed as Kamalia AC
F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Iqra Nasir has been appointed as Assistant Commissioner of Kamalia, replacing Ghazala Yaseen Chadhar. Ghazala Yaseen Chadhar has been transferred to Tehsil Pir Mahal as Assistant Commissioner.

Iqra Nasir has assumed charge of her new assignment as Assistant Commissioner. Meanwhile, Electronic and Print Media have welcomed iqra nasir's appointed as assistant commissioner and expressed the hope that she would wholeheartedly work for welfare of people of Kamalia.



D I KHAN: KP Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur launching wheat procurement process.

RTS Commission KP arranges awareness session
F.P. Report

KOHAT: Right to Public Services (RTS) Commission Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here Wednesday arranged an awareness session regarding notified services under RTS Commission Act.

The session among others was attended by In Charge Commissioner RTS KP, Mohammad Asim Imam, Commissioner RTS, Zakir Hussain Afridi, Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir, District Police Officer Mohammad Umar Khan and concerned officials of Health, Education, Local Government, Food, Agriculture, Transport and other departments.

In Charge Commissioner RTS briefed the participants about RTS Act and its notified public services, awareness campaign and other initiatives in detail. He told that all departments and institutions are bound to provide government services to public within its notified period. He said that those who failed to deliver services in notified period would be dealt under the RTS Act. A question and answer session was also held at the end of session.

Education role vital for shaping lives
Haseena Bibi

EDUCATION and career are such important topics. They play a big role in shaping our lives. Education provides us knowledge, skills and opportunities, while our career gives us a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Education is like a superpower that equips us with knowledge and skills. It helps us to grow, think critically and open up doors of opportunity. Whether you chose to go to college, learn a trade, or pursue online courses, education is the foundation for successful career. When it comes to choosing a career its important to follow your passions and interests. Think about what makes you excited and motivated.

Explore different fields, talk to people working in those industries and gather information to make an informed decision. Once you chose a path, its time to put in the work. [Continuous learning is key. Stay updated with the latest trends and development in your field. Attend workshops, seminars or webinars to expand your knowledge and skills.

Networking is also super important. Connect with professionals in your industries, join relevant groups or associations and build relationship that can lead to new opportunities. Don't forget the importance of work-life balance. Take care of your physical and mental well-being pursue hobbies, spend time for self-care. Its all about finding that balance that allow you to thrive both personally and professionally. Remember success is not about money its about finding fulfilment and enjoying what you do. so don't be afraid to take risk and try new things. Embrace challenges and learn from failures and always remember to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Malakand traders reject imposition of taxes

Shafi Ullah

SWAT: Malakand Division Traders Federation bluntly refuted the imposition of taxes in the division, warning the government that the populace would take to the streets if such taxes were enforced. This sentiment was expressed during a Loya Jirga convened by the traders' federations of Malakand Division.

The Jirga meeting was attended by notable figures including President of Traders Federation Malakand Division, Abdul Rahim Khan; President of Hotel Association, Al-Haji Zahid Khan; President of Traders Federation Lower Dir, Anwaruddin; President of Buner District Traders Federation, Fazal Rabi; Spokesperson of Swat Traders Federation, Dr Khalid Mehmood Khalid; President of Bisham Traders Federation, Mohammad Zada; President of Bat Khela Traders Federation,

Shakirullah Khan; President of Upper Swat, Zubair Khan; President of Malakand Agency, Zawar Khan, and others.

They emphasized that Malakand is designated as a tax-free zone, and the imposition of taxes would be vehemently opposed. They highlighted the ongoing hardships faced by the people of Malakand Division, citing prevalent unemployment and soaring inflation, making it challenging for the populace to survive. They criticized the government's intent to levy taxes in an area already burdened with difficulties.

Moreover, they criticized the provincial elected representatives for their apparent indifference towards the issue, urging them to advocate for the public's interests in the provincial assembly. They emphasized that these representatives were elected by the people and should prioritize their constituents' welfare.

The statement reiterated the collective stance of various organizations and associations within the Malakand Division, including the business community, transport association, chamber of commerce association, jewellers' association, drug and chemical association, gemstone association, Gujjar Youth Forum Swat, petroleum association, and others, in vehemently opposing the imposition of taxes.

Furthermore, they issued a warning that if the government failed to address their demands, a mass protest would be staged, May 14, involving the entire populace of Malakand Division. They threatened to enforce a complete shutdown and strike until their grievances were addressed. In conclusion, they firmly rejected the imposition of taxes in Malakand Division and vowed to resist such measures vehemently.

PPP martyred leader in Dir remembered

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Pakistan Peoples' Party Lower Dir chapter held a function at Odigram to observe the 11th death anniversary of its martyred leader Zahir Shah Khan aka Bhai Jan. The Late Bhai Jan, the then district naib nazim, was martyred along with his seven comrades during an electioneering drive at Babagam area of the restive Maidan when a roadside bomb hit his convoy on May 7, 2013.

He was running a campaign for his brother, former MPA Muhammad Zamin Khan for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly seat (then PK 96). The deceased, along with some party activists, was returning home after attending a party meeting in Maidan.

The PPP workers from different parts of the district attended the function to remember their martyred leader. Former MPA and brother of the martyred Muhammad Zamin Khan, PPP district president and former provincial minister Mahmood Zeb Khan, general secretary Syed Ashfaq Bacha, secretary information Alam Zeb advocate, Naemullah, Nawabzada Ahmad Zeb and others addressed the anniversary. They paid tributes to the martyred leader and said that he had rendered his life for the sake of the party and nation.

The speakers said that Bhai Jan was killed in order to block the PPP way to the

parliament. They said the history of the PPP was full of such sacrifices and it would never compromise on democracy and rule of law in the land. The speakers said the party founder 'Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto', his daughter Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, Zahir Shah and several others sacrificed for the nation.

The speakers also rejected the imposition of taxes in Malakand region and said the PPP workers would strongly resist if the government implemented its plans to tax local residents. They said the PPP lawmakers had played a key role in developing the area while the Pakistan Tahreek Insaf lawmakers had failed to initiate any mega development project in Dir during the last 11 years.

Salaries stopped: The administration of the Timergara Medical College reportedly stopped the salaries of its 17 employees for their long absence, violation of discipline and maligning of the college officers on social media and creating groupings in employees. In a letter issued by the college administration the employees had been warned to be terminated in case of their failure to satisfy the administration.

Nanbais fines: The food inspector Shabir Ahmad on the directives of deputy commissioner Wasil Khan paid surprise visits to different markets in Talash and checked the weight and price of roti, fruits, vegeta-

bles, chicken and meat. Several shopkeepers and nanbais were fined for overcharging customers while the Talash police were asked to register cases against 10 shopkeepers. The shopkeepers were warned of action if found violating official rates and selling substandard food items.

Rally held in favour of Palestinians in Dir: The Islami Jamiat Tulba, a students' wing of Jamaat-i-Islami on Wednesday staged a protest rally at Timergara to express solidarity with Palestinians. The participants led by JI district chief Izazul Mulk came out from the Ahya ul Uloom Balambat and walked on the road to Timergara. They were carrying banners and placards and chanting slogans against the Israeli forces.

The rally was addressed by Izazul Mulk, JI general secretary Hafiz Yaqubur Rehman, IJT provincial nazim Wasim Haidar and others. They condemned the Israeli atrocities and demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. They said that so far about 35000 innocent Palestinians including children and women had been martyred by the Israeli forces in bombardments and attacks but the world power had kept silent on the matter. The IJT leaders said that their organization was organizing such rallies in other cities in favour of the Palestinians.



QUETTA: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi offering prayer at martyrs' monument during his visit to Frontier Corps Balochistan (North) Headquarters.



Rescuers bring out survivors from rubble in South Africa

CAPE TOWN (AP): Rescue teams searching for dozens of construction workers missing after an apartment complex collapsed in South Africa brought out more survivors as they entered a second night of desperate work to find anyone alive in the wreckage. At least seven people have been confirmed dead.

Authorities said 26 workers had now been rescued from the site where the five-story building collapsed while under construction in George, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) east of Cape Town on South Africa's south coast. An additional 42 people are believed to be still buried in the debris of concrete and metal scaffolding. Rescuers were hopeful of more people being found alive after saying earlier that they had made contact with at least 11 workers trapped in the rubble and were communicating with them.

It wasn't immediately clear how many of those had been rescued but five survivors were brought out, adding to the 21 found, according to a count provided by city authorities. There were 75 construction workers on the site when the building collapsed. Rescuers erupted in applause as one of the survivors was brought to the surface. They yelled at the man to "stay with us!" as he was pulled out of a gap in the wreckage and put on a stretcher. They then shouted to him, "you are outside now!" Authorities haven't given updated details on the extent of the injuries but said in the first few hours after the collapse that at least 11 of the workers rescued had severe injuries. Colin Deiner, head of the provincial Western Cape disaster management services, said the search-and-rescue operation would likely take at least three days. He said

it would take at least the rest to bring out all 11 of the survivors they had located, which included a group of four workers trapped in what was the basement of the building.

Some of those workers had limbs under concrete slabs and couldn't move, Deiner said. "We are going to give it the absolute maximum time to see how many people we can rescue," Deiner said at a news conference. "It is very, very difficult if you are working with concrete breakers and drillers close to people." "Our big concern is entrapment for many hours, when a person's body parts are compressed. So, you need to get medical help to them. We got our medics in as soon as we possibly could."

Deiner said it was possible that there were more survivors deeper in the wreckage and a process of removing layers of concrete would begin in time. More than 100 emergency services and other personnel had been working on the site in shifts and the rescue operation had passed the 30-hour mark since the building collapsed.

Rescuers were using sniffer dogs to try to locate workers. Large cranes and other heavy lifting equipment were brought in to help and tall spotlights were erected to allow the rescuers to work in the dark. Deiner said a critical part of the rescue operation came when they had ordered everyone to remain quiet and shut off machinery so they could listen for any survivors. That's when they located some of them, he said. "We were actually hearing people through the rubble," Deiner said.

Several local hospitals were making space in their trauma units in anticipation that more people might be brought out alive. More than 50

emergency responders had also been brought in from other towns and cities to help, including a specialized team that deals with rescue operations in collapsed structures. Family and friends of the workers had gathered at the nearby municipal offices and were being supported by social workers, the George municipality said. Authorities were starting investigations into what caused the tragedy, and a criminal case was opened by police, but there was no immediate information on why the building collapsed. CCTV footage from a nearby home showed the concrete structure and metal scaffolding suddenly collapsing, causing a plume of dust to rise over the neighborhood. People came streaming out of other buildings after the collapse, with some of them screaming and shouting.

Alan Winde, the premier of the Western Cape province, said there would be investigations by both the provincial government and the police. Authorities said that under city law the private construction company's engineers were responsible for the safety of the building site until its completion, when it would be handed over to the city to check and clear. Winde said the priority was the rescue effort and investigations would unfold after that.

"At the moment, officials are focused on saving lives. This is our top priority at this stage," Winde said. The national government was being briefed on the rescue operation, Winde said. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa released a statement offering his condolences to families of the victims and also called for investigations into the cause of the collapse.

Belarus launches nuclear drills

MINSK (AP): Belarus launched drills involving missiles and warplanes capable of carrying tactical nuclear weapons, which close ally Russia has deployed there amid tensions with the West over Ukraine.

The Belarusian maneuvers began a day after Russia announced plans to hold similar drills simulating the use of battlefield nuclear weapons in what it cast as a response to statements by Western officials signaling possibly deeper involvement in the war in Ukraine. It was the first time such an exercise had been publicly announced by Moscow. Belarus' Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin said a unit of Iskander short-range missiles and a squadron of Su-25 fighter jets will take part in the drills.

The maneuvers, held jointly with Russia, began as Russian President Vladimir Putin was inaugurated to a fifth term, vowing to ensure Russia's security. Last year, Russia moved some of its tactical nuclear weapons into Belarus, which also borders Ukraine and NATO members Poland, Latvia and Lithuania. Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko has relied on close ties with Russia and provided his country as a staging ground for the war in Ukraine.

Moscow has emphasized that the tactical nuclear weapons deployed to Belarus remain under Russian military control. Unlike nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles that can destroy entire cities, tactical nuclear weapons intended for use against troops on the battlefield are less powerful. Such weapons include aerial bombs, warheads for short-range missiles and artillery munitions.

The deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus, which has a 1,084-kilometer (673-mile) border with Ukraine, would allow Russian aircraft and missiles to reach potential targets there more easily and quickly if Moscow decides to use them. It also extends Russia's capability to target several NATO allies in Eastern and Central Europe. Both Putin and Lukashenko said that the Russian nuclear weapons' deployment to Belarus was intended to counter perceived Western threats. Lukashenko cast the drills as "exclusively defensive," arguing that the Russian nuclear weapons are intended to deter any potential aggression against Belarus.

Malawi VP graft charges dropped

LILONGWE (BBC): A Malawian court has dropped corruption charges against Vice-President Saulos Chilima after the state prosecutor filed a notice for the case to be discontinued. No reasons were given for the decision.

Dr Chilima was arrested in November 2022 on allegations that he accepted money in exchange for awarding government contracts. He denied the charges. The latest move has provoked questions over the government's handling of prosecutions for alleged corruption. The vice-president's arrest followed accusations he had received money to influence the awarding of contracts to Xaviar Ltd and Malachitte FZE, two companies linked to British businessman Zuneeth Sattar. Mr Sattar also denied any wrongdoing.

The vice-president has made several court appearances since his arrest, although the actual trial never commenced. Presiding judge Redson Kapindu ordered his immediate discharge citing a filing from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) made of a "discontinuance of charges against the accused person in respect of three counts of corrupt transactions". The DPP now has 10 days to formally inform parliament of the reasons that led to the decision to drop the charges against the vice-president, as required by the constitution, the judge said. Dr Chilima's lawyer, Khumbo Soko, expressed relief over the decision to drop the charges.

Xi gets red-carpet welcome in Serbia



BELGRADE (BBC): The red flags start at Belgrade's Nikola Tesla Airport and run all the way along the motorway into the centre of Serbia's capital. This is Serbia's way of showing that it is proud of its "ironclad friendship" with China - and welcoming Xi Jinping to Belgrade.

At the Western City Gate, more commonly known as the Genex Tower, one entire tower is draped in China's national colours. Just for good measure, there is a billboard for Hisense, the Chinese home appliances manufacturer which opened a refrigerator factory in Valjevo, western Serbia, last year. In some parts of Europe, the Chinese president's itinerary might have raised eyebrows. After all, it is not often that Serbia finds itself as part of a three-stop tour by an international leader of such stature. But Serbia has been deepening its relationship with China in recent years, even as it continues with negotiations to join the European Union.

Mr Xi is likely to use his trip to highlight his criticisms of Nato. His visit coincides with the 25th anniversary of the US airstrikes on China's embassy in Belgrade. And in an editorial for the Serbian newspaper, Politika, the president made it clear that feelings over that incident still run high. "We should never forget," he wrote. "The Chinese people cherish peace, but we will never allow such tragic history to repeat itself." That kind of rhetoric resonates in Serbia, where the vast majority of people oppose Nato membership. That is a key factor in why this stop on Mr Xi's European tour makes perfect sense. Commercial connections are also a factor. The two countries signed a free trade agreement last year, building on a "comprehensive strategic partnership" in 2016 - the year of Mr Xi's previous visit to Serbia. China now claims to be the largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) in Serbia. Its ambassador, Li Ming, says that Hisense, along with mining company Zijin and tyre manufacturer Linglong, provide 20,000. UN trade figures actually put China in fifth place on the foreign direct investment list, behind Germany, Italy, the

US and Russia. Nonetheless, the Chinese investments are eye-catching - and only likely to increase. Serbia has just taken delivery of its first Chinese electric high-speed trains. They will eventually run alongside Swiss-made rolling stock on the Belgrade-Budapest railway, which is being reconstructed with Chinese expertise and finance.

And that is just the start. Serbia's infrastructure minister, Goran Vesic, says Chinese partners will work on other infrastructure, including roads, bridges, tunnels and sewage. "There is really a lot of room for co-operation with Chinese companies," he told Serbia's national broadcaster, RTS. No wonder Serbia's president, Aleksandar Vucic, is planning to personally serve the finest wines his country has to offer to his Chinese counterpart during a banquet in Mr Xi's honour. Noting that within five years Serbian wine will face no import tariffs in China, Mr Vucic told China Central Television that Serbian wines were "not as expensive as [those] in France" and that he believed Mr Xi was "going to like" his selections. This was perhaps a gentle dig at Emmanuel Macron, who hosted Mr Xi for the first stop on his European trip. The French president's offering was a bottle of Rémy Martin Louis XIII cognac, which would cost the best part of 5,000 in Belgrade. A trip to the Pyrenees was also included in the charm offensive - to sweeten pleas by Mr Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen for Mr Xi to ensure more balanced trade with Europe and influence Russia's President Vladimir Putin to end the war in Ukraine. After Belgrade, the next stop for China's president will be Budapest, where he will meet his strongest ally among the leaders of EU member states, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Chinese investments are also a strong factor there - with a factory for electric car giant BYD among the projects that buttress Mr Orban's resistance to the EU consensus on everything from migration to providing arms to Ukraine.

UN says 3m forced to flee in Myanmar conflict

NEW YORK: The number of people in Myanmar forced from their homes by conflict now exceeds more than 3 million in what the United Nations has described as a "bleak milestone" for the country.

The UN said the number displaced had surged by 50 percent in the last six months as fighting escalated between the military and armed groups trying to remove the generals who seized power in a coup in February 2021. "Myanmar has this week marked a bleak milestone with more than 3 million civilians now displaced nationwide amid intensifying conflict," the office of the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Myanmar said in a statement.

"Myanmar stands at the precipice in 2024 with a deepening humanitarian crisis that has spiraled since the military takeover in February 2021 and the consequent conflicts in many parts of the country, driving record numbers of people to abandon their homes seeking safety."

Of the 3 million internally displaced people, more than 90 percent fled as a result of the conflict triggered by the coup, the UN added. About half of the displaced are in the north-western regions of Chin, Magway and Sagaing, with more than 900,000 in the southeast. About 356,000 people live in the western state of Rakhine where a brutal military crackdown in 2017 prompted more than 750,000 mostly Muslim Rohingya to flee into neighbouring Bangladesh. Myanmar was plunged into crisis when Senior General Min Aung Hlaing seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, which led to mass protests that evolved into an armed uprising when the military responded with brutal force.

Fighting has intensified since the end of October last year when ethnic armed groups allied with anti-coup fighters launched a major offensive in northern Shan and western Rakhine states overrunning dozens of military outposts and taking control of several key towns near the border with China. In recent weeks, the military has also been battling with ethnic Karen groups for control of Myawaddy, a major trade hub on the border with Thailand. The UN said the deepening conflict meant that some 18.6 million people in Myanmar were now in need of humanitarian assistance, 1 million more than in 2023. But it said efforts to reach those in need were being hampered by "gross underfunding". It said it had so far received less than 5 percent of the funds it needed for humanitarian operations. "With cyclone season fast approaching, additional resources are needed now to protect the most vulnerable and save lives," the statement said. Last year, UN human rights chief Volker Turk accused the military of preventing life-saving humanitarian aid from reaching people in need by creating a web of legal, bureaucratic and financial hurdles. — Aljazeera

Rainfall allows Catalonia to ease water restrictions

BARCELONA (AP): Spain's Catalonia region will ease restrictions on water use for a wide area including Barcelona after recent rainfall palliated a prolonged drought, regional authorities said. Catalonia declared a drought emergency in February when its reservoirs fell under 16% capacity after nearly three years of below-average rainfall. But steady rain in recent weeks has boosted reserves to nearly 25%. Spain's reservoirs overall are at 66% full.

The loosened restrictions mean that some 6 million people will now see individual use limits increased from 200 to 230 liters per day (53 to 61 gallons). Catalonia's water agency says the average resident uses 116 liters (30 gallons) per day at home. Famers will only have to reduce their average uses by 40%, instead of 80%, while industrial users will only have to save 15% compared to 25%. David Mascort, who heads Catalonia's environmental authority, said that plans were still intact to install a floating desalination plant off Barcelona's coast in October. He said that Catalonia's reserves for the areas fed by the Ter and Llobregat rivers were now near the same level as the previous year. "We are in the same situation as last year, but this time, we are better prepared."

Kim family's master propagandist dies at 94

SEOUL (BBC): North Korea's former propaganda master Kim Ki Nam has died, state media said on Wednesday. He was 94. He died due to old age and "multiple organ dysfunction" for which he had been receiving treatment since 2022, the official KCNA said. He had spent decades leading propaganda efforts in the totalitarian state, including building a personality cult around the ruling Kim dynasty.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attended his funeral early on Wednesday morning and paid tribute to the "veteran revolutionary who had remained boundlessly loyal" to the regime, KCNA said. South Korea's Yonhap news agency likened him to Nazi Germany's propaganda boss Joseph Goebbels, widely known for his mantra "repeat a lie often enough and it becomes the truth".

Kim Ki Nam had no blood relations with the ruling patriarchy despite sharing the family name that is among the most common in North and South Korea. He was appointed deputy director of Pyongyang's Propaganda and Agitation Department in 1966, where he worked closely with Kim Jong Il, the predecessor and father of current leader Kim Jong Un. Kim Ki Nam later rose to lead the department. Kim Ki Nam reportedly had a close relationship with Kim Jong Il, with several media reports describing them as "drinking buddies". In the 1970s, he was put in charge of the state mouthpiece, Rodong Sinmun newspaper. He later led initiatives to establish the role of Kim Il Sung - widely seen as North Korea's founding father - in the country's history, and to support Kim Jong Il's succession of the leadership, according to North Korea Leadership Watch, a site on Pyongyang's political culture. Kim Ki Nam is one of few North Korean officials to have visited the South, leading a delegation to attend the funeral of former South Korean president Kim Dae-jung in 2009. For decades, he also served as the key author of the state's political slogans and wielded great influence over its

media and publishing operations, and even in the fine arts. One example of how the propaganda machine kicked into action was after the sudden death of Kim Jong Il in 2011.

This hastened the ascent of his son, Kim Jong Un, as the country's leader. The young Kim was believed to be just in his 20s at that time. "No force on earth can check the revolutionary advance of our party, army and people under the wise leadership of Kim Jong Un," read one of the first KCNA reports after Kim Jong Il's death. "Under the leadership of Kim Jong Un we should turn our sorrow into strength and courage and overcome the present difficulties," the report said. In 2015, images on state media showed the tall, bespectacled Kim Ki Nam - in his 80s at that time - standing among a group of military officials and taking notes while Kim Jong Un spoke. He retired in the late 2010s, passing on his role to Kim Jong Un's sister Kim Yo Jong, but has continued to appear at public events - a sign that he remained on good terms with the regime. "Kim Jong Un kept Kim Ki Nam in key propaganda positions for years, indicating that he, like his father, trusted and relied on him," said Rachel Lee, a Senior Fellow at the US-based think tank 38 North Program. Ms Lee added that the Rodong Sinmun dedicated its entire frontpage on Wednesday to Kim Ki Nam's death and details of his funeral and this "speaks to the respect accorded to him".

Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said Kim Ki Nam's death marks "the end of an era" for North Korean propaganda. "This is someone who sought to glorify the Pyongyang regime in a way to appeal across and beyond the Korean Peninsula," he said. The state's propaganda machine has since departed from the previous generation's spin on pan-Korean nationalism, Prof Easley said. "Now, Kim Jong Un demonizes South Koreans and heavily relies on nuclear weapons for political legitimacy," he said.

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

Hamas proposal raises cease-fire hopes

The Israeli army has seized and closed the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, which has functioned as the main route for humanitarian aid to enter the Palestinian enclave during the conflict. That means Gaza has been effectively cut off from humanitarian aid since Tuesday.

The latest military offensive seems to be misleading Israel into believing that the deeper it pushes into the Palestinian enclave the more initiative it can gain in the resumed negotiations with Hamas.

At the ongoing talks among Hamas, Israel, the United States, Egypt and Qatar resumed on Wednesday, the Hamas delegation presented a newly revised proposal. That prompted White House spokesperson John Kirby to say that the remaining gaps can "absolutely be closed".

This is arguably the first time since the outbreak of the Gaza conflict on Oct 7 that the US side has expressed optimism about the possibility of a cease-fire being agreed. Given the special role the US assumes in the conflict — US military aid is a must for Israel to sustain its offensive — the optimism Washington has expressed offers reason to hope that a cease-fire agreement will finally be achieved.

Although the details of the new proposal of Hamas remain unknown, the militant group has apparently made marked concessions in it, showing its sincerity for peace. As its spokesperson said, "the ball is now in Benjamin Netanyahu's court" and the US has no reason not to exert greater pressure on its ally to bring the war to an end.

But Tel Aviv must realize that it is not its gains on the battlefield that has prompted Hamas to revise its cease-fire proposal but the joint efforts of the international community, including those that are not directly taking part in the peace talks in Cairo, such as China and France.

It should also note that Hamas official Osama Hamdan, speaking to reporters in Beirut on Tuesday, warned that if Israel's military aggression continued in Rafah, there would be no cease-fire agreement.

Since Hamas has nowhere to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, the ongoing peace talks in Cairo might be the last chance for peace. A chance that will be squandered if Israel chooses to reach for a yard after taking an inch, and which will result in a humanitarian tragedy that Israel will find hard to live down. Tel Aviv should discard any notion it may have that by intensifying its attacks on Rafah, it can force Hamas to make more concessions. Doing so would only distance it further from the international community, most of whose members already find Israel's military campaign in Gaza beyond the pale.

Nor should Tel Aviv dismiss the fact that Hamas' regional allies will not sit idle in the face of Israel continuing to squeeze the space for the Palestinians in Rafah.

Since Israel now technically controls all the major channels by which aid can enter Gaza, how it will cater to the needs of the Palestinian civilians besieged in the enclave will also be a test of Tel Aviv's as well as Washington's moral compass. Israel should do everything possible to avoid an even worse humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip.

War and violence are not the way to solve what is essentially a political problem. They will never bring true security, and will only deepen hatred. The immediate priority is to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 2728, realize a cease-fire at once, ensure humanitarian relief, and return to the right track of seeking a political settlement to the Palestinian question on the basis of the two-state solution. That is the only way to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Israeli and Palestinian people for lasting peace and security.

Manila kidding itself

TENSIONS have risen markedly in the South China Sea recently due to the Philippines repeatedly taking provocative actions — such as sending ships to intrude into China's territorial waters — to challenge China's sovereignty and maritime interests there.

In the latest incident, Manila sent a coast guard ship and a government vessel into the waters adjacent to China's Huangyan Island on April 30 in a premeditated act of provocation, only for the two boats to be expelled by the China Coast Guard, which took professional control measures such as using water cannons to block their illegal entry.

Manila has previously made similar confrontational moves, dispatching vessels to send construction materials to the old warship it illegally grounded on China's Ren'ai Reef in 1999, in an effort to reinforce the ship so as to achieve permanent occupation of the Chinese reef.

Yet rather than learning a lesson from its repeated futile attempts to encroach on China's territories, the Philippines has tried to shift the blame onto China, by summoning a senior Chinese envoy in Manila last Thursday to protest what it claims are China's "aggressive actions".

And in order to fool the international community into believing that the Philippines is not a troublemaker, its top leader has claimed that the last thing the country wants to do is to raise tensions in the region.

Yet what his government has been doing belies his words. The main cause of the current tensions between the two countries in the South China Sea is that the Ferdinand Marcos Jr government, encouraged by Washington, has reneged on the common understanding and arrangements it reached with Beijing to manage differences, prevent conflict and build trust. It is the Philippines going back on the previous "gentlemen's agreement", internal understanding and the agreed "new model" between the two sides — in an attempt to change the status quo — that has created troubles and sparked the current tensions.

This is because the Philippines has accepted the role of being a pawn in the United States' geopolitical game in the "Indo-Pacific" which is aimed at containing China.

On Monday, thousands of US and Philippine troops conducted massive war games off the Philippines' northern coast, which only serves to escalate tensions in the region and highlight its provocative intentions. The drills came shortly after US, Australian, Japanese and Philippine troops held joint maritime exercise in the South China Sea in early April.

For its own good and for peace and stability in the region, Manila should mend its way by adhering to the basic norms of international exchanges, and honoring its commitments on dealing with territorial disputes with China.

It is delusional for the Philippines to believe that the auspices of the US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty mean it can make some territorial gains at China's expense.

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.



May 9 Mayhem: Never Again!

Palwasha Aftab

On May 9, 2023, a series of disturbing incidents unfolded following the arrest of Imran Khan. Mobs comprising PTI workers, deliberately and maliciously vandalized and set fire to public and military properties, drawing comparisons with the infamous Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

To put it into perspective, here is a list of events indicating that the PTI, like TTP, is the enemy of the Army and the country. On October 10, 2009, TTP attacked GHQ, likewise on May 9, 2023, PTI assailants attacked the bedrock of Pakistan's national security - the Headquarters of the Pakistan Army. In its opposition to education and development, TTP has attacked several schools, including APS. Similarly, PTI's angry mob torched FC Public School in district Dir, unmasking its aversion to cradles of knowledge and critical thinking.

TTP has made a terrorist attack on the ISI office; PTI made a similar attempt. While TTP is known for its ambush on vehicles of the security personnel, PTI did the same on May 9.

TTP has attacked army cantonments and garrisons, same way, PTI's rioters targeted army regiments like the Punjab Regiment Center Mardan and Baloch Regiment Center Abbottabad.

In 2013, terrorists attacked the residence of the Father of the Nation in Ziarat, Balochistan; a few years later, in May 2023, PTI affiliated traitors attacked the Jinnah House (currently Corps Commander House) in Lahore under the patronage of their party's senior leader, Yasmin Rashid.

While it is in TTP's playbook to ravage historical buildings and monuments, the same course of

action was followed by the PTI miscreants as they attacked the historic Bala Hisar and Chakdara forts. TTP is dismissive of the innumerable sacrifices rendered by the security forces for the nation, so is PTI and its cults, who in their hatred for Army, shamelessly desecrated memorials of Pakistan's revered military officer, Captain Karnal Sher Khan, among other national heroes.

TTP has been hitting government buildings, and so did Imran Khan's tsunami, which joined the ranks of TTP by ransacking and burning government buildings, the most tragic of which was the attack on Radio Pakistan.

Finally, just like TTP's terrorist activities are diametrically opposed to the principles of Islamic Shariah, which they so ostensibly endorse and claim to enforce; in the same manner, Imran Khan's "Riyasat-e-Madina" rhetoric contradicts his politics of hate and violence.

Statement issued by Commander Sirbukaf Mohmand of banned outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), acknowledging participation of TTP men in attacks on state installations along with PTI's violent protesters, reveals how the lines between TTP and PTI have alarmingly gotten blurred.

Clearly, the arrested people involved in the incidents of May 9, 2023, committed offenses in the prohibited military areas. Hence, their trial under the Pakistan Army Act and Official Secrets Act in military courts is indisputable.

While a majority of the nation supports trying May 9 miscreants in military courts, the legitimacy of transferring PTI culprits from civil to military courts for trials has been questioned on allegations

of running counter to international and domestic laws.

To address these concerns, it is essential to understand the legal framework underpinning military courts. Military courts in Pakistan were incorporated into the national legal system through amendments to the Army Act and the constitution in 1973. In the past, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has upheld the jurisdiction of military courts to try and sentence individuals for offenses under the Army Act.

Furthermore, military courts follow a legal procedure that safeguards the rights of the accused in line with the Constitution, ensuring fairness throughout the trial process. This includes "provisions for arrest, counsel access, protection against double jeopardy, presentation of charges, provision of evidence, right to a fair hearing, recording of evidence, right to appeal, judicial review and the right to file a mercy petition".

Likewise, the legal process is consistent with Pakistan's international human rights obligations and international laws, namely: the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Also, the military trial of civilians is not an unusual occurrence, but a well-established practice in both developing and developed nations. States which have tried their civilians in military courts include: United States, Turkey, India, Egypt, Russia, Columbia, South Korea, Bangladesh, Iran, Israel, Syria, Saudi Arabia, North Korea, China, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Ukraine, Algeria, Nigeria, Venezuela, Brazil,

Mexico, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Zimbabwe and Uganda.

What we saw on May 9, 2023, was the ultimate peak of political and social radicalization masterminded by PTI through its brainwashing of the society against the state of Pakistan. No wonder, the PTI officials, including the founding chairman of PTI, in their bid to evade accountability and consequences for their actions, instantly distanced themselves from involvement in May 9 violence, but leaked audio conversations, social media posts and CCTV footage have proved otherwise.

In such a case, if the state follows the "pardon" policy, it will systematically encourage recurrence of events like the May 9 mayhem.

A decisive action against those responsible for the May 9 tragedy is therefore necessary to establish deterrence among potential law breakers in future. Moreover, it is incumbent upon the state to investigate whether such extreme anti-state indoctrination was done to get merely political goals or some external forces were also behind this terrible design to disintegrate Pakistan.

The people of Pakistan must understand that no external power can succeed in subduing Pakistan in the presence of its powerful and highly professional military, which, itself, draws its strength from the masses of Pakistan.

The foes of Pakistan, therefore, have turned to devastate Pakistan by investing in certain political and extremist outfits of the country who can sow hatred among the masses for its military based on disinformation. In this context, the nation is advised not to fall prey to such an anti-Pakistan agenda.

How the Gaza war is derailing peace efforts in the wider region

Dr. Abdel Aziz

In addition to its devastating direct effects, Israel's war on Gaza has delayed if not derailed several key projects aimed at reshaping the region by restoring peace and security. Many thought that those grand visions of historical reconciliation and cooperation would lead to greater prosperity in this region and beyond.

The first casualty has been the peace process to tackle the Arab-Israeli conflict. Last September, at the opening of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, Saudi Arabia launched a new effort, in coordination with the Arab League, the EU and others, to rejuvenate the Arab Peace Initiative of March 2002 by offering a grand bargain in exchange for its withdrawal from occupied territory.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Iran's hard-liners did not hide their opposition to the bargain. The former wanted normalization without ceding territory and the latter wanted Israel's withdrawal without normalization, but almost everyone else agreed with the proposition. Before Oct. 7, the Saudi initiative was gaining momentum as the US and others made considerable efforts in that direction.

The prospect of Arab-Israel reconciliation frightened Iran's hard-liners for two reasons. First, advocacy for maximalist positions on Palestine is a key element of Iran's revolutionary foreign policy, which opposes the two-state solution and excludes any reconciliation between Israel and the Palestinians. Second, they feared that the US would use the grand bargain to consolidate forces opposed to Iran in the region. At the same time, Israeli extremists, including Netanyahu, were opposed to any solution that could lead to a Palestinian state, which is the key component of the Arab Peace Initiative and the revived peace efforts.

The Gaza war provided a way out for both. Iran has opportunistically used the war to dust up its revolutionary credentials. Iran's affiliates — Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen and some Iraqi militias — have engaged in quixotic efforts to show support for Palestinian factions in Gaza in an attempt to exploit the conflict for political gain for Tehran.

At the same time, the war, especially the Hamas attack on Oct. 7, gave Netanyahu a pretext to dig in his heels and again reject the idea of a Palestinian state. There was also another reconciliation project, between Iran and its neighbors. The March 2022 agreement signed in Beijing between Saudi Arabia and Iran led to some initial positive results, including the reopening of embassies and exchange of ambassadors between Riyadh and Tehran.

It was followed by a flurry of high-level meetings and ironing out of some bilateral differences. There were genuine efforts to help de-escalate regional conflicts and extend the reconciliation beyond bilateral issues. Israel did not hide its anxiety regarding any effort to integrate Iran into the region and normalize rela-

tions with it. Netanyahu has made a career of portraying Iran as the source of all evil.

The Gaza war has slowed that process too. Much as in 2011, when Iran's hard-liners exploited the so-called Arab Spring protests to enhance their regional influence, successfully at times, today they appear to be prioritizing attempts to take advantage of the conflict to improve their bargaining position.

Delayed reconciliation with Iran is not only postponing its integration in the Gulf region, but is also casting doubts on other projects. For example, Gulf Cooperation Council-Central Asia integration, which started two years ago, is moving slowly now because of the issues related to Iran, which sits right in the middle between these two regions. Iran could become an integral part of this project if there was genuine reconciliation with its neighbors.

Peace in Yemen has been another casualty. Before the war in Gaza, Yemeni factions were moving toward a peace process, led by the UN and supported by Saudi Arabia and Oman. Since the war started, the Houthis have dragged their feet in responding to the UN roadmap and instead started a war against international shipping in the Red Sea. There is speculation that they believe the war has raised their stature within Yemen and improved their bargaining position to get a better deal than the one offered by the UN.

Syria is another casualty. Last year, Syria was readmitted to the Arab League under certain conditions as spelled out in the Amman Communiqué. It was a "step-for-step" formula agreed to by the foreign ministers of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria. Among the conditions were movement in good faith toward reaching a UN-led political solution in Syria, according to UN Security Council Resolution 2254, and combating drug trafficking from Syria. The war in Gaza has clouded the atmosphere and little progress has been made since then. Drug traffickers operating from Syrian territory have become more brazen and violent and the peace process has been on hold.

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, which was announced last year to connect India and Europe, via the Gulf, through marine routes and railroads, has also suffered. The US, Saudi Arabia and others announced during the G20 meeting in New Delhi significant financial pledges to start this ambitious project, which Washington hoped would not only bring economic benefits but would also help integrate these regions politically and would have a positive effect on the Middle East process of peace and reconciliation.

All these grand ideas are now either on hold or moving more slowly than anticipated due to the war in Gaza. The sooner this war is brought to a conclusion, the sooner they can materialize. If not, the extremists will win and drag this region into the abyss.

Europe and Saudi Arabia are partners for a prosperous future

Christophe Farnaud

On Thursday, as on May 9 every year, we celebrate Europe Day.

On this day in 1950, the Schuman Declaration laid the foundations for today's EU. Initially an initiative to combine European economies in order to prevent war, it evolved into one of the most successful integration projects in history. The 27 member states of the EU share a clear vision of promoting peace, stability and prosperity within and beyond our borders. This implies that we defend and promote our values and our interests in accordance with international law. It is a constantly renewed effort and we are currently adjusting again to the new and dangerous realities of the world.

This means that we need partners. No country, no power can face today's challenges alone. Against this backdrop, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as an organization and as individual countries, are strategic partners for Europe, with whom a new

dynamic has been launched.

This is particularly true about Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom, through the implementation of Vision 2030, is going through a spectacular process of transformation in all fields that strengthens its role, regionally and globally. Riyadh today is an exciting place to live and work. Every day brings new achievements, new projects, something new to discover. In support of its vision, Saudi Arabia has pursued a foreign policy aimed at de-escalation, the easing of tensions and the strengthening of peace in the region.

The EU, already a major partner of Saudi Arabia, supports these changes. As a reflection of this new reality, the partnership between Saudi Arabia and the EU is increasingly close, solid and productive. The past year saw an unprecedented number of high-level visits from Europe to Saudi Arabia and vice versa. Beyond the regular visits of the EU Special

Representative for the Gulf Luigi Di Maio, a number of EU commissioners visited the Kingdom to discuss cooperation in energy and trade, some of them even twice. Josep Borrell, the high representative for foreign affairs and security policy and vice president of the European Commission, visited Riyadh in January and again last week, on the occasion of the World Economic Forum special session — an event that provided further evidence of how Riyadh has become an important focal point for international meetings.

In the context of growing international tensions, this partnership has a political and security dimension. In January, the EU and the GCC held their first Regional Security Dialogue in Riyadh, followed by a High-Level Forum on Regional Security and Cooperation at ministerial level last month in Luxembourg. These

exchanges, reflecting common views and interests for the most part, are indispensable. We must work together to build lasting solutions.

This is true about the terrible situation in Gaza. Beyond urgent humanitarian measures — in total, since October, the EU and its member states have mobilized more than 690 million (\$742 million) in assistance to the Palestinian people — our priorities remain the establishment of a ceasefire and the release of hostages, but also to avoid regional escalation and to work together toward a sustainable solution, the two-state solution.

This is also true of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Europe's support to Kyiv is constant. We appreciate the diplomatic efforts of Saudi Arabia.

More broadly, the relations remain dynamic in all fields. Just a few weeks ago, the European

Commission updated the rules on Schengen visas for Saudi, Omani and Bahraini nationals, who are now able to acquire a five-year multiple-entry visa with their first application.

This important measure will make it easier for citizens of the GCC countries to visit Europe, which is a destination they know well. At the same time, European citizens are more and more interested in visiting Saudi Arabia and in experiencing its great hospitality. We will continue working to achieve further easing of the travel between our countries.

In the economic and trade arena, significant accomplishments in recent months emphasize the strength of the exchanges. In October, the first EU-KSA Investment Forum was held in Riyadh, with about 1,500 registered companies. This week, we launched the European Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia, another milestone in our economic relations. This chamber, the first in the Gulf, is

from companies, for companies. It will contribute to strengthening the voice of our companies in Saudi Arabia in order to build new partnerships with our Saudi friends.

European companies have already built a strong foundation in the Kingdom. We are collectively the second most important trading partner of Saudi Arabia and the first foreign investor. More than 1,300 companies from the EU have invested in the Kingdom. However, the economic dynamics in the Kingdom and in Europe, as well as our common global challenges, like climate change and a just energy transition, offer much room for further collaboration at both the public and private levels.

I also want to highlight our excellent cooperation in the field of higher education. Investing in the youth is the most promising way of promoting our relations. We are also proud to develop our relations with Saudi universities. I hope the Erasmus+

program, which is accessible to Saudi universities, will facilitate more exchanges of students.

To strengthen people-to-people contacts and mutual understanding, the EU has launched several events, such as the European Film Festival, the European Food Festival, the Night of European Languages and the European Week of Music. On Thursday, we are also launching Europe Month, a series of cultural events to encourage further cultural exchanges between Europeans and Saudis. Even in sports, the relations are stronger than many think, from famous European football players playing here to their European coaches and the Dakar Rally.

More cooperation will allow us — the EU, Saudi Arabia and the GCC — to strengthen our accomplishments by making us more resilient and stronger. Together, we will be able to do more for a future of peace and prosperity.

Can Modi finally win over the southern states and reshape India’s electoral map?

Hannah Ellis-Petersen

UNDER Tamil Nadu’s scorching midday sun, K Annamalai waved at the crowd gathered around his campaign bus. Some people stretched their babies upwards to be touched by him, others threw flower petals and passed gifts through the window. A sea of mobile phones vied for space as people tried to squeeze the candidate into their selfies.

Here in Coimbatore, an industrial city in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Narendra Modi’s Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) has been working overtime. Over months, thousands of volunteers and party workers have taken to the streets – backed hundreds of locally-targeted WhatsApp groups and a highly-organised social media campaign across YouTube, Facebook and Instagram – whipping up a frenzy around Annamalai, one of the BJP’s most talked-about candidates.

In the build up to India’s mammoth six-week election, which began in April and will continue till 4 June, the BJP has been focusing its efficient campaign machinery, backed by vast financial resources, on winning south Indian constituencies like Coimbatore.

Making a breakthrough into India’s southern states, among the richest and most well-educated in the country, is crucial to Modi’s ambitions to gain an even larger parliamentary majority in this election and extend the reach of the BJP to every corner of the country. However, it will be no easy feat for his party.

Unlike across north India, where the BJP’s dominance is now largely assured, southern states such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala have continued to push back against Modi and the Hindu nationalist narrative of his party. The BJP has never won a seat in Kerala, and it won no seats in Tamil Nadu in the last election, in 2019.

The state’s chief ministers have also emerged as some of Modi’s fiercest critics and accused the BJP of depriving them of tax income and investment to punish and undermine their governments.

Many fear that the gulf between India’s north and south could worsen after 2026, when India’s electoral map is due to be redrawn according to population growth. India’s poorer, more populous north – the stronghold of the BJP – is likely to gain parliamentary seats while southern states, which successfully brought down their populations years ago though progres-

sive welfare and education policies, are likely to lose significant parliamentary representation.

Tamil Nadu’s chief minister M K Stalin recently described it as a “sword of Damocles” hanging over the state and has vowed to fight any seat losses.

“The south has always been a tough nut for the BJP to crack because they are primarily viewed as a north Indian, Hindi-speaking party that does not represent regional southern interests, particularly around language and culture,” said Milan Vaishnav, director of the South Asia program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

But this time round, predicted Vaishnav, the BJP could make “significant inroads” in these states, “perhaps even winning a fair number of seats in Tamil Nadu”. He added: “That would be a huge breakthrough for the BJP and could re-shape India’s electoral map in ways nobody thought possible five years ago.”

Resistance to the right-wing, Hindu-first politics of the BJP has historically run deep in the southern tip of India. In Tamil Nadu, India’s third richest state, the dominant political ideology for over half a century has been Dravidian nationalism, a left-wing, social equality movement. It began in opposition to upper caste hierarchy and the imposition of north Indian languages such as Hindi and is rooted in protecting the Tamil linguistic and cultural identity. Only Dravidian parties have governed the state since the 1960s.

In Kerala, the first place in the world to democratically elect a communist government in the 1957, leftist politics has also continued to dominate for decades. The state prides itself for having the highest literacy rate in south Asia, and social cohesion between Hindus and the sizeable Muslim and Christian minorities who have lived there for centuries.

In both states, secularism is widely lauded and many voters spoke of their discomfort with the BJP’s heavy-handed use of religion in politics, its Hindu-first agenda and alleged persecution of minorities.

Out on the campaign trail in Tamil Nadu, Annamalai – a former senior police officer who became BJP state president three years ago – steered clear of the overt religious themes and communal, anti-Muslim rhetoric that has become increasingly prevalent at north

Indian BJP rallies, even by Modi himself.

He declared the BJP as the “natural party” for protecting Tamil and national interests, rather than “corrupt, dynastic” Dravidian parties such as Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which now rule the Tamil Nadu state government.

“It is not Dravidian politics that dominates in Tamil Nadu, it is personality politics,” said Annamalai, whose campaign team has worked to build an almost cult-like status around him. “It is the larger than life characters who grab people’s attention here.”

Accusations that the BJP intended to impose a north Indian identity on to the state were “ridiculous” he said, pointing out he didn’t even speak Hindi himself. “When I converse with our honourable prime minister, I speak in English and he speaks English back to me,” said Annamalai, who makes his close relationship with Modi well known. “Under what logic can they say we’re imposing Hindi?”

The buzz around Annamalai has certainly made the BJP more visible in Coimbatore than in the past decade. At a party rally, regional organiser S L Muthukumar said he had recently switched over from DMK. “The BJP never had much presence here before but look at how the crowds have turned out, Annamalai has created so much excitement,” he said.

First-time voters such as Bhubarashan 23, said he had been drawn in by the messages of change on the Annamalai campaign’s YouTube channel. “Annamalai is young, he is energetic, he has good ideas,” said Bhubarashan. “Modi brought development to north Indian states like Gujarat and now they are world leaders. We need that in Tamil Nadu.”

Others were more sceptical that the crowds who flocked to see Annamalai would translate into the 25% vote share and seven parliamentary seats he has optimistically projected. Loyalty to Dravidian parties like DMK, and their long-running welfare and education schemes which are credited with lifting millions out of poverty, is deeply entrenched. Meanwhile, many accused Modi of neglecting the state and ruining their businesses with the imposition of a nationwide goods and services tax that is highly unpopular across Tamil Nadu.

N Rajan, 62, said he was a life-

long supporter of DMK and was highly critical of Modi, who he blamed for the rising costs of food and essentials. “Modi thinks he can suddenly start visiting Tamil Nadu for our votes, when all his government has done in ten years is neglect us and then take our hard-earned money,” he said.

Over the border in Kerala, where Muslims make up 26% of the population and Christians 18%, the BJP looks likely to have an even tougher fight. The BJP’s campaign has been hampered by Modi’s record in the state of Manipur, where the Christian minority are facing ongoing ethnic violence while the prime minister is accused of turning a blind eye. While the BJP’s vote share is expected to increase in the state, few believed it will translate into any parliamentary seats.

One constituency where the party has high hopes is Thrissur, an affluent, culture-rich city on Kerala’s coast. Their candidate Suresh Gopi, a former star of south Indian cinema, steered clear of any Hindu nationalist narratives and spoke of “spreading love and ending hatred”, stressing that he “does not see religion” when it comes to voters. One of his main messages on the campaign trail has been to “vote for the man, not the party”.

One of those he won over was 19-year-old nursing student Dathan. “We want a change, we want development and Modi is the strongest leader in India” he said. “Look, we all know in the end there is no other option other than Modi.”

Yet Dathan, a Hindu, also spoke uncomfortably of the BJP’s record on minorities, placing his arm around fellow Muslim and Christian students as he spoke. “These are my brothers, no politics can divide us,” he said.

Frustration was rife against the Congress and Communist party-led coalitions that have alternately governed Kerala for decades but most appeared willing to put it aside in the face of perceived threats to secularism and democratic norms under the BJP. “In Kerala, we worship god but we don’t mix it with politics and we reject those that do,” said K. Muralaheedharan, the local candidate for the Congress-led coalition.

Sheela George, 54, a teacher, accused the BJP of “only focusing on temple building, not education or development.” She added: “They know if people get the high levels of education we have in Kerala, the BJP would not win any more elections.”

American president and Congress should take all Americans’ views into consideration but, in reality, the partisan divides matter more. So, do Biden’s policies align with Democratic voters’ priorities and do Trump’s align with Republicans’?

The Pew results suggest that the top priorities for Democratic voters include addressing climate change, combating the spread of weapons of mass destruction and infectious disease, protecting the US against terrorism and limiting Russia’s power. These priorities generally align with the Biden administration’s priorities, although Biden appears to put more emphasis on supporting Ukraine and promoting democracy abroad than many Democrats would.

The poll supports other evidence that Biden is clearly out of step with Democratic voters in his determined support for Israel, as only 8 percent of Democrats in the poll said that supporting Israel should be a top priority. Other polls also have found declining Democratic support for unconditional support for Israel. A Politico-Morning Consult poll conducted around the same time as the Pew poll found that 33 percent of Democratic voters said that Biden is “not tough enough on Israel” in response to the war in Gaza.

Among Republican voters, top priorities include reducing the flow of illegal drugs, maintaining a military advantage over other countries, limiting China’s power and getting other countries to bear more of the cost of maintaining the global order. These priorities align well with Trump’s approach.

Stopping the flow of illegal drugs fits into Republicans’ broader concerns about the southern border and immigration, which is a major focus of Trump’s rhetoric.

Trump emphasizes power over other countries, particularly China, while downplaying threats from Russia, which aligns with Republican priorities in the survey. The America First rhetoric also seeks to reduce the spending of US resources abroad and demands that allies and partners do more.

Exploitation, AI-style, a worrying new trend

In a world where artificial intelligence is on the lips of everyone, each for their own reasons, I have often wondered if the benefits it provides outweigh the risks.

Among the few valid but gimmicky concerns we often hear are whether a super-intelligent AI will wipe out humanity, steal our jobs or enable killer robots that could annihilate one species and not another.

My concern has always been to ask: at what cost? And whether AI will impact the future of humankind, such as the norms and values on which our social and economic models have rested for centuries.

Above all, how much are the key ingredients for machine learning and AI costing the tech companies? That is the cost of harvesting and labeling data, which is human labor-intensive and costly, not to mention the environmental footprint of the mega-processors and their consumption and cooling in the age of trying to reduce emissions that cause global warming — an area that could form the discussion of another article all on its own.

The social impact of AI is yet to be determined. But since AI rests on data and large-language models, it needs extensive human input during the training phase. Big tech companies have resorted to service providers that hire independent workers, often from low-income countries and are often working in less-than-perfect conditions and earning very little. This has led some people to warn about the creation of “digital sweatshops” and the exploitation of workers in the developing world.

Last year, Time magazine reported on how Kenyan workers who were contracted to monitor text data for ChatGPT for any “toxicity” were paid less than \$2 dollars per hour and were not compensated for being exposed to explicit and traumatic content.

It was revealed by Untold Magazine last month that such workers were even recruited from refugee camps. Refugees from Syria, some as young

Mohamed Chebaro

as 21, have been recruited from camps in Bulgaria. After brief initial training in “digital skills” and some English language training, refugees work part-time for data labeling companies in what is known as “microwork” or “click work,” which employers describe as trivial and straightforward. But the work they engage in tells a different story.

These refugees spend their days labeling images of people based on race, gender and age, as well as carrying out what is known as the “semantic segmentation” of satellite-sourced images, a critical task for computer vision that involves the meticulous separation and labeling of every pixel in an image.

The report claimed that this form of data work holds particular importance in generating training data for AI, especially for computer vision systems embedded in devices such as cameras, drones and even weapons.

The tasks at hand called on workers to separate the trees from the bushes, cars from people, roads from buildings, etc. But experts claimed that such work — belittled by the employer as small, low-skilled and not requiring expertise — in reality does require contextual knowledge, including an understanding of what vegetation and vehicles look like in specific regions, causing some to be suspicious that AI could be used for weapons and military applications.

According to the World Bank, there are between 154 million and 435 million data workers worldwide, the majority situated in the Global South. Their work tends to be on a freelance basis and they earn a few cents per piece or task, often commissioned by employment platforms or companies online. They have no employment protections whatsoever.

In the case of the Syrian refugees in Bulgaria, their suspicions are not unfounded, as the number of autonomous drones and other such technologies has grown dramatically over the past few years. Tech companies and mili-

taries have been racing to integrate AI technology into their reconnaissance, target identification and decision-making processes, which many bill as the future tools of warfare, despite their clear limited use in the Ukraine-Russia war and, more widely, in the Israeli war on Gaza.

Cheap labor is often the name of the game in gig or temporary freelance work, but in the context of generative AI and machine-learning models, the harm is multiplied. It is bad not only for the poorly paid workers, but also due to the fact that their labor contributes to the development of algorithms that could discriminate and cause harm in a way that blurs the lines of accountability and transparency regarding incorrect or biased information, as the data is often from third or even fourth-party service providers.

One risk that has already been experienced is from AI-powered software tools used in surveillance and facial recognition, which have been proven to discriminate on the basis of race and gender.

The ethical concerns and moral dilemmas for the workers should be addressed, as some of their work might adversely affect their own communities. Many data labelers are kept in the dark about the end users and their remit in terms of its usage.

If used in a proper way, AI has the potential to be transformative and to make a real difference to everyday life. But AI companies’ lack of transparency, such as the veil of secrecy they apply to their programs’ development in the name of safeguarding their competitive edge, coupled with weak or nonexistent official scrutiny, encourages a culture of impunity, even if we are to believe the premise that all companies working in this sector have the best interests of humanity as their priority.

I am yet to be convinced, especially when business ventures are focused primarily on profit and power. Rarely are they set up for the universal benefit of humankind — not least their poorly compensated workers.

Badr bin Abdulmohsin: prodigy, poet, prince

Faisal J. Abbas

IT has been a sad week for Saudi arts and culture, with the sudden death of the poet Prince Badr bin Abdulmohsin. To those who don’t speak Arabic, all I can say is you have missed out on a lot. To use Western sporting terminology, Prince Badr was the Greatest Of All Time in the world of Arabic poetry. In terms of his influence on local culture, he was on a par with the Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho or the American-English poet T.S. Eliot.

It was therefore no surprise that Arabic-language social media was flooded with condolences by mourners. Fans posted tributes of their favourite poems and song lyrics, from the celebratory “Foug Ham Al-Sohb” (Above the Clouds) sung by the Saudi artist Mohammed Abdo, to the deeply emotional “Al-Mussafer” (Voyager) sung by his compatriot Rashid Al-Majid. With such a large and varied catalog, it can be argued that Prince Badr wrote the soundtrack to the life of a whole generation over nearly four decades (yours truly included!).

And if his death were not bad enough, fans were immediately struck with another heart-breaking revelation: Mohammed Abdo, who could be described as the Kingdom’s Frank Sinatra and is himself a noted interpreter of Prince Badr’s work, has been given a diagnosis of cancer. He is receiving treatment in Paris, and all his performances and engagements have been canceled.

Of course, this is life — it has to end at some point, sometimes much too soon. Yet one cannot help but notice that when

Western legends such as Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Whitney Houston, Freddie Mercury and others die, there is no shortage of documentation and celebration of their talent, genius and achievement. It is an unfortunate flaw in our society that we simply don’t have a culture of immortalizing and paying tribute to such rare talent.

In fact, until recently, perhaps many around the world did not associate Saudi Arabia with art and culture at all. To give credit where credit is due, this gap has been the subject of reforms in the Kingdom, and there have been initiatives by the Ministry of Culture and the General Entertainment Authority to address the issue. Stages have been named after Abdo and fellow singing sensation Abu Baker Salem, and there are literary programs to preserve and study eternal works such as those of Prince Badr. However, more could and should be done. And more importantly, we should not wait for such rare talents to die before we celebrate them, and learn from their experiences.

The same argument, by the way, is equally true and important for living legends in the worlds of politics, business and journalism. We have no shortage of world class talent in all these fields, and each has a remarkable story to tell and valuable lessons to teach.

This brings me to another phenomenon: we lack the notion of transfer of knowledge through autobiographies, masterclasses and workshops. Of course, there are exceptions, and the late intellectual, ambassador and minister Ghazi Al-Gosaibi is definitely among them.

His Arabic-language books “A Life in Administration” and “The Accompanying Minister” are still must-reads for anyone who wants to work in government. In fact, so insightful and informative is the former that the Ministry of Education made it part of the high school curriculum in 2018.

Two years ago, former Saudi intelligence chief Prince Turki Al-Faisal shared only but a part of his vast experiences and memories with the publication of “The Afghanistan File,” a fascinating chronology and account of his department’s efforts in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Not only did the book provide valuable lessons in dealing with crises, but it also set the record straight on the many misconceptions born out of the vacuum in narrative. And can you imagine how fascinating and informative it would be if a political heavy-weight such as Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Kingdom’s legendary former Ambassador to the US, wrote his memoirs?

In the journalism world, we have living legends who should be persuaded to share their experiences. Among them are former Ashraq Al-Awsat editors Othman Al-Omeir and Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, as well as Khaled Al-Malek — editor of the Saudi daily Al-Jazira since 1972, and president of the Saudi Journalists’ Association until this year.

As for the late Prince Badr, whose name in Arabic means “full moon,” all that remains to be said is that, in his absence, the literary space will be a much darker place. May he rest in peace.

New poll highlights Americans’ foreign policy priorities

Kerry Boyd Anderson

AMID the US presidential campaign, protests against the Gaza war on college campuses and debates in Congress over providing support to Ukraine and Israel, it is useful to consider how the broader American public views foreign policy and US interests abroad.

In April, the Pew Research Center conducted a survey asking Americans about how they view foreign policy priorities. Overall, out of a list of 22 policy goals, 73 percent of respondents said that protecting the country from terrorist attacks should be a top priority. Other top priorities included reducing illegal drug imports into the US (64 percent) and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (63 percent).

The poll found significant partisan differences between Republicans and Democrats. The biggest partisan gap was around climate change, as 70 percent of Democrats ranked it as a top foreign policy priority, while only 15 percent of Republicans agreed. Similar to some partisan divides in Congress, supporting Ukraine was more important to Democrats (37 percent) than Republicans (12 percent), while supporting Israel was a much higher priority for Republicans (39 percent) than Democrats (8 percent).

Reflecting the political polarization over the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing the spread of infectious diseases was a top priority for many Democrats (63 percent), but less so for many Republicans, with only 41 percent of the latter placing it as a high priority. While a majority of Americans wanted to prioritize reducing the flow of illegal drugs, it was more important to Republicans (79 percent) than Democrats (51 percent). Maintaining a “US military advantage over all other countries” was also a higher priority for Republicans (68 percent) than Democrats (41 percent).

These partisan divides are real and serious. However, as the Pew report noted, “a majority of Americans say that all 22 long-range foreign policy goals ... should be given at least some

priority.” Americans in general agreed on many foreign policy goals but disagreed on which were the most important. The Pew report also found that significant minorities questioned whether supporting Israel or Ukraine or promoting democracy should be priorities at all.

Last month’s survey was the third such poll conducted by Pew, following similar ones in 2018 and 2021, which allows for some comparison over time. Over the last six years, limiting China’s power increased as a pri-

The poll found significant partisan differences between Republicans and Democrats. The biggest partisan gap was around climate change, as 70 percent of Democrats ranked it as a top foreign policy priority, while only 15 percent of Republicans agreed. Similar to some partisan divides in Congress, supporting Ukraine was more important to Democrats (37 percent) than Republicans (12 percent), while supporting Israel was a much higher priority for Republicans (39 percent) than Democrats (8 percent). Reflecting the political polarization over the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing the spread of infectious diseases was a top priority for many Democrats (63 percent), but less so for many Republicans, with only 41 percent of the latter placing it as a high priority. While a majority of Americans wanted to prioritize reducing the flow of illegal drugs, it was more important to Republicans (79 percent) than Democrats (51 percent). Maintaining a “US military advantage over all other countries” was also a higher priority for Republicans (68 percent) than Democrats (41 percent).

ority for Americans — up by 17 percentage points. Limiting Russia’s power also rose in importance — up by 8 points since 2021, which likely reflects Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Perhaps due to the war in Gaza, Americans in April were more likely to see a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a top priority, increasing by 11 points since 2018. Meanwhile, strengthening the UN and aiding refugees each dropped by 8 points since 2018.

In order to understand these views and their potential impact on US foreign policy, it is crucial

to keep in mind that foreign policy is typically a lower priority for most Americans than domestic issues. The Pew findings reinforced this trend: 83 percent of respondents said that domestic policy should be a higher priority for the president than foreign policy. The complexity of global issues, combined with the generally low prioritization of foreign policy for most Americans, means that governing elites in Congress and the executive branch have disproportionate influence over foreign policy.

The poll found significant partisan differences

between Republicans and Democrats. The biggest partisan gap was around climate change, as 70 percent of Democrats ranked it as a top foreign policy priority, while only 15 percent of Republicans agreed. Similar to some partisan divides in Congress, supporting Ukraine was more important to Democrats (37 percent) than Republicans (12 percent), while supporting Israel was a much higher priority for Republicans (39 percent) than Democrats (8 percent). Reflecting the political polarization over the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing the spread of infectious diseases was a top priority for many Democrats (63 percent), but less so for many Republicans, with only 41 percent of the latter placing it as a high priority. While a majority of Americans wanted to prioritize reducing the flow of illegal drugs, it was more important to Republicans (79 percent) than Democrats (51 percent). Maintaining a “US military advantage over all other countries” was also a higher priority for Republicans (68 percent) than Democrats (41 percent).

However, public attitudes toward foreign policy issues are not irrelevant and politicians often respond when their constituents have particularly strong feelings. For example, President Joe Biden has adjusted his rhetoric — if not his policies — about the war in Gaza in response to Democratic voters’ concerns. Donald Trump’s “America First” rhetoric reflects his supporters’ priorities and worldview.

Surveys such as the Pew poll offer an opportunity to consider whether governing elites’ foreign policy priorities are aligned with voters’ views. Ideally, the



SCCI demands setup of a state of art lab for gemstone certification

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry demanded establishment of a state of the art laboratory for certification of precious and semi-precious stones in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to carry out proper cutting and polishing on scientific methods and enhance export Pakistan gems and earn hefty foreign exchange for the country.

The demand was made by senior vice president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Sanaullah Khan while chairing a meeting regarding promotion of

gems and jewelry sector held here at the chamber house on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by Director Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) Noman Bashir, Director Gems and Gemological Institute Peshawar (GGIP) Naveed Masood, Coordinator Gems and Jewelry Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahid Khan, an executive member of the chamber Quarat Ul Ain, Acting Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan, and other senior officials concerned.

Participants during the meeting gave a number of proposals for promotion of the gems and jewelry sector

and urged federal and provincial governments to outline a comprehensive plan for development of the gems sector, establishment of a state of the art laboratory for certification of precious and semi-precious stones, essentially upgradation of GGIP and allocation of separate land for this purpose.

Sanaullah Khan suggested allocation of land/dedicated place in Namak Mandi Peshawar, which is hub of business and trade for GGIP.

The senior office bearer of the SCCI demanded of the government to take pragmatic steps for promotion of gems and jewelry

sector.

He furthermore called for the imposition of a ban on export of rough and uncut precious and semi-precious stones.

Noman Bashir said TDAP in light of the SCCI proposals would take all steps for promotion of gems and jewelry sector, particularly, identification of suitable land/location for GGIP upgradation and putting it into modern lines.

Officials of TDAP and GGIPs gave full assurance to implement the SCCI recommendations for development of the gems and jewelry sector for which the chamber SVP Sanaullah Khan thanked them.



PESHAWAR: Senior vice president of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sanaullah Khan chairing a meeting regarding promotion of gems and jewelry sector Chamber's House.

Minister holds crucial meeting with 'Fruit Juice Council'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, convened a pivotal meeting with the M/s Fruit Juice Council at the Ministry of Commerce on Wednesday.

The council, represented by industry leaders, provided an extensive briefing to the minister, highlighting pressing concerns regarding increased tariff rates, including Federal Excise Duty (FED) and Goods and Services Tax (GST),

according to a press release issued here. During the session, the council expressed alarm over a significant 40 percent decline in juice sales attributed to the recent tax hikes.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan underscored the importance of focusing on and boosting exports.

He emphasized the government's willingness to provide incentives, but a comprehensive proposal aimed at enhancing exports.

The minister cited the Prime Minister's initiative to combat smuggling through a dedicated committee, a move expected to bolster local industries and generate employment opportunities.

Moreover, Minister Jam Kamal stressed the imperative of collaboration with provincial authorities and district administrations to crack down on fake and unregistered food products.

Such measures, he argued, would safeguard

registered industries and uphold quality standards.

The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to facilitating exports, highlighting its readiness to support local industries in navigating challenges and seizing opportunities.

The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary Syed Hamid Ali and representatives from leading companies including Nestle, Shezan, TetraPak, PepsiCo, Haleeb Foods, and Popular Group.

Companies not to be allowed to take undue profit: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries & Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday said that fertilizer companies must not be allowed to take undue profit.

Steps should be taken to ensure uniform price of the urea fertilizer across the country for the convenience of farmers, he directed while chairing a meeting of the Fertilizer Review Committee.

Besides the Federal Secretary of Industries and Production and agriculture secretaries of the four provinces, the meeting was attended by the representatives of Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited, Engro, Fatima Fertilizer Company and Kisan Ittehad, a news release said.

The minister regretted that the fertilizer companies had raised the prices of urea without realizing the plight of farmers.

He asked the companies to roll back the recently increased urea prices on their own, or otherwise the government would fix the same.

All the fertilizer companies and dealers would have charge same price of the urea, he reaffirmed, adding the government had decided to get conducted third party audit to determine their cost of production and profit margin.

The Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain said the government was committed to ensure uninterrupted supply of gas to the fertilizer industry.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where three ships, Maersk Yorktown, Wide Alpha and MH Sandef Jord, berthed at Container Terminal and Multi-Purpose Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile five more ships, Maersk Cape Town, MSC Roma, Capricorn, PH Giang Minh and Huang Shan-16 scheduled to load/offload Container, Irone Ore, and Palm oil also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of seven ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, of them three ships, Wide Alpha, Maersk Yorktown and Jessie left the port on today morning. Meanwhile two more ships, Clyde and White Peach are expected to sail today afternoon.

Cargo volume of 100,405 tonnes, comprising 55,631 tonnes imports cargo and 44,774 tonnes export cargo carried in 3,694 Containers (1,787 TEUs Imports and 1,907 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 06 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them five ships, Maersk Cape Town, MSC Roma, Ionic Artemis, PH Giang Minh and Huang Shan-16 & another ship, Sea Ambition scheduled to load/offload Container, Fuel oil, Palm Kernel, Palm oil and Mogas are expected to take berths at QICT, FOTCO, MW-I, LCT and EVTTL on today.

Pak Stock Exchange loses 159 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) Wednesday witnessed bearish trend and shed 159.38 points, a negative change of 0.22 percent, closing at 72,601.82 points against 72,761.20 points the previous trading day.

A total of 970,325,029 shares valuing Rs 23.514 billion were traded during the day as compared to 621,826,404 shares valuing Rs 24.970 billion the last day.

Some 388 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 149 of them recorded gains and 208 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 31 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 407,883,727 shares at Rs 1.51 per share, K-Electric Limited with 68,032,121 shares at Rs 4.68 per share and Hum Network with 56,105,156 shares at Rs 9.03 per share.

Services Industries Limited witnessed an increase of Rs 49.60 per share price closing at Rs 710.91, whereas the runner-

up was Highnoon Laboratories Limited with Rs 26.83 decline to close at Rs 649.82.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 552.77 per share closing at Rs 18,995.18, followed by Hallmark Company Limited with Rs 68.00 decline to close at Rs 838.62.

Rupee gains 01 paisa against US dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday gained 01 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.10 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.11.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, stood at Rs 277.00 and Rs 279.70 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 49 paisa and closed at Rs 298.62 against the last-day closing of Rs 299.11, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained shed 01 paisa and was traded at Rs 1.79 against Rs 1.80, whereas an

decrease of Rs 1.77 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 346.81 compared to the last closing of Rs 348.58.

The Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal remained stable at Rs 75.71 and Rs.74.15 respectively.

Gold rates dip by Rs 800 per tola to Rs 239,200

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 800 and was sold at Rs. 239,200 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs.240,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 686 to Rs 205,075 from Rs 205,761 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 187,986 from Rs 188,615, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,620 and Rs 2,254.80 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$5 to \$2,312 from \$2,317, the Association said.

European stocks rise but Wall Street slips

LONDON (AFP/APP): European stocks advanced on Wednesday, with London striking another record, driven by hopes of interest rate cuts as inflation eases.

Wall Street stocks slid, however, as its rally on rate cuts ran out of steam, while oil prices fell on demand concerns amid ample US stocks.

London's FTSE 100 index forged an all-time peak at 8,364.04 points on the eve of a monetary policy decision from the Bank of England, which is forecast to hold rates but could flag a summer reduction.

Frankfurt and Paris stocks also pushed higher, shrugging off Asian losses, boosted by speculation that the European Central Bank could also decide to cut rates soon.Sweden's central

bank cut its key interest rate for the first time in eight years on Wednesday, citing easing inflation and hinting at two more reductions before year-end.

The move comes almost two months after the Swiss National Bank became the first major Western central bank to lower its rates following hikes across Europe and the United States aimed at taming rising consumer prices following the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The US Federal Reserve, however, is not expected to cut rates before September following an uptick in inflation in the world's biggest economy.

"European stocks are rising on optimism that borrowing costs will soon be lowered," City Index ana-

lyst Fiona Cincotta told AFP, noting that Frankfurt's DAX was also near its record.

"The BoE is expected to leave rates unchanged but could start to pave the way for a rate cut in the coming months."

The prospect of lower interest rates tends to boost stock markets because it cuts borrowing costs for individuals and businesses, thereby lifting both consumer spending and investment.

"A lower interest rate environment is good news for households and businesses alike," concluded Cincotta.

In Asia, major markets fell as dealers paused for breath, with Hong Kong falling for a second straight day after a 10-day winning streak.

US Consul General visits FF Steel to reinforce bilateral trade ties

F.P. Report

KARACHI: US Consul General Peshawar Mr. Shante Moore visited FF Steel in Peshawar, Pakistan to reinforce bilateral trade and investment ties between the US and Pakistan.

During his visit, he toured the facility, met with the senior management team, and praised FF Steel's contributions to Pakistan's economy.

FF Steel is one of Pakistan's leading steel manufacturers, known for producing high-quality steel products and investing in research and development. The visit is expected to further enhance economic



cooperation between the two countries, which

already have a strong bilateral trade relationship with

nearly \$2.08 billion in trade in 2023.

2nd symposium on Battery Electric Vehicles organized

LAHORE (APP): Senior leaders, policymakers, academia and industry experts discussed progress, challenges, and ways forward for electrification of vehicles in the country in line with global trends at the 2nd Symposium on Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) in Pakistan, held here on Wednesday.

The event was jointly organised by LUMS (Lahore University of Management Sciences), Higher Education Commission (HEC), World Bank, and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The experts focused on accelerating the electric mobility transition in Pakistan.

Dr. Shakeel Sadiq Jajja, Chair of the Symposium and Associate Professor of Suleman Dawood School of Business LUMS, high-

lighted the scope of BEVs in Pakistan, and said that electrification of transportation is rising in the last few years much more rapidly all over the world. The key environmental benefit attributed with BEVs is that they have zero tail-pipe emissions along with the low cost of operation. The environmental benefit is fully harnessed if these vehicles are powered through sustainable sources of electricity. At a different level, BEVs provide an opportunity to develop new supply chains and industries, which are critical to the future of the economy such as batteries, robotics, big data, and analytics, he explained.

The symposium covered critical areas ranging from the Electric Vehicle (EV) landscape in Pakistan, international best practices

to industry perspectives on demand, supply, charging, and financing. The event also showcased an exhibition of EV-related products and services. It served as a pivotal platform for fostering dialogue and collaboration for the government and industry on the BEV value chain.

Ms. Jen Jungeun Oh, Practice Manager, Transport, South Asia, at the World Bank said that the symposium has brought together key stakeholders in the EV ecosystem in Pakistan and generated several useful takeaways. Stakeholders agreed that concerted action is needed to catalyse EV adoption in the country, focused first on electric two and three wheelers and electric buses, given their prevalence and socio-economic importance. Key

strategies include strengthening the policy environment, reducing capital costs through localisation of procurement particularly for e-buses, and unlocking affordable commercial financing through risk sharing instruments. The World Bank is committed to partner with the EV ecosystem on this journey."

Zeeshan Sheikh, IFC's Country Manager for Pakistan and Afghanistan, said that globally, in recent years, IFC has invested over USD 3 billion in e-mobility related initiatives, and "we are committed to drawing on our experiences to support the private sector and the Government of Pakistan in fostering an enabling environment for enhanced adoption and investment in BEVs in Pakistan."

The Frontier Post classified@s

TO ADVERTISE IN The Frontier Post

For Classified advertisements please contact
Mobile: +92-334-1001900
Email: shoab@thefrontierpost.com

COURT NOTICES BANNU

In The Court of Amjad Ali Civil Judge XI Bannu. Suit No. 61/1 Institution No. 03-03-2024 Next date of hearing 11-05-2024 Case Title: Muhammad Imran Vs Mir Dawood Khan etc. Notice to (4) Raza Ullah (5) Abdur Raza sons of Naeqeb Ullah Khan (6) Ihsan Ullah Khan (7) FidaUllah Khan sons of Muhammad Sher Khan (8) ZiaUllah Khan (9) Zaka Ullah sons of Aziz Ullah Khan Resident of Kale Naseer Shamsheh Khel Tehsil and District Bannu present Abroad. Whereas in the above case titled the service of above defendant (s) is not possible through ordinary means,

therefore, you defendant (s) is/are informed through this publication that on 11-05-2024 at 8.00 AM. You has / have to appear before this court either personally or through attorney or through counsel to pursue the suit noted above, otherwise, ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you.

SWABI

In the Court of Quarat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/ Judge Family Court Swabi, Mst.Sana Khan VS Waqas Hussain Suit Number : 321/FC, Institution Date: 09-10-2023, Hearing Date : 25-05-2024, Notice to : Waqas Hussain Son Muhammad Bahadar R/o Bamkheil, Mohallah Younas Khel, Teh, & Distt. Swabi, presently United Kingdom, London city, 1928 church, reacl, Willosdon, NW/109 NP. United Kingdom Mobile : 00447868540645 Defendant. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 25-05-2024 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.

In the Court of Quarat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/ Judge Family Court Swabi, Mst. Aiman Naz VS Akhtar Ali, Suit Number : 14/FC Institution Date : 15-01-2024, Hearing Date: 03-06-2024 Subject: Dissolution Of Marriage Notice to: Akhtar Ali Son Hazrat Younas R/o Kamal Sher Khalay, Teh, Razar, Distt. Swabi, presently abroad. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 03-06-2024 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.

In the Court of Arbab Waheed Alam, Civil Judge- VI, Swabi, Mst. Bakhat Meen VS Ali Asghar etc. Suit Number : 08/1, Institution Date: 20-01-2023, Hearing Date : 11-05-2024, Subject: Proclamation, Notice to: (4) Meer Akbar, (6) Mst. Bibi Perveen daughter Shreen Jan R/o Doder. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 11-05-2024 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.



In brief

Osaka wins in Rome

ROME (Agencies): Naomi Osaka marked her return to the Rome Open for the first time since 2021 with a straight sets victory over Clara Burel in the first round on Wednesday. Former world number one Osaka came through against her 45th-ranked French opponent 7-6 (7/2), 6-1. It was the 26-year-old's first win against a top-50 opponent on clay since beating Victoria Azarenka at the French Open in 2019. Osaka, now ranked at 173 in the world after taking a break from the tour to have her first child, will face 19th seed Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine for a place in the third round. Kostyuk, the runner-up on clay in Stuttgart last month, lost to Osaka in their only other previous meeting, in three sets at the 2020 US Open. On Wednesday, the Japanese star sealed victory in 84 minutes, finishing with 27 winners, including eight aces, and broke serve four times. "I thought the first set was really tough. I'm really glad I was able to close it in two," said Osaka after just her second win on European clay this spring. "Overall I think mentally I tried to stay as strong as I can, so I'm really happy about that." She added: "I was up 5-3, serving for the set and I lost (the game). But I'm very proud of myself for just being able to hang in there and eventually close it on my terms." "I obviously played a lot better in the second set. I'm hoping that when I play my match tomorrow, I want to learn from the mistakes I made today."

Thomas escapes to win Giro 5th stage

LUCCA (AFP): Frenchman Benjamin Thomas outfoxed the three other members of a late breakaway to take stage five of the Giro d'Italia in Lucca on Wednesday. Thomas, a five-time world champion on the track, was part of a powerful quartet that escaped with 80km to go and eked out a narrow lead to the line. Slovenian Tadej Pogacar finished safely in the peloton and retained the overall lead of the Giro. Thomas of Covidis escaped with Dane Michael Valgren of EF Education-EasyPost, Frenchman Enzo Paleni of Groupama-FDJ and Italian Andrea Pietrobon of Polti-Kometa after an intermediate sprint with less than 80 km to go. The quartet never led by more than 90 seconds but were able to turn that small margin into victory by working hard together while the sprint teams in the peloton were unable, or unwilling, to organize a coherent chase. "It was like a long, long team pursuit," said Thomas. "It was really hard in the finale. Every pull was full gas. With 10km it was still 45 seconds with a tail wind so we knew we could have played with the bunch. We were going over 60 kilometres an hour. That's when we knew we could do it. "Nobody bet on the breakaway today," Pietrobon then attacked with almost a kilometre to go and built a lead. "I risked losing it to win it," said Thomas. "I didn't close the gap. It worked out perfectly." As the Italian faded, Valgren overtook but was in turn caught on the line by Thomas. Thomas lives in the region with his Italian partner and rides the roads in training. "I knew all the road of the final because I train there sometimes. It was helping me to know with the cobbles and the corners," said Thomas. "Nice to win in Italy."

Pakistan beat Canada 5-4 to become a strong final contender

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan hockey team on Wednesday defeated Canada 5-4 in their fourth pool match to solidify their position to earn a final spot in Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, underway in Ipoh, Malaysia.

With the win, Pakistan has accumulated 10 points in four matches and is now a strong contender for the title.

According to information made available here by Pakistan Hockey Federation, Canada took early lead in the 5th minute with a goal from Sean Davis and another in the 17th minute from Harbir Sidhu. Pakistan's Abubakar Mahmood scored two goals in the 28th and 29th minutes, levelling the score.

After halftime, experienced goalkeeper Abdullah Ashfaq Khan took over the Pakistani goalpost. Arshad Liaqat, Rana Waheed Ashraf and Ghazanfar Ali scored goals in the 36th,



44th, and 45th minutes, respectively, solidifying Pakistan's lead.

Canada's Sean Davis scored a field goal in the 45th minute, and Avijot Butter scored another field

goal in the 50th minute, reducing Canada's goal deficit.

However, Pakistan emerged victorious in the end. Six teams are participating in the event,

including hosts Malaysia, Pakistan, Korea, Japan, New Zealand, and Canada. Pakistan will play their fifth and final pool match against New Zealand on Friday.

Pakistan Jr. Tennis team for South Asian Tennis C'ship announced

PESHAWAR (APP): A three-member Pakistan Junior Tennis team has been announced for the forthcoming South Asian Tennis Championship to be played in Kathmandu, Nepal from May 20-29, 2024.

The players selected include Rashid Ali Buchani (Sindh), Muhammad Shayan Afridi and Muhammad Junaid Khan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

The players are really pumped up for the event. Surprisingly, since 2011 each of the national team either U12, U14, U16 or Davis Cup national squads, none of the coaches of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been named alongside the team to recognize their efforts and hard work with the players who were selected in the national side.

Talking to the media, Shayan Afridi said that he will try his level best to win the trophy in U12 category. He was working hard for the event. After a long struggle, he had been included in the national team. He said that he has been playing tennis for the last four years and had won many competitions,

including Pakistan Junior Open, PSB Cup, Bank of Punjab Cup and many more. Muhammad Junaid said that he had also been playing tennis for the last four years and his victories are quite high. "I could not express the joy of joining the national team for the first time."

He said he had an honour of winning runners-up trophies in Sheikh Steel in U12 and U14 categories besides winning Milat Tractor's both U12 and U14 categories trophies.

Muhammad Junaid said that he won runners-up trophy of the Service Tyres and reached the semi-finals in the U14 category of the same. He said that he reached the quarter-finals of the Sheharyar Malik Open Tennis and won the winner trophy in the U12 category besides winning the trophy of the Haji Umar Khatab Memorial Tennis Open Championship U14 category. Omar Ayaz Khalil, Secretary of the KP Tennis Association, when contacted, said that it was a good news that two junior players took trials and were selected for the National team to

play tennis for the first time at international level.

He said other players who have been selected to represent Pakistan include Shoaib Khan, Barkat Ullah, Yousaf Khalil, Sagib Umar, Aqib Umar, Kashan Umar, Hamza Roman, Hamid Israr, Uzair Khan with two of the upcoming selected team players Junaid Khan and Shayan also got the honor of becoming international players and represented Senior and Junior Davis Cup teams.

Khalil said, "We have well qualified coaches who worked hard with the players and they had been selected for various teams at the national level including Shaharyah Khan, Shah Hussain, Zakir Ullah, and Nouman Khan. All of them are well talented but Pakistan Tennis Federation did not give them a chance to go with the teams as coaches. They deserved to be named with the team because of their hard efforts, yet to be recognized." He said four other players Muhammad Faizan Afridi, Ryan Umar Khalil, Salar Khan and Shaharyar Khan will soon join the teams.



ROME: Naomi Osaka of Japan in action against Clara Burel of France in the first round on Day Three of the Internazionali BNL D'Italia.

Panesar quits as UK parliamentary candidate

LONDON (AFP): Former England cricketer Monty Panesar has withdrawn as an election candidate for the fringe Workers Party of Britain, just a week after announcing he was standing for UK parliament.

Panesar, 42, who played 50 Tests, said he wanted to stand up for the working class and address the nation's wealth gap when his candidacy was announced.

Born Mudhsuden Singh Panesar in Luton, north of London, to Sikh parents who emigrated from the Indian Punjab state, he became a firm fan favourite and a distinctive figure in the field in his black patka during his Test career between 2006 and 2013.

The former left-arm spinner had intended to stand in Ealing Southall, held by the main opposition Labour party.

But he posted on X: "So today I am withdrawing as a General Election candidate for The Workers Party."

"I realise I need more time to listen, learn and find my political home, one that aligns with my personal and political values."

"I wish The Workers Party all the best but look forward to taking some time to mature and find my political feet so I am well prepared to deliver my very best when I next run up to the political wicket."

A party spokesman said: "It is in Monty's best interests at this time to withdraw as a candidate, and we hope for his return to the field in due course."

Panesar appeared to become confused about one of the Workers Party's policy pledges, to leave the NATO military alliance, during a disastrous interview with Times Radio last week. He suggested NATO's role was related to immigration policy and that British membership was making it harder to control its border.

The leader of the Workers Party is George Galloway, a left-wing firebrand who was re-elected to parliament in March after tapping into anger over the Israel-Hamas war.

Lahore, Karachi to face each other in final of National Women's Tournament

FAISALABAD (APP): Lahore and Karachi will face each other in the final of National Women's One-Day Tournament at Iqbal Stadium, here on Saturday, May 11, 2024.

On Wednesday, Karachi defeated Rawalpindi by 22 runs in the tenth round of the National Women's One-Day Tournament at Bohranwali Ground, Faisalabad on Wednesday. Omaira Sohail's gritty half-century (67, 86b, 7x4s) led Karachi to post 167 all out in 41 overs. Karachi's spinners led by Omaira (4-34) played a vital role in restricting Rawalpindi to 145 all out in 49.4 overs.

Maham Manzoor and Syeda Aroob Shah shared five wickets. In a low-scoring thriller at the Iqbal Stadium Peshawar defended their 110-run total against Multan, winning the game by a mere four runs. Peshawar's Aleena Shah helped her team reach 110 with a dogged 40 as Multan's Noor-ul-Iman spun a web around Peshawar batters taking five wickets for 15 runs.

In return, Multan looked comfortable with 76-2 on the board before losing eight wickets for 30 runs and falling agonisingly four runs short with six balls to spare.

At Jawad sports Complex, after opting to bat first Quetta lost wickets at regular intervals as Khadija Chishti and Arijah Haseeb top scored with 23 runs each taking their team to 105 all out in 49.1 overs. Lahore's Noreen Yaqoob and Ayesha Bilal picked up three wickets apiece while Quratulain dismissed two batters.

In reply, Dua Majid made light work of the chase with an unbeaten half-century (52, 71b, 6x4s) stitching a 55-run opening partnership with Samiya Afsar (31, 43b, 2x4s, 1x6) and an undefeated 53-run second wicket stand with Iram Javed (20 not out, 31b, 2x4s) to seal the chase in 24 overs. Lahore and Karachi, having finished as the top two sides with nine wins each in the double round-robin stage will take on each other in the final of the tournament at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad on 11th May 2024 (Saturday).

Scores in brief:

Lahore Women beat Quetta Women by nine wickets at Jawad Sports Complex Ground, Quetta Women 105 all out, 49.1 overs (Arijah Haseeb 23, Khadija Chishti 23; Ayesha Bilal 3-16, Noreen Yaqoob 3-20, Quratulain 2-25).

Lahore Women 108-1, 24 overs (Dua Majid 52 not out, Iram Javed 20 not out).

Peshawar Women beat Multan Women by four runs at Iqbal Stadium,

Peshawar Women 110 all out, 42.2 overs (Aleena Shah 40, Sidra Nawaz 23; Noor-Ul-Iman 5-15).

Multan Women 106 all out, 49 overs (Samina Aftab 30, Gull Rukh 29; Momina Riasat 2-9, Zaib-un-Nisa Niaz 2-26).

Karachi Women beat Rawalpindi Women by 22 runs at Bohranwali Ground,

Karachi Women 167 all out, 41 overs (Omaira Sohail 67, Huraia Sajjad 24; Rida Aslam 3-24 Laiba Mansoor 2-23, Tania Saeed 2-39).

Rawalpindi Women 145 all out, 49.4 overs (Aima Saleem 32, Tania Saeed 27 not out, Farzana Farooq 24; Omaira Sohail 4-34, Maham Manzoor 3-17, Syeda Aroob Shah 2-19).

Nadal welcomes unusual role of underdog

ROME (AFP): Spanish tennis legend Rafael Nadal said on Wednesday he was "excited to be playing in Rome" despite entering the Italian Open unseeded and ranked 305.

"All the matches are tough for me today, difficult and more unpredictable than what they used to be for me, especially on clay," the 37-year-old, 10-time Italian Open winner said. "I accept that role. I accept that challenge. I'm excited about the way that I can be able to play if I keep working the proper way and my body allows me."

The 22-time Grand Slam singles champion has recently returned to the circuit after a long absence due to injury. He will open his campaign against Belgian qualifier Zizou Bergs with the Spanish icon taking nothing for granted but confident of his current match preparation.

"I'm excited to be playing in Rome. It's a tournament that brings back a lot of unforgettable memories," said Nadal, who turns 38 on June 3. "But it's day by day. This will be my third week almost in a row on the tour, third tournament almost in a row. "That hasn't happened for a super long time — that's good news."

"I need to keep going. I need to keep exploring how I will be able to manage to play every day. "But I'm happy the way that I feel today." Nadal is not the only top player with injury issues. Young stars Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz are missing Rome. "When you push your body to the limit, you get injured," said Nadal.

"When the game is faster and faster and faster, you get injured. "When you play most of the year on hard courts and the surfaces are tougher for the body, you get injured. That's the simple answer." But he said that such issues were inevitable. "It is also about the tournaments, about the business, about the sport." "At the end the players want to make money. The tournaments want to make money. The cycles come together."

"We accept that role. Things happen."

"You cannot complain about that. You accept what's going on. You keep going. You get injured, you have to recover well. "They are young (Alcaraz and Sinner), they are going to have plenty of time to play in Rome and have a lot of success here. No drama."

Muhammad Shayan Optimistic about Future Success



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR : In Peshawar, talented squash player Muhammad Shayan expressed gratitude towards the Provincial Squash Association for their dedicated efforts in advancing the sport.

Shayan emphasized the crucial role played by both the association and the provincial government in providing ample opportunities for players to flourish. He affirmed his commitment to elevating the country's status in the realm of squash and expressed confidence in his ability to achieve significant milestones.

Speaking to the media, Shayan conveyed his deep passion for squash and his aspiration to ascend from National Champion to World Champion.

He underscored the significance of hard work in realizing his ambitions and conveyed optimism about the trajectory of his journey.

Shayan remains steadfast in his dedication to the sport, believing that his diligent efforts will ultimately be rewarded by the grace of Allah.

National Challenge Cup semis

ISLAMABAD (APP): SA Gardens and Wapda emerged victorious in the National Challenge Cup 2023 quarterfinals, securing their berths in the semi-finals here at the Jinnah Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex on Wednesday.

In the first quarterfinal, SA Gardens edged past WSTC with a narrow scoreline of 1-0. Umar netted the lone goal of the match in the 38th minute. WSTC couldn't break through SA Gardens' defense despite a fierce battle. The head coach of SA Gardens Zafar Iqbal conveyed his gratitude towards the Pakistan Football Federation for organizing such events. "I am very happy that my team qualified for the next stage," he said. "I would like to thank PFF for holding such events and I hope PFF will continue to organize such events in a professional and befitting manner."

In the second quarterfinal, Wapda secured a victory against PAF with a 1-0 triumph. The decisive goal, scored by Shayek Dost in the 9th minute propelled Wapda into the semi-finals. Commenting on the match, Wapda's head coach, Muhammad Habib, expressed his team's eagerness for the competition.

"We have been waiting for the competitions for so long," he stated. "Both the teams played very well and we will continue to carry this momentum in semi-finals."

GCP wins overall trophy of KP HED Inter-College Boys Games

PESHAWAR (APP): Government College Peshawar clinched the overall trophy of the Inter-College Boys Games, which concluded here under the aegis of Higher Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here on Wednesday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education Department (HED) Meena Khan Afridi was the chief guest on this occasion. Director Higher Education Dr. Fareed Ullah Shah, Principal and Provincial President Sports Committee Professor Dr. Muhammad Ishaq, Deputy Director Sports Dr. Imran Ullah Khan, Regional Directors Hazara, Bannu, Swat, Mardan and Peshawar, Ex-Director Sports and Organizer Peshawar Zone Abdul Rashid Anwar, Principal of various colleges, teaching staff, players, and large number of students spectators were also present.

The colourful ceremony was

started from the recitation from Holy Quran by Daud Sardar, Student of BS Political Science, followed by a Naat Sharif presented by Prof. Bakht Noor Farooqi and the National Anthem.

Speaking on this occasion, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education Department, appreciated the organizing committee for holding different games in which a total of 324 male and female colleges divided in eight different zones across the province took part.

He said sports teaches us discipline, unity, tolerance and above all accepting defeats and victories of others. He advised the students to take active part in sports which is now an integral part of the academic. He said the present government is fully giving attention to organize different sports activities across the province. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Higher Education

Department said that the projects related to developing sports infrastructures in the province would be re-started so that to ensure playing field facilities at the Tehsil and District levels.

He said a bigger Games involving all the male and female colleges would be organized very soon wherein the cash prizes for the winners, runners-up and third position holders teams and in the individual games would be increased to double. He said no country could progress without education and that is why the government is fully committee to ensure quality education to the youth.

He said it is very encouraging that a record number of male and female colleges all across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa took part in different Games including Cricket (male & female), football (male & female), hockey (male & female), volleyball

(male & female), basketball (male & female), throwball (male & female), Tchoukball (male & female), Handball (male & female), badminton (male & female), Table Tennis (male & female), and Squash (male & female).

KP Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi also announced to ensure quality education in the colleges while the shortage of teaching staff in the colleges would soon be addressed and all other genuine demands of the colleges would be fulfilled on priority basis.

He said they want to continue sports friendly policy in the educational institution that aims to unite the youth sports culture at one platform. He said the youth will have the opportunity, motivation, and access to play sports—regardless of their race, ethnicity, sex, ability, or ZIP code. Why youth sports? Research shows

that participating in youth sports can lead to immediate and long-term benefits for youth, their families, and communities.

He said, clearly, sports can help you reach your fitness goals and maintain a healthy weight. However, they also encourage healthy decision-making such as not smoking and not drinking.

At the end, KP Minister for Higher Education gave away the general trophy to Govt College Peshawar by winning the Tchoukball, table tennis and third position in volleyball, basketball, throwball, and runners-up trophies of Handball, and hockey.

Results:

Cricket:

GP GC Haripur, GDC Madyan Swat, POGC No. 1 Bannu

Football:

GP GC Landikotal, GP GC Lakki Marwat, GDC Chitral

Hockey:

GP GC Dargai Malakand, GC

Peshawar, GP GC No. 1 Bannu Volleyball: GDC Matra Peshawar, GP GC Dugar Buner, Govt College Peshawar

Basketball:

GDC Dera Ismail Khan No. 2, GDC Dir Upper, GC Peshawar

Throw Ball:

GP GC Haripur, GP GC Mardan, GC Peshawar

Tchoukball:

GC Peshawar, GDC Mansehra, GDC Sikandar Khel Bala, Bannu

Handball:

GP GC Mansehra, GC Peshawar, GP GC Mardan

Badminton:

GDC Bannu No. 2, GP GC Haripur and GP GC Charsadda

Table Tennis:

GC Peshawar, GP GC Mansehra and GDC Mingora, Swat

Squash:

GP GC Haripur, GP GC Abbottabad No. 1, Govt College Peshawar.



In brief

IRSA releases 152,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 152,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 187,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1467.63 feet and was 53.63 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 38,100 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1167.60 feet, which was 117.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 61,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 84,900, 58,200, 49,500 and 11,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 62,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 15,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

World Ovarian Cancer day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Early detection and awareness campaigns through media platforms can play a major role in tackling the challenge of women-only 'ovarian cancer' (the silent killer) disease, health experts said on Wednesday on the need to motivate the public, stressed, especially those living in remote areas. Speaking to PTV News Channel, a Senior Gynecologist Professor Dr. Syeda Batul said regarding World Ovarian Day we celebrate on May 8 every year, this disease and its symptoms, risk factors, and the importance of skin. She highlighted that we can recognize this day by understanding the various factors that can increase your risk of ovarian cancer. Replying to a question, she said pregnancy and breastfeeding slightly reduce the risk of ovarian cancer, adding, that preventive strategies including genetic testing, regular screening, and preventive surgeries in consultation with healthcare providers can also reduce the burden. She asked healthcare providers including lady health workers, family members including husbands, mothers-in-laws, and employers to play a role in ensuring the promotion of breastfeeding. To another question, she said ovarian cancer risk increases with age, and women over the age of 50 are at a higher risk. In a society where the elderly are revered, awareness of age-related risk factors is essential.

15 drug peddlers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers, illegal weapon holders and other law-breakers here on Wednesday arrested 15 accused besides recovering four kg charras, 35 liters liquor, a 30-bore pistol, a 44-bore rifle and other items from their possession. A police spokesperson said that Morgah, Airport, New Town and Wah Cantt police rounded up Wahid, Atif, Zeeshan, Hafazat Gul, Waqar, Suleman, and Wajid and recovered over 4 kg charras from their possession. Similarly, Wah Cantt, Mandara, Sadqabad, New Town, Waris Khan, Kahuta, and Airport police arrested eight accused namely Waqas, Anis, Nawaz, Kashif and others and recovered 35 liters liquor, weapons and other items from their possession.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi offering dua after planting a sapling at CDA Headquarters.

NDMA chaired UN INSARAG steering group meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) chaired UN INSARAG Steering Group Meeting convened on Wednesday in Geneva, Switzerland marking a pivotal moment in addressing governance and disaster preparedness strategies on a global scale.

The event was organized by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) which saw the participation from affiliated countries from three regions, a news release said. Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Inam Haider and current Chair of Asia Pacific Region emphasized the necessity for regional collaboration to tackle the unprecedented challenges posed by climate change-induced disasters.

During the session titled "Governance Review Report Presentation & Recommendations," Lt. Gen Inam Haider underscored the importance of introducing policy guidelines to enhance disaster response mechanisms. In his address, the Chairman advocated for a robust training regime and simulation exercise for emergency response teams and urged for the utilization of technology to streamline disaster management efforts.

Chairman NDMA also highlighted the need to leverage innovative technologies for disaster risk reduction and response. He appreciated the efforts of INSARAG Secretariat in preparing the comprehensive INSARAG Governance review.

Additionally, the session witnessed the launch of the "INSARAG Turkey/Syria After Action Review Report" by Ahmet Dogas,

Counselor at the UN Permanent Mission of the Republic of Turkey.

The participants discussed enhancing international cooperation for swift disaster response.

The INSARAG Steering Group Meeting serves as a crucial platform for fostering collaboration, sharing best practices, and charting the way forward in ensuring effective disaster response and recovery efforts globally. Pakistan is regional chair of INSARAG in Asia Pacific Region for the year 2024.

The INSARAG Steering Group Meeting discussed detailed recommendations with all stockholders in subsequent sessions by the INSARAG family. The meeting highlighted the importance of community engagement and empowerment in disaster resilience communities across the globe.

CTP amends rule 9-3

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi have amended rule 9-3, Punjab Motor Vehicle Rules, 1969 to facilitate the citizens. Due to the amendment, the process to obtain a driving license would be easier as the time taken from six weeks has been reduced to 15 days, said City Traffic Officer (C TO) Rawalpindi Taimur Khan.

He informed that following the orders of Additional Inspector General (IG) Traffic, Mirza Faran Baig, CTP Rawalpindi, the citizens who failed the driving and sign test would be able to retake the test after 15 days at the traffic headquarters race course. Earlier, there was a waiting period of 6 weeks for failing the driving test, the CTO said adding, now the process would be easier to get a license, the six-week period has been reduced to 15 days so that the citizens could get the driving license easily.

Licensing facilities are being provided 24/7 for the convenience of the citizens at the traffic headquarters Race Course, said Taimur Khan adding, the citizens should get their driving license without delay. It is not allowed to drive without a driving license on the road, said the CTO. He informed, a fine amounting to Rs 2000 is imposed for driving without a license. The CTO urged the parents not to allow the children below 18 years of age to drive.

Fruitful policies of institutions need of hour : Sherry Rehman

ISLAMABAD (APP): PPP parliamentary leader in the Senate Sherry Rehman Wednesday stressed for introducing fruitful policies of Institutions which would not only encourage efficiency but also facilitate the employees.

Talking to a private news channel, she said that said Pakistan People's Party always believed in the politics of public welfare and prosperity of Pakistan.

The resolution of public problems are top priority of President Zardari and stressed the need for working round the clock on public welfare projects, she added. She said that PPP's mission is to solve and address public grievances.

Replying to a question about privatization, she said that PPP believe that if the federal government does not want to operate Steel Mills and PIA anymore, the Sindh government would be willing to acquire it, adding, we are confident we can revive it by running it under the same public-private partnership.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman has constituted a three members committee to engage government over privatization issues as PPP had the best record of protecting the worker's rights and taking initiatives for their welfare, PPP parliamentary leader in the Senate Sherry Rehman mentioned.

Racket involved in supplying drugs to students busted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an operation managed to bust a drug peddling racket involved in supplying drugs to the students and arrested two accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that the accused were supplying drugs to a major educational institution in Islamabad. Acting on a tip-off, the woman was arrested with drugs from the gate of the educational institution.

An accused arrested along with the woman drug supplier works in the canteen of the educational institution. During the search of the arrested suspect's room, hashish, opium, and more tokens of Ice were found. According to the investi-

gation, the women drug smuggler used to smuggle drugs from Peshawar and supply to the accused who disclosed selling drugs to university students. The arrested woman belongs to Nowshera while the other accused belongs to Mansehra. A case has been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigations are under process.

ANF arrests couple supplying drugs in educational institutions: The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) arrested an accused, including a woman involved in the supply of drugs in educational institutions.

According to spokesperson of ANF, the accused were supplying drugs to a major educational institu-

tion in Islamabad on a tip-off. The woman was arrested with drugs from the gate of the educational institution and the other accused arrested along with another accused works in the canteen of an educational institution. During the search of the arrested suspect's room, hashish, opium and more tokens of ice were found.

According to the investigation, the accused used to smuggle drugs from Peshawar to the accused.

The accused disclosed selling drugs to university students. The arrested accused belongs to Nowshera while the accused belongs to Mansehra.

A case has been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigation has been started.

IESCO secures 9,176 safety hazard points costing Rs 1.679b so far

ISLAMABAD, May 08 (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has secured 9176 safety hazard points costing Rs 1.679 billion so far in various circles of the company.

Being responsible and customer friendly company, IESCO cleared all the said points from its own budget told Chief Engineer Operations, Muhammad Aslam Khan. He paid tribute to IESCO line staff for their tireless efforts to ensure smooth power supply to the consumers besides prompt redressal of customer electricity related complaints.

He also emphasized on the use of safety equipment and precautions during work

on line. He directed the line staff to use all safety gadgets and follow safety SOPs to avoid an unpleasant incident while working on transmission lines.

He also warned of strict departmental action against those who were not following safety SOPs. The Chief Engineer said that they have much focused on public safety and were clearing safety hazard points i.e. electric wire crossing close/above the house, weak and tilted poles, open distribution boxes. He requested valuable customer to report such dangerous safety hazardous point to relevant SDO office, IESCO. Helpline number 118 or CCMC numbers 051-9252933-34.

‘Women role crucial in climate advocacy, mitigation to achieve community resilience’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Wednesday said the role women was crucial in climate advocacy and mitigation efforts to ward off serious impacts of environmental degradation and achieve community resilience among the vulnerable population of the country.

She was addressing the Pakistan Gender Climate Award 2024 second edition hosted by the civil society coalition for climate change, in collaboration with the Embassy of France, the French development agency, the European Union delegation to Pakistan, the UAE embassy, and UNDP.

Romina Khurshid Alam stated that Pakistan's commitment to gender inclusivity in national mainstream and climate action was unwavering as its national climate policy and adaptation plans have rightfully prioritized gender as an area for action.

PM's coordinator stated that the recognition of women achievers through this award ceremony underscores the critical nexus between gender and climate. "It serves as a powerful reminder of the indispensable role that women play in driving climate action forward, often in the face of unique challenges and barriers," she added. She also extended her heartfelt appreciation to the foreign governments represented in the event for their invaluable support and partnership in the country's collective journey towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

While congratulating the women achievers, she also remembered Mr. Shabbir Hussain, climate beat reporter who passed away while reporting & raising awareness on climate change and said her ministry was working on hosting climate award attributed to his name.

Executive Director, of the Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC), Aisha Khan in her opening remarks appreciated the commitment and dedication of the winners of the awards towards sustainability, climate resilience and action, community welfare, and innovation.

She informed the participants that the submissions for the awards continued for a month whereas it took

three months for evaluation and selection of the three most deserving candidates by a five-member jury.

The Awards were held in three main categories climate action, green enterprise, and young climate journalism with the focus on key thematic areas of strengthening of adaptive capacity of communities and ecosystems to climate change, empowering women and youth as agents of change, enhancing environmental protection and sustainability, climate advocacy, knowledge sharing, and information dissemination and innovation, she added.

"The number of applications increased fourfold as 79 entries were received this year as compared to only 20 the past year. However, the maximum applications were received under climate action followed by young climate journalism," she said. French Ambassador, Nicolas Galey said the purpose of the award to acknowledge women in innovation, sustainability and leadership was in line with the feminist diplomacy of France.

He added that the French development agency was financing projects in green development, energy, less carbon development projects and climate-smart initiatives of Pakistan.

"Gender inequality hinders development in general and women are more vulnerable to climate change and 2022 floods indicated this in the context of Pakistan. Pakistan's climate resilience would require heavy capital and investment in women's development whereas climate change mitigation and adaptation is the responsibility of all," the Ambassador said. He thanked Aisha Khan and her team at CSCCC for making the awards a success. Head of EU Delegation, Rina Kionka in her special remarks acknowledged the winner women for championing climate action and thanked them for their efforts for the cause.

She mentioned that the EU was proud of this initiative as it addressed on one hand the gender equality and development of women's goal and climate action on the other.

Kionka mentioned that EU stood for inclusive societies and was working tediously to achieve this objective, whereas women and girls were

at the very center of EU initiatives.

"EU remains committed to partner with Pakistan on its journey to a sustainable future," she added.

Deputy Head of Mission, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Muhammad Sultan AlKaitoob said the UAE recognized indispensable role of women in sustainable development and had implemented significant strides to ensure maximum women's inclusion, whereas some 50% workforce including members of the Parliament comprised of women in UAE.

"UAE is ready to collaborate with Pakistan and other countries for a sustainable world," he added.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Resident Representative, Samuel Rizk said the climate change risks were more apparent in Pakistan as during natural calamities the vulnerable were most affected and women were the most disproportionately presented in this regard. He added that Pakistan was ranked low in terms of women's gender parity, whereas the Award winners exemplified that barriers can and will be broken. Rizk lauded the CSCCC efforts for its collaboration and congratulated the winners.

The first winner in the climate action category was Qandeel Rehman, a PhD in Renewable Energy Engineering and founder of Solar-For-Her and She-In-Energy that launched solarizing of schools to improve the classroom learning environment and girl child enrollment in rural schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. French Ambassador conferred the Award to her and the Award Cheque was given by Samuel Rizk. The second award in the green enterprise category was given to Umbreen Arif, co-founder and managing director The2Magpies Nature Resort in Aliabad, Hunza promotes eco-tourism in fragile mountain areas, circular economy, sustainable development, and building capacity of mountain women as entrepreneurs. The third award was conferred upon Khalida Niaz in the young climate journalism category given away by the UAE envoy. She was executive producer and editor at Tribal News Network highlighting the impact of climate change on women using journalism to raise awareness on gender-climate nexus and amplifying female voices on climate action.

Randhawa directs to complete Blue Area Parking Plaza by June's first week: Randhawa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Randhawa Wednesday directed to complete the construction work of the Blue Area Parking Plaza by the first week of June at any cost.

During an inspection of the Blue Area Parking Plaza and other ongoing projects of the federal capital, he assured that there would be no further delay or extension in the completion timeline for the project.

On the occasion, the official of the CDA had provided detail briefing of the project and informed that the parking plaza would

comprise two basements, a ground floor and five additional floors.

He said the first floor of the parking plaza, including the construction of 18 shops, along with a restaurant and cafe on the rooftop.

The official said the parking plaza was designed to accommodate up to 1200 cars simultaneously.

Randhawa directed to complete the construction work of the ground floor shops within 20 days, with a focus on action/rental basis.

Chairman CDA stressed the allotment of shops on the first floor facing Jinnah Avenue should be made on action/rental basis.

Randhawa also visited

the Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area F-9/G-9 expansion project. During the briefing, it was informed that the project involved with addition of two lanes on both sides, covering a total length of 1.8 kilometers.

It was informed that the completion cost of the expansion project is estimated at Rs 480 million. During the visit of the Islamabad Model Jail, Randhawa said that the construction work of the jail should be completed within 100-day. He directed the first phase of jail construction work, including the boundary wall, barracks, admin block, and watchtower, will be completed within the specified timeline.

Experts urges youth to take an active part in awareness drives for protecting humanity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health experts on World Thalassemia Day appealed to people that every single drop of blood could save precious lives, urging youngsters to take an active part in awareness campaigns through social media forums to protect humanity.

"Prevention is better than cure. Every member of society must be screened for thalassemia through a simple blood test before marriage," the World Health Organization (WHO) Advisor on Blood Regulation, Availability and Safety Prof Hassan Abbas Zaheer talking to PTV news channel said.

This year's theme is "Empowering Lives, Embracing Progress: Equitable and Accessible Thalassemia Treatment for All". International Thalassemia Day is a powerful call to raise awareness about this condition and its impact while celebrating the solidarity of the resilient Thalassemia community worldwide, he mentioned.

He also highlighted the need for raising public awareness campaigns regarding blood disorders across the country, adding, students asked to regularly donate blood for thalassemia patients.

The main reason behind the spread of Thalassemia in Pakistan is lack of awareness and holding such events may create awareness among people to respond appropriately for prevention and

protection from the horrible disorder, he added.

Raising awareness about Thalassemia and its prevention through premarital screening of individuals can prove helpful in reducing the chances of its transmission to the next generation, he further stressed.

Another expert of disease Dr Saqib Ansari emphasized that the screening test plays a vital role in identifying the disorder and enabling preventive measures to combat its spread.

He explained that Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder that causes an abnormal or inadequate amount of hemoglobin. Haemoglobin is the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen. In most countries where thalassemia exists, patients with Beta-thalassemia major do not reach or surpass the age of 20 years. As they require regular blood infusions to survive.

He said that during blood shortage, such patients face serious life threats, as blood makes only a few healthy red blood cells which even do not ensure a life cycle for a long time.

He said that collecting blood donations daily for children battling Thalassemia, hemophilia, and blood cancer diseases and providing free quality blood to deserving patients was indeed great work.

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

Justice in light of Sharia applies equally to everyone



KABUL (Ariana News): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the political deputy prime minister, said Wednesday in a meeting with a number of elders, scholars and youths of the Hazara ethnic group in Kabul that justice in light of Islamic Sharia is applied equally to everyone. The deputy Prime Minister’s office said in a statement that Kabir stressed that discrimination and prejudice have no place in the Islamic system, but the main goal is to serve the people. “There is no place for ethnic, sectarian and linguistic prejudices and hypocrisy in Afghanistan. All Afghans should work together for the construction, development and prosperity of Afghanistan,” the statement read. At the gathering, elders and scholars of the Hazara community demanded resolutions regarding their legal cases and other problems and assured the IEA of comprehensive cooperation with the Islamic system, the statement added.

Eight development projects worth 44b Afghanis launched in country

KABUL (TOLONews): The Economic Deputy PM’s office has announced the commencement of eight practical development projects valued at over 44 billion Afghanis this solar month in the country. According to the economic Economic Deputy PM’s office’s statement, these projects include the construction of roads, the establishment of factories, and water management-related projects. The projects mentioned in the statement that are being implemented in collaboration with the private sector include the Herat-Ghor road project, the construction of the second part of the Kotel Khairkhana road, the road from Charahi Shahid to Qasba, the road from the Maidan Hawaiee to the customs office in Kabul, the creation of two pharmaceutical factories, a non-alcoholic beverage factory, and the Pashtun dam project. Abdul Latif Nazari, the deputy of the Ministry of Economy, told TOLONews: “The eight significant projects initiated by the Islamic Emirate in the month of Thor encompass the transport sector, the industrial sector, and the energy sector. Our aim is to manage the country’s water resources and to strengthen pharmaceutical factories, as well as the construction and maintenance of roads and highways.” However, some experts believe that the implementation of these development projects will significantly impact job creation in the country. Shakir Yaqoobi, an economic expert, told TOLONews: “We hope that by implementing these projects, we can create employment opportunities and stimulate the economic wheel.” Abdul Zuhur Mudabbir, another economic expert, said: “Work on development projects can have positive effects on the economy, including raising the GDP and national revenue.” The Chamber of Industries and Mines has stated that for major investments in the country, banking restrictions also need to be addressed. Sakhi Ahmad Payman, the first deputy of the Chamber of Industries and Mines, told TOLONews: “If banking restrictions are reduced and more facilities are provided, it will attract investment.” Previously, the Economic Deputyship of the Prime Minister’s Office had also announced the commencement of nine projects valued at over 16 million Afghanis in various sectors in the month of Hamal of the current solar year.

Tatarstan businessmen keen to invest in oil and gas sector



KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum says that the head of the ministry has met with a number of visiting businessmen and representatives of oil and gas processing companies from the Republic of Tatarstan. The ministry said at the recent meeting, the visiting businessmen outlined their experience and work in the field of oil and gas extraction and processing. In a post on X, the ministry quoted the Tatarstan group as having acknowledged an “orderly system” in Afghanistan with complete security and favorable grounds to invest. The visitors said at the meeting their companies are considering the possibility of investing in the survey, exploration and extraction processes of oil and gas in the country, as well as the refinement stage. Shahabuddin Delawer, Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, welcomed the group’s enthusiasm and said “fortunately, Afghanistan has rich oil and gas resources in various areas,” adding that currently agreements are being drawn up regarding Herat’s oil and gas blocks – something which Tatarstan businessmen could invest in. Delaware said that the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum is ready to cooperate in accordance with the relevant laws in order to facilitate investment. Tatarstan, officially a Republic of Tatarstan, is a republic of Russia located in Eastern Europe.

4,000 Afghan immigrants deported

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of Afghanistan has announced that about four thousand Afghan migrants have been returned from the countries of Iran and Pakistan. The ministry stated in a newsletter on Wednesday, May 8th, that these individuals have returned to Afghanistan over the past two days through the border crossings at Torkham, Spin Boldak, and Islam Qala. According to the newsletter, 2,831 migrants from Iran and another 1,001 from Pakistan have entered the country “forcibly and voluntarily.” The ministry mentioned that 24 unaccompanied children were also among the returning migrants from Iran who have been referred to the National Immigration Agency for assistance and family identification. This comes at a time when the deportation of Afghan migrants from Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey has increased in recent months. Previously, several international organizations and the United Nations have expressed concerns about the deportation of Afghan migrants from Pakistan and Iran and have called for a halt to this process.

China to donate \$1.5m to support displaced Afghans

KABUL (Khaama Press): During a meeting with Leonard Zulu, the UNHCR Representative for Afghanistan, Zhao Xing, the Chinese Ambassador to Kabul, stated that his country intends to donate \$1.5 million to support internally displaced Afghans. Leonard Zulu appreciated China’s assistance in a post on social media platform X. The Chinese Embassy in Kabul announced that this contribution will support UNHCR projects supporting internally displaced persons in Afghanistan. The statement mentioned that China is eager to strengthen its cooperation with the UNHCR in providing humanitarian aid to Afghanistan. In a post on the social media platform X, Leonard Zulu also wrote that he had discussed with the Chinese ambassador how the private sector in China could help create jobs for returning Afghan migrants by assisting large and medium-sized companies. This situation unfolds against the backdrop of a dire humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, which the forced deportations from neighbouring countries, including Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey, have further exacerbated. The current situation has worsened as displaced Afghans return, already burdened by the scarcity of resources and unstable conditions in their homeland. The continuous influx from these forced deportations adds additional strain to Afghanistan’s limited humanitarian aid capabilities.

Afghanistan, Kazakhstan strengthen trade relations

KABUL (BNA): The Minister of Industry and Commerce, Nooruddin Azizi, hailed the opening of the Kazakhstan Chamber of Commerce in Afghanistan as an effective step. The ceremony, attended by key dignitaries including Sheikh Noor Ahmad Islam Jar, the governor of Herat, and officials from various chambers of commerce and industries, marked a milestone in enhancing bilateral trade relations. Speaking at the event, Minister Azizi emphasized the positive impact of the Kazakhstan Trade House on strengthening and expanding trade ties between the two nations. The Minister Nooruddin Azizi highlighted that the establishment of the trade house was a direct outcome of the official and private sector delegation’s visit to Afghanistan for the Trade Connectivity Conference, bilateral trade meetings, and Afghanistan’s product exhibitions held in the capital city of Kazakhstan last year. Arman Yussentayev, the head of the Kazakhstan Chamber of Commerce in Afghanistan, expressed the Republic of Kazakhstan’s aim to boost the volume and value of trade exchanges between the two countries. He affirmed that Kazakhstan is keen on expanding trade relations with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, underlining their interest in fostering economic cooperation. The inauguration of the Kazakhstan Chamber of Commerce signifies a renewed commitment to strengthening economic ties between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan. The collaboration between Afghanistan and Kazakhstan in the realm of trade is crucial for the economic growth and prosperity of both nations. The opening of the Kazakhstan Trade House is a testament to the determination of both countries to forge stronger economic partnerships and explore new avenues of cooperation.

IE responds to Zionist Regime’s attack

KABUL (BNA): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan condemns the brutal attack by the Zionist regime on Gaza city of Rafah. The Rafah City, located in southern Gaza, has become the final refuge for 1.4 million Palestinian Muslims who were displaced from northern Gaza, central Gaza, and Khan Yunis during the six-month war and bombardment. They currently endure dire conditions, living in constant fear and terror. Once again, the Zionist occupier regime has committed a major crime against all the international principles by ruthlessly targeting Palestinian Muslims through relentless bombardment. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan condemns this act as a war crime and mass killing of Palestinian Muslims. Once again, it urges the Islamic world and other nations to raise their voices against this catastrophe and to strive in every possible way to deliver food, medicine, and humanitarian aid to the besieged Muslims in Gaza. Regrettably, up to now, influential governments and the World have been unable to halt the Zionist regime’s genocide of Palestinians. The absence of effective measures in this regard has emboldened the Zionist regime to reject Hamas’s peace proposal once again and persist in its ruthless bombing of innocent Muslims and the ongoing occupation of their lands.

Three killed in Faizabad explosion

B A D A K H S A N (TOLONews): In an explosion targeting a security forces convoy in the center of Badakhshan province, three members of the Islamic Emirate forces were killed, and five others were injured on Wednesday. The Ministry of Interior, confirming these statistics, said that the incident resulted from the explosion of a motorcycle loaded with explosives, which targeted the security forces’ convoy in the city of Faizabad before noon on Wednesday. Abdul Matin Qani, the spokesman of the ministry, said: “The magnetic mine exploded just as a security forces convoy was passing through the area on a mission to eradicate poppy cultivation. According to preliminary information, unfortunately, three security forces members were martyred, and five others



were injured.” “As local residents, we are cooperating with them so that such an incident does not occur again,” said Rasul, a resident of Badakhshan. “We are very worried. The women and children are all scared at home,” another resident of Badakhshan said. So far, no individual or group has claimed responsibility for the explosion. “I was sitting in the shop when a loud explosion occurred. One car stopped and other cars also stopped behind it. After that, they did not let us leave the shop,” said Amanullah, a witness to the event. Meanwhile, a number of Badakhshan residents asked the Islamic Emirate to make more efforts in securing the province.

People complain about rising unemployment

KABUL (TOLONews): A number of young people in the capital are complaining about increasing unemployment. They say that despite having educational degrees, there are no job opportunities available for them. Shahzad, a 25-year-old who graduated from Kabul University’s Faculty of Journalism in Public Relations, says he has turned to selling clothes due to the lack of jobs in his field, but his dream is to find a job in his profession. Shahzad, a resident of Kabul, told TOLONews, “Currently, my dream is to secure a better and suitable job in my field, like others who have studied and achieved their dreams.” Rafiuallah is another youth who sells vegetables on the streets of Kabul due to economic challenges. He is asking the Islamic Emirate to facilitate job opportunities for them. He said, “The government should facilitate work; projects should open up so people can work. We have no other demands, thanks be to peace.” Moreover, Mohammad



Younus Rashid, the Deputy Minister of Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Information and Culture, in a meeting with the Deputy of the World Food Programme in Afghanistan, announced the development of a solution to address the unemployment challenges of young people. Rashid has asked the Deputy of the World Food Programme to introduce an online work program in technical centers. The Deputy Minister of Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Information and Culture said, “WFP should also provide job opportunities for educated young people alongside those who are uneducated, as educated youths are facing unemployment and challenges.” Meanwhile, the World Food Programme has announced a reduction in its aid in Afghanistan, stating that this agency will be able to assist 5.2 million dollars people in May, but after that, the aid will decrease to four hundred thousand people. This occurs while unemployment and poverty have forced the country’s citizens to rely more on humanitarian aid.

IEA’s Chief of Army vows to eradicate drugs



KABUL (BNA): The Chief of Army in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Qari Fasihiuddin Fitrat, addressed protesters in the province of Badakhshan, emphasizing the government’s strong commitment to eradicating drugs and addressing the concerns of drug addiction plaguing Afghanistan and Islamic countries. He assured the demonstrators that there is no dual policy in the Islamic Emirate and that the command to ban drug cultivation is based on religious principles rather than political considerations. Chief of Army Fitrat declared that the Supreme Leader had issued explicit directives to combat the proliferation of drugs, highlighting it as a paramount issue. He emphasized the Islamic Emirate’s unwavering dedication to tackling drug trafficking without any hindrance. The Chief of Army outlined a comprehensive approach to drug prohibition, which includes issuing directives, local government actions against cultivation, crackdowns on traffickers, dispatching special teams, and establishing local oversight committees. A delegation from the Islamic Emirate reached an agreement with the representatives of two martyrs’ families, local elders, and influential figures from the Argo and Drayem districts in Badakhshan province. The meeting aimed to address recent incidents

and find common ground to combat drug trafficking effectively. As a result, tensions have been fully resolved, and both parties have pledged their cooperation in the fight against drug cultivation. Representatives of the protesters, in an interview with the Bakhtar News Agency (BNA), expressed their satisfaction with the Islamic system and the security provision in the country. They confirmed that the agreements reached regarding drug eradication have been successfully resolved. The protesters pledged their support and cooperation with the security forces, vowing to actively participate in efforts to destroy drug cultivation fields.

Israel pounds Gaza as truce talks resume in Cairo

RAFAH (AFP): Israel bombarded the overcrowded Gaza city of Rafah, where it has launched a ground incursion, as talks resumed Wednesday in Cairo aimed at agreeing the terms of a truce in the seven-month war. Despite international objections, Israel sent tanks into Rafah on Tuesday and seized the nearby crossing into Egypt that is the main conduit for aid into the besieged Palestinian territory.

The White House condemned the interruption to humanitarian deliveries, with a senior US official later revealing Washington had paused a shipment of bombs last week after Israel failed to address US concerns over its Rafah plans. The Israeli military said hours later it was reopening another major aid crossing into Gaza, Kerem Shalom, as well as the Erez crossing.

But the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said the Kerem Shalom crossing — which Israel shut after a rocket attack killed four soldiers on Sunday — remained closed. It came after a night of heavy Israeli strikes and shelling across Gaza. AFPTV footage showed Palestinians scrambling in the dark to pull survivors, bloodied and caked in dust, out from under the rubble of a Rafah building.

Russia said on Wednesday that the

war in Gaza was escalating due to Israel's incursion into Rafah and that Moscow so far saw no prospect for a peace settlement in Gaza or the wider Middle East. "An additional destabilizing factor, including for the entire region, was the launch of an Israeli military ground operation in Rafah," Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told reporters.

"About one and a half million Palestinian civilians are concentrated there. In this regard, we demand strict compliance with the provisions of international humanitarian law." Speaking more broadly about efforts to find a lasting settlement in the Middle East, Zakharova said: "I would like to call it a settlement, but, alas, it is far from a settlement."

"There are no prospects for resolving the situation in the Gaza Strip. On the contrary, the situation in the conflict zone is escalating daily." "We are living in Rafah in extreme fear and endless anxiety as the occupation army keeps firing artillery shells indiscriminately," said Muhanad Ahmad Qishta, 29.

"Rafah is a witnessing a very large displacement, as places the Israeli army claims to be safe are also being bombed," he said. The Gaza war was sparked by Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel, which

resulted in the deaths of more than 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of Israeli official figures.

Israel in response vowed to crush Hamas and launched a military offensive that has killed at least 34,789 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry. Militants also took around 250 people hostage, of whom Israel estimates 128 remain in Gaza, including 36 who are believed to be dead.

Talks aimed at agreeing a ceasefire resumed in Cairo on Wednesday "in the presence of all parties," Egyptian media reported. A senior Hamas official said the latest round of negotiations would be "decisive." "The resistance insists on the rightful demands of its people and will not give up any of our people's rights," he said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly on the negotiations.

The official had previously warned it would be Israel's "last chance" to free the scores of hostages still in militants' hands. Mediators have failed to broker a new truce since a week-long ceasefire in November saw 105 hostages freed, the Israelis among them in exchange for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

India arrests 4 accused of recruiting for Russian army

NEW DELHI (AFP): Indian authorities have arrested four people accused of "trafficking" Indian citizens to fight for the Russian army in Ukraine. Two years since Russia's invasion began, tens of thousands of its soldiers have been killed in Ukraine and Moscow has been on a global quest for more troops.

At least two Indian soldiers have been killed in the conflict, with several recruits telling AFP they were shipped to the frontlines under false pretenses. A statement published by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) late on Tuesday said four men had been arrested, including one who had worked in Russia as a translator for a network facilitating the recruitment of Indian soldiers.

"Investigation is continuing against other accused persons who are part of this international network of human traffickers," the statement added. The arrests come two months after the investigators conducted raids across 13 locations in India and detained several people for questioning. The CBI said then that it had found at least 35 instances of Indians being sent to Russia.

India's foreign ministry had earlier said it was working to secure discharges for around 20 Indian nationals in the Russian army. Several Indian recruits told AFP in February that they were lured into joining up by promises of high salaries and Russian passports before being shipped to the frontlines.

The soldiers said they had been promised non-combatant roles but were trained to use Kalashnikov assault rifles and other weapons before being sent to Ukraine. Russia's army held off a much-hyped Ukrainian counter-offensive last year, and it has since made gains on the front lines as Kyiv struggles with ammunition and manpower shortages.

India is a longstanding ally of Russia and has shied away from explicit condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine. Unemployment remains high in India despite rapid economic growth and huge numbers seek work abroad each year, including thousands who had sought employment in Israel after labour shortages sparked by its military campaign in Gaza.

Rubina named as BISP Chairperson

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari Wednesday approved the appointment of Rubina Khalid as Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

He also accepted the resignation of Dr Amjad Saqib from his position as Chairperson, a press release issued by the President House said. The president approved the appointment under Section 5(3) of the Benazir Income Support Programme Act 2010.

Lawyers, police clash in Lahore amid protest

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Violence erupted outside the Lahore High Court on Wednesday as clashes broke out between lawyers and police during a protest against the relocation of civil courts to Model Town court. The police arrested several lawyers during the clash that created panic in the area.

The protest, which initially began peacefully, turned chaotic when police attempted to disperse the demonstrators, resulting in several injuries to lawyers and law enforcement officials.

According to eyewitnesses, tensions escalated when lawyers were denied entry to the Chief Justice's chamber, prompting a forceful response from the police, who utilized batons, tear gas, and water cannons to control the situation. "In

response to the unrest, the Lahore High Court closed all its doors, prohibiting entry to anyone," stated DIG Operations Faisal Kamran, emphasizing the imperative of maintaining law and order within the court premises.

Kamran further warned that any attempt to disrupt peace would be met with a swift police response, particularly cautioning against the pelting of stones.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz today instructed the Punjab's Inspector General of Police (IGP) to refrain from using force against protesting lawyers outside the Lahore High Court (LHC). In a tweet, Nawaz emphasized the need to avoid confrontation to ensure the safety of Lahore's residents. She urged the legal community to resolve their grievances with the LHC amicably.

The directive comes amidst escalating tensions outside the LHC, where hundreds of lawyers protested against the registration of cases under terrorism-related sections against their colleagues and the relocation of some courts. Clashes erupted between the lawyers and a heavy police outside the high court.

According to DIG Operations Muhammad Faisal Kamran, the lawyers attempted to storm the LHC. He confirmed the arrest of over 20 lawyers, who were subsequently taken into custody and moved to various police stations. The incident underscores the complexity of the situation and the pressing need for dialogue and de-escalation between law enforcement and legal professionals to uphold public safety and the rule of law.



LAHORE: A view of clashes between lawyers and police as lawyers trying to enter High Court.

HRCP Report finds gross economic injustice

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Apart from the political polarization that continued through 2023, resulting in greater restrictions on civil and political rights, the year was marked by acute distress among ordinary people, caused by the cost-of-living crisis and manifested in large-scale protests countrywide.

In its annual report on the state of human rights in 2023, released earlier today, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has thus called for economic justice and protection of civil rights. The report notes with deep concern that irreparable political divisions spilled over into public acts of arson and violence on 9 May 2023, following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan. What followed was flagrant disregard for the Constitution as unelected forces tightened their grip on the country's democratic structures and civic spaces shrank to an all-time low.

The state's response to the 9 May riots was to quell dissent—to the extent of resurrecting military courts to try civilians, perpetrating enforced disappearances, ordering mass arrests and

allegedly orchestrating public disassociation from the PTI among many senior party leaders. The right to freedom of expression and assembly took a particular hit during the year. The general elections were also delayed well beyond the 90-day constitutional limit on various grounds, including the need for new delimitations on the basis of the recent census.

The rule of law was markedly poor, with a record six-year high in fatalities related to terrorist attacks and counter-terrorism operations and two militant attacks in Bajaur and Mastung, that collectively left at least 117 dead. The practice of extrajudicial killings continued, while street crime and the incidence of mob lynchings surged.

As in previous years, journalists, activists and political workers were subjected to enforced disappearances across the country. In an admirable show of strength, however, young Baloch women mobilized a long march from Turbat to Islamabad to protest against extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

Among vulnerable groups, religious minorities reported an increasing cli-

mate of fear, especially in the aftermath of an attack in Jaranwala, Punjab, in which scores of churches and homes were torched and looted by mobs, following allegations of blasphemy against a Christian man. In the wake of the federal government's decision to expel undocumented foreigners, Afghan nationals in particular were rounded up in police raids and sent to deportation centres with little to no legal recourse.

Speaking at the launch of the report, HRCP secretary-general Harris Khalique said that the 2023 economic crisis had 'pushed tens of millions of ordinary citizens to the brink of desperation.' Commenting on the high incidence of enforced disappearances, he also deplored the role and performance of the Commission of Inquiry of Enforced Disappearances as 'disgraceful.'

HRCP chairperson Asad Iqbal Butt said that it was critical for the state to fulfil people's right to education, livelihood and health. Expressing concern over the low rate of trade unionization, he said that attempts to unionize workers were routinely met with harassment and intimidation.



QUETTA: President Asif Ali Zardari seen off by Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail and Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti at conclusion of his official visit.

PPP demands accountability for May 9 attacks

F.P. Report

KARACHI/ISLAMABAD/ LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has condemned May 9 as yet another dark chapter in the nation's history. He urged that justice must prevail for the perpetrators who attacked Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's residence, Jinnah House, and military installations, adding that the violence on May 9 was a malevolent scheme aimed at sowing chaos and enforcing fascism in the country.

According to the press release from the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, in his message, said that the instigator behind the strongly condemnable events of May 9 is well-known to everyone. He emphasized that Pakistan cannot afford to ignore the violence that perpetuated on May 9. He further said that such actions have no precedence in Pakistan's political history, adding that leaking classified documents and attacking military installations is not politics; it's anti-national.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that his party, the PPP, supports the demand for a judicial inquiry, overseen by the Chief Justice, is imperative for investigating the events of May 9. However, he emphasized that for this to occur, all parties, including the PTI, must commit to accepting whatever decision the judicial commission arrives at.

Hajj flight to depart today

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan's Ministry of Religious Affairs announced today that the country's first Hajj flight of the year is scheduled to depart from Karachi airport on Thursday, carrying 180 pilgrims.

The flight departure is set for 1:45 am local time, with a second flight of 150 pilgrims departing for Medina at 2 am. During the month-long pre-Hajj flights operation, over 68,000 intending pilgrims, part of the government's regular Hajj scheme, will be flown to Saudi Arabia via 259 flights.

The majority of flights, spanning from May 24 to June 9, will land in Jeddah. Post-Hajj flight operations from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan are slated to commence on June 20. On Thursday, the inaugural day, a total of 11 flights will transport 2,160 intending pilgrims to Medina from various airports across Pakistan. Notably, Islamabad will dispatch three flights carrying 680 pilgrims, Karachi will witness two flights with 330 pilgrims, and Lahore will facilitate three flights with 670 pilgrims. Additionally, the first Hajj flights from Quetta and Sukkur are scheduled for May 11 and 27, respectively.

Preparations for the intending pilgrims have been finalized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony. This includes the mandatory vaccination of pilgrims conducted on April 30. Furthermore, pilgrims are required to carry smartphones to access essential apps during their Hajj journey.

Internal rifts surfaces in PTI

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Fault lines within the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership have seemingly worsened as its senior leader Sher Afzal Marwat Wednesday announced his decision against working with senior party leaders.

"I refuse to work with Shibli Faraz and Omar Ayub [...] they didn't allow me to meet PTI founder Imran Khan [in prison]," Marwat said while speaking to the media outside Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. "I was denied meeting the party founder yesterday as well as today," he added.

Marwat's remarks come days after the party revoked his nomination for the post of National Assembly's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman and named Sheikh Waqas Akram for the said office. PTI Secretary General and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub and Senator Shibli Faraz had

summoned a political committee meeting to withdraw Marwat's name, sources said, adding that they suggested Akram's name as his replacement. During voting, the sources said, Asad Qaiser, Sheharyar Afridi, Shandana Gulzar, and Zulfi Bukhari came forward in favour of Marwat.

Lamenting that the PTI founder was misguided on every issue, Marwat, quoting Faraz, said that the party backtracked over his name for the PAC chairman post after Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) raised objections to his nomination. "I have been targeted since February 8 [elections] and I have appraised the party founder about it", Marwat said while stressing that he has no interest in holding offices.

"I would resign from the National Assembly if the [PTI] founder even hints me so," he added. Claiming that he picked up the PTI when it had become a "dead horse", he lamented that he

was de-notified as a member of the political committee despite being appointed to the said body by Imran Khan himself.

"I cannot accept [such] disrespect [...] I am leaving and will only come back to meet the PTI founder when I'm called," he said. He also claimed that the party's social media team was against him. Stressing the need for protests, the outspoken politician said that the restoration of the mandate and freedom of the PTI founder couldn't be achieved without demonstrations. "Let the nation see whether there is a countrywide protest on May 9 tomorrow or not," he said.

This is not the first time Marwat has been at loggerheads with other party leaders as previously PTI's Taimur Khan Jhagra had raised objections over his prospective candidacy from Peshawar. Last month, he was even engaged in an online spat with Imran's close aide Salman Ahmad.

KP CM launches wheat procurement process

F.P. Report

DI KHAN: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, on Wednesday, added that pragmatic steps are being taken to this effect. "It will be ensured that farmers are provided with their due rights without any hindrance are problems" he said and added that necessary steps have been taken to make the overall procurement process transparent; committees have also been formed at district level in addition to establishing a control room and introducing online app for this purpose.

He said that the provincial government will get a benefit of Rs. 12 billion by purchasing wheat from local farmers, which would be utilized for the construction and renovation of wheat warehouses. He made it clear that wheat procurement would be carried out on the basis of first come, first served. He asked the farmers community to come forward and play their proactive role in implementing the provincial government's policy aimed at ensuring wheat

that prosperity of farmers, their encouragement and facilitating them is one of the priority areas of the provincial government, adding that pragmatic steps are being taken to this effect. "It will be ensured that farmers are provided with their due rights without any hindrance are problems" he said and added that necessary steps have been taken to make the overall procurement process transparent; committees have also been formed at district level in addition to establishing a control room and introducing online app for this purpose.

He said that the provincial government will get a benefit of Rs. 12 billion by purchasing wheat from local farmers, which would be utilized for the construction and renovation of wheat warehouses. He made it clear that wheat procurement would be carried out on the basis of first come, first served. He asked the farmers community to come forward and play their proactive role in implementing the provincial government's policy aimed at ensuring wheat

procurement in an efficient and transparent manner.

He made it clear that there would be no compromise on quality, adding that strict action would be taken against both the bribe taker and giver. He maintained that the provincial government has decided to have zero tolerance policy against corruption and bribery in all the government departments, adding that all possible steps would be taken to ensure transparency in all government matters including postings/transfers.

The people would have to play their respective role in this regard, and they should never pay bribes to get their due rights, as engaging in bribery is a corrupt practice that involves both the parties. Therefore, he said that both the parties found involved in bribery, would be held accountable. He said that corruption and bribery, unfortunately, have become the menace of our society, we must have to root out this scourge for all and all the stakeholders including general public would have to play their respective role in this regard.

Pakistan's lunar mission 'ICUBE-Q' enters moon orbit

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's first lunar mission, iCube Qamar, has been successfully deployed in orbit, Dr Khurram Khurshid, a member of the core team at the Institute of Space Technology (IST), told media on Wednesday.

He said the orbiter was successfully deployed in lunar orbit on 8th May at 1:14pm PST, terming the development "a great success overall".

Following its deployment, the satellite will allow imaging of the desired Lunar surfaces in a carefully selected 12-hour elliptical orbit. The iCube Qamar was launched on board China's Chang'e-6 from Hainan, China, on May 3. Ahead of the launch of the satellite last week, Dr Khurram said that the Pakistani satellite —

carried by China's Long March-5 rocket — will reach the lunar orbit in five days and will circle around the moon for three to six months.

He added that different pictures of the surface of the moon will be taken with the help of satellite after which Pakistan will have its own satellite images of the moon for research. The satellite was designed and developed by the Islamabad-based Institute of Space Technology (IST) in collaboration with China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) and Pakistan's national space agency Suparco.

iCube Qamar orbiter carries two optical cameras to image the lunar surface. Following successful qualification and testing, the orbiter was integrated with China's Chang'e6 mission

— the sixth in a series of lunar exploration missions. CubeSats are a class of small satellites used by academic institutes for experimental and research purposes in low Earth orbits, generally with an altitude of less than 1,000 km.

However, these satellites are now finding many applications in higher orbits and deep space missions. Moon is in an elliptical orbit at an average distance of around 384,400 km from the Earth which makes it challenging to communicate with and control small satellites.

The opportunity to release CubeSat into lunar orbit from the Chang'e-6 mission was offered by the China National Space Agency (CNSA) through the Asia Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO) to member states.