

PM to depart for S Arabia
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is set to depart for a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia next week, accompanied by a high-level delegation including the Deputy Prime Minister, key federal ministers, and senior officials. During the visit, he will hold discussions with Saudi officials on enhancing trade and economic cooperation, promoting investment, and strengthening bilateral ties.



@thefrontierpost

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

Tarar distributes ration
F.P. Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said that the incumbent government is taking solid steps to ensure progress and prosperity in the country besides improving the lives of the less privileged segment of society. He said this while distributing ration among people of his constituency NA-127 along with his mother Sajida Tarar, here on Saturday.

The Frontier Post

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 48

Regd. No. 241

RAMAZAN 15 1446 -- SUNDAY, MARCH 16 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

Security forces kill 9 terrorists, two jawans martyred

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Nine Khwarij were killed in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. On reported presence of Khwarij, an intelligence based operation was conducted by the Security Forces in Mohmand District. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarijs' location, resultantly, seven khwarij were sent to hell.

However, during intense fire exchange, two brave sons of soil, Havildar Muhammad Zahid (age: 37 years, resident of District Malakand) and Sepoy Aftab Ali Shah (age: 26 years, resident of District Chitral) having fought gallantly, rendered the ultimate sacrifice and embraced shahadat.

In another encounter that took place in general area Maddi, Dera Ismail Khan District, fire exchange took place between own troops and khwarij. Resultantly, two khwarij were effectively neutralized. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed khwarij, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities. Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Kharji found in the area as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism

from the country.

President Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani Saturday lauded the security forces for two successful operations against Khwarij in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He commended the security forces for their bravery in killing nine Khwarij.

He paid tribute to the two brave Jawans for embracing martyrdom during the operations. He applauded the bravery of the sons of the nation for sacrificing their lives for the country. He said the brave armed forces were carrying out successful operations for eradicating Fitna al-Khwarij. The President expressed determination to continue operations till complete elimination of terrorism. He said the whole nation stood with the security forces in the war against terrorism.

President Gilani prayed for the elevation of ranks of the martyrs in Jannah and for grant of patience to the bereaved families.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Saturday lauded the officers and Jawans of security forces for successful intelligence based operation against Fitna Al-Khwarij in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He appreciated the officers and Jawans of security forces for their professional capabilities for eliminating nine Khwarij in Mohmand and Dera Ismail Khan.

He paid tribute to Havaladar

Muhammad Zahid and Sepoy Aftab Ali Shah for embracing martyrdom for the country while fighting bravely and killing Khwarij. He prayed for the elevation of ranks of martyrs in Jannah and for the grant of patience to the bereaved families.

He said the war against the menace of terrorism would continue till its complete eradication from the country. The nation stood with the armed forces in the war against terrorism, he added. He said the whole Pakistani nation was proud of its brave Jawans, who were giving their lives for the nation, and their families.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday lauded the security forces for eliminating nine terrorists in operations conducted in Mohmand and Dera Ismail Khan districts.

In a statement, Governor Kundi also paid tribute to the two security personnel who were martyred during the operations. Expressing heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs, he prayed for the elevation of their ranks in Jannat.

He reaffirmed the nation's unwavering support for the security forces in their fight against terrorism, saying that the entire country stands united in eradicating this menace. "We salute the sacrifices of our martyrs for the security and sovereignty of the nation," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif being briefed about the layout plan of Danish University of Emerging Sciences.

Thousands of Palestinians hold rally in London

PM sees Daanish Varsity to compete with global peers

Saqib Mushtaq

LONDON: Thousands of Palestinian supporters gathered in central London on Saturday to protest Britain's continued military and political support for Israel. The protest, which started in Piccadilly Circus and continued towards the U.K. prime minister's office (opposite Downing Street), is the second largest demonstration in London since the ceasefire in Gaza was announced.

Demonstrators, holding Palestinian flags and placards with slogans such as "Free Palestine" and "Stop supporting Israel," demanded an end to London's arms and diplomatic support for Tel Aviv. "We are here today to send a clear message to the British government: Stop your complicity with Israel," Bin Jamal, head of the Solidarity Campaign with the Palestinian People and one of the organizers of the protest rally, told IRNA.

"The British government has turned a blind eye to Israel's blatant crimes - from cutting off water and electricity to Gaza to relentless attacks on civilians. While the United Nations has published reports about the Israeli military's use of sexual violence against Palestinians, our government has not uttered a single word to condemn these crimes," he said. In holding the rally, the protesters defied strict restrictions imposed by the government on anti-Israeli gatherings. In previous demonstrations, a number of participants, including members of human rights organizations, were arrested by police. Despite these restrictions, protesters said they would continue their protests until Palestine is liberated. — Agencies

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that establishment of Daanish University in Islamabad would not only become a model in the country but would also carve a niche among the world's top educational centers on basis of quality education, research and development in applied sciences.

Addressing a ceremony at the site review of Daanish University of Emerging Sciences at Sector H-16, the prime minister said that it was a moment of joy for everyone as a piece of land of 100 acre was allocated for the establishment of Daanish University. The prime minister said that no doubt, the country had good educational centers spread across in different provinces, but as far as he remembered, there was no proper research and development educational center dedicated to the modern applied sciences.

He expressed the hope that Daanish University could be equal to world-renowned educational institutions like Stanford, Oxford, MIT and others, adding that on Aug 14, 2026, the first section of the university would be operationalized. He further informed that the government would have no relation with its functions and administration as it would work autonomously like the PKLI where legislation was made in this regard. PKLI was now functioning in the best way in the healthcare sector.

Students from all over the country would get enrollment in different faculties of the university purely on the basis of merit. A Trust would be created and initially, the government would provide Rs10billion as seed money and later, it would run on the amount collected from fees of wealthy students while the poor students would be

Premier keeps PoL prices unchanged

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has decided to keep petroleum product prices unchanged for the next fortnight and divert the relief from a decrease in petrol prices in the international market towards a notable downward revision in the power tariff for the masses.

The federal government aims to maintain petroleum product prices and transfer the full financial benefit to the masses through power tariff, the PM Office said in a statement on Saturday. The move will be one of many steps taken by the government to achieve a meaningful reduction in the electricity rates, the premier said.

A package is being prepared under a comprehensive and effective strategy to slash power prices, PM Shehbaz said, adding that the details of the relief measure for the public are being finalised by utilising the financial space created due to fluctuations in global oil prices. The statement added that the power tariff reduction package would be unveiled in the coming weeks. The premier said his administration remains committed to prioritising public relief since coming into power.

He expressed his aim to provide further relief for the masses alongside the power tariff reduction. "The relief will not only reduce electricity prices but will also have a broader impact on inflation, leading to a further decrease," said the premier. The PM will address the nation to announce the major relief measure.

assisted. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, ministers, parliamentarians, experts and relevant authorities. The prime minister said that names of the board of governors of Daanish University had been finalized so that the brilliant minds could contribute. The campus would be constructed with red facade which would have all the allied facilities, he added.

About functioning of the Daanish schools across Punjab province, he said a large number of orphans and poor students were getting education there. The centers equipped with free education, smart boards, IT labs, dormitories etc. were providing all facilities to the students from backward areas, he added.

He also appreciated teachers who left their well-paid jobs to teach students in far-

flung areas at Daanish schools. The prime minister opined that the immense talent in those areas would have been wasted if the students were not properly educated. He emphasized they could realize the real objectives of a prosperous Pakistan by striving to provide quality education to all.

The prime minister also expressed his gratitude to former Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and the incumbent CJP Yahya Afridi for transferring the amount of 190 million pounds to government's exchequer which would be utilized for the establishment of Daanish University. The prime minister stressed that nations were built on basis of hard work and not by seeking of loans or funds and resolved to strive to make Pakistan a stronger and prosperous country and to realize the ideals of its founder Quaid e Azam.

IED blast on police mobile injures three cops in Lakki Marwat

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: In yet another terror incident in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, at least three cops sustained injuries in IED blast targeting police mobile in Lakki Marwat.

According to police officials, the blast occurred in the jurisdiction of Dadiwala police station, injuring three cops and severely damaging the police mobile vehicle. The police officials stated that in the exchange of firing at one terrorist was gunned down, whereas his motorcycle and ammunition was also confiscated.

The injured cops have been rushed to the nearby hospital, police spokesperson added. Earlier, a terrorist attack on a security check post in Jandola was thwarted by security forces, resulting in the deaths of 10 terrorists. According to security sources, the attack was repelled timely and effectively by Pakistan Army. Whereas one of the terrorists detonated himself at the gate during the attack.

Meanwhile, a terrorist was killed in an exchange of fire with police in Kurrum Par area on Saturday. Police said that a group of terrorists attacked a police post in Abbasa Khattak area prompting police to retaliate in the same manner. "An effective response by police forced the attackers to flee", they maintained, saying that police chased the terrorists in mountains and killed one of them during a fierce gun battle. They said that armed villagers also assisted police in their action against terrorists.

Terrorists attack police stations, post

F.P. Report

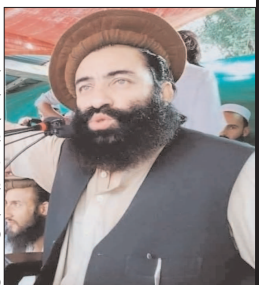
BANNU: Terrorists launched coordinated attacks on two police stations and a police post in Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, triggering an exchange of fire between the assailants and security personnel, officials said. Unidentified motorcyclists hurled two hand grenades at the Khojri police post. However, no casualties were reported in the attack. Following the incident, local residents took up arms to support the police and announced that elders of the area would play an active role in safeguarding the post.

Meanwhile, militants also targeted Bakakhel and Ghoriwala police stations, where gunfire was exchanged between security forces and the attackers. The incidents, occurring simultaneously at three different locations, spread panic in the region. Security forces have launched a search operation in the area to track down the assailants, while law enforcement agencies have tightened security measures to prevent further attacks. Local residents have vowed to cooperate with the police in countering terrorist threats, reaffirming their commitment to maintaining peace in the area.

Mufti Munir Shakir dies in blast

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The founder of the proscribed Lashkar-e-Islam Mufti Munir Shakir, succumbed to injuries sustained in a bomb blast near a mosque in Peshawar. The incident occurred in the limits of the Armar police station, when an improvised explosive device (IED) detonated outside the mosque. Three other individuals were injured in the blast and were immediately transported to Lady Reading Hospital for medical treatment. Meanwhile, police launched an investigation into the nature of the attack. In a video message, Mohammad Asim, a spokesman for the Lady Reading Hospital (LRH), said: "Mufti Shakir was brought to LRH in critical condition and succumbed to his injuries," adding that the hospital was in the process of handing over the body to his heirs.



Saif blasts federal govt policies

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations, Barrister Dr. Saif, has stated that the country is engulfed in terrorism while the illegitimate federal government remains in a state of negligence. He criticized the federal government for neither taking effective diplomatic measures nor formulating any internal strategy to tackle the situation.

In his statement, Barrister Dr. Saif said that the illegitimate federal government holds Afghanistan responsible for terrorism but is unwilling to engage in diplomatic talks. He further mentioned that there has been no response to the Terms of Reference (TORs) sent for negotiations with Afghanistan. He emphasized that while the federal government is neither negotiating with Afghanistan itself nor allowing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to do so, dialogue with Afghanistan is essential to curb terrorism.

Pakistan, IMF near staff level agreement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) team, led by Nathan Porter, and Pakistani authorities have made significant progress toward reaching a Staff Level Agreement (SLA) on the first review under the 37-month Extended Arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

Porter stated this in his end-of-mission statement as the delegation visited Islamabad and Karachi from Feb 24 to March 14, 2025, to hold discussions on the first review of Pakistan's economic programme supported by EFF and on a possible new arrangement under the IMF's Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).

"Program implementation has been strong, and the discussions have made considerable progress in several areas including the planned fiscal consolidation to durably reduce public debt, maintenance of

sufficiently tight monetary policy to maintain low inflation, acceleration of cost-reducing reforms to improve energy sector viability, and implementation of Pakistan's structural reform agenda to accelerate growth, while strengthening social protection and rebuilding health and education spending," read the statement.

Porter said progress had also been made in discussions on the authorities' climate reform agenda, which aims to reduce vulnerabilities from natural disasters-related risks, and accompanying reforms which could be supported under a possible arrangement under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF).

He added that mission and the authorities would continue policy discussions virtually to finalise these discussions over the coming days. He also thanked the Pakistani authorities, private sector, and development partners for fruitful discussions and their hospi-

ality throughout this mission. A day earlier, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) delegation assured Pakistan of economic cooperation during the economic review. The IMF officials were in Pakistan to conduct the review for release of a \$1 billion tranche under the \$7 billion bailout package.

The two-week long economic review and negotiations between the Pakistani authorities and the officials of the global lender concluded on March 14. For final round of talks, the delegation visited the Ministry of Finance where they met Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb.

The visiting officials lauded the performance and measures taken by the country's economic team. During the meeting, Aurangzeb assured the IMF of achieving all economic targets. He stated that no targets would be violated while staying in the loan programme.



Admissions Open Postgraduate Medical Education Fellowship Programme

Apply by April 7, 2025

www.aku.edu/mcpk/pgme

pgme.admissions@aku.edu
+92 3486 2357 / 4546 / 4534



CM calls for global action against Islamophobia

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has strongly condemned discrimination, hatred, and prejudice against Muslims worldwide, emphasizing the need for global action to combat Islamophobia.

In her message on the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, she highlighted that Pakistan has taken a leading role in addressing this issue by presenting a resolution against Islamophobia at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). "Islam is a religion of mercy that teaches peace, love, tolerance, and human digni-

ty," she stated, expressing concern over the growing trend of propaganda against Islam and Muslims.

The CM underscored that Islamophobia is a serious threat to global peace and interfaith harmony. She stressed the importance of decisive international efforts to counter hateful attitudes, urging the United Nations and other global organizations to take concrete steps in this regard.

She further called on the world to ensure the protection of the lives, property, rights, honor, and dignity of oppressed Muslim communities, including Kashmiris and Palestinians.

She reaffirmed that the Punjab government is committed to fostering religious harmony and protecting the rights of all minorities. "We envision a Punjab where people of all religions and sects live with equal rights and dignity," she said, emphasizing the need to educate the world about the true essence of Islam to combat misconceptions and prejudice.

CM Maryam Nawaz urged collective action, stating, "It is essential to raise our voices against all forms of hatred. Everyone must play their role in ensuring sustainable world peace."

NAB DG distributes cheques to Eden victims

LAHORE (APP): National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lahore Director General Muhammad Ahtram Dar supervised the cheque distribution process for Eden victims even on a holiday and personally handed over cheques to several affectees.

According to a spokesman, under the directives of the NAB Chairman, cheques worth Rs1.16 billion rupees are being distributed among 11,000 Eden scandal victims before Eid. To facilitate this, additional staff has been deployed at the NAB Lahore office, improving service delivery and ensuring timely cheque distribution.

On this occasion, DG NAB Lahore personally monitored the entire distribution process and issued appropriate instructions. He stated that a shuttle service is being provided for the victims' convenience. Furthermore, victims will no longer need to wait for NAB's letter or submit a stamp paper for receiving their cheques. Under the new system, all Eden victims can receive their cheques directly from NAB without prior letter issuance.

Hundreds of affectees arrived at NAB Lahore Bureau to collect their cheques, benefiting from the provided facilities.

Minister Kamal calls for five-year plans at NRIFC visit



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal visited the National Research Institute for Fertility Care (NRIFC) in Karachi. During his visit, he was briefed by the Director of NRIFC, the Director of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), and the Director of Border Health Services on the key functions, challenges, and future strategies of their respective institutions.

Minister Kamal listened to the challenges faced by these institutions and directed that a comprehensive written report be submitted. Additionally, he called for a five-year future

plan from NRIFC, DRAP, and Border Health Services, outlining the current status and future objectives. "Today, we must determine where we stand and where we aim to be in the next five years," said Minister Mustafa Kamal.

Dr. Saif-ur-Rehman Khattak briefed the Minister on the functions and performance of DRAP's field office and the Central Drug Testing Laboratory (CDTL) in Karachi. The Minister was informed that the CDTL has been upgraded to meet WHO standards and is expected to achieve WHO pre-qualification within the next three months. This will make it Pakistan's first government laboratory to receive WHO pre-qualification.

Minister Kamal emphasized the need to further enhance the Central Drug Testing Laboratory and accelerate efforts to bring it up to international standards. He directed officials to upgrade existing facilities and submit a five-year development plan.

"Our decisions and actions have a significant impact on human lives. We will ensure that the people of Pakistan have access to the most advanced healthcare facilities," he added.

The Minister also underscored the importance of boosting pharmaceutical exports and taking measures to support local pharmaceutical manufacturing. He directed authorities to ensure compliance with international quality standards, which would help attract foreign pharmaceutical companies to invest in Pakistan.

"We will provide every possible support to the local pharmaceutical industry so that high-quality medicines can be produced within the country and made available to the public," said Minister Kamal. He further stressed that by adopting global standards, Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry can secure a strong position in the international market.

BoK moves forward with remittances and Islamic banking

Aziz Buneri

PESHAWAR: The Bank of Khyber (BoK) is reshaping its approach under new leadership, focusing on remittances, rebranding, Islamic banking, digital services, and women's financial inclusion.

In just four months, the bank has introduced a remittance campaign, launched a rebranding strategy, expanded its Islamic banking operations, modernized IT infrastructure, and initiated a program aimed at supporting women in finance and business.

The remittance campaign is central to the BoK's efforts, offering faster, more secure, and cost-effective money transfers for overseas

Pakistanis. By improving digital integration and strengthening formal channels, the bank seeks to attract expatriates looking for reliable ways to send money home. With remittances forming a crucial part of Pakistan's economy, the initiative supports broader financial goals and aligns with state efforts to encourage regulated money transfers.

At the same time, the bank is undergoing a rebranding that goes beyond a new visual identity. The focus is on positioning itself as a modern financial institution, improving customer engagement, and enhancing its digital banking presence. The shift aims to strengthen customer trust and ensure the bank remains competitive in an increasingly digi-

tal landscape.

With a rising demand for interest-free banking, the bank is expanding its Islamic banking services. It is introducing new products, strengthening compliance with Shariah principles, and growing its network to serve both individual and corporate clients. As Pakistan moves toward interest-free banking policies, the bank is positioning itself as a key player in this space, appealing to customers seeking ethical financial solutions.

One of the most ambitious efforts under the new leadership is "BOK She Leads", an initiative aimed at increasing women's participation in banking. Led by Fauziah Mahmood, the program provides tailored financial solutions, busi-

ness advisory services, and networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs. By addressing financial barriers, the initiative seeks to promote greater economic inclusion.

Internally, the bank is restructuring its workforce, streamlining operations, and enhancing cybersecurity measures. Investments in IT infrastructure are expected to improve digital banking services and ensure safer transactions.

With these changes, BoK is not only adapting to evolving customer needs but also strengthening its role in Pakistan's financial landscape. The bank's leadership is setting a course for a more accessible, efficient, and customer-focused institution.

PMDC holds second meeting to standardize fee structure for private colleges

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) is working to establish a standardized tuition fee structure for private medical and dental colleges. To regulate the fee structure and address public concerns over rising medical education costs in Pakistan, PM&DC held its second subcommittee meeting yesterday.

In response to growing concerns from students, parents, and the public regarding the rising cost of medical education, the PM&DC convened its second subcommittee meeting to analyse fee justifications, assess the feasibility of rationalizing the fee structure and to develop a structured and equitable fee policy to prevent excessive tuition hikes while maintaining the highest academic standards in medical and dental colleges.

The meeting was attended by key stakeholders, including representatives from private medical and dental colleges, education experts, law experts, and chartered accountants. This standardization effort is a crucial step toward eliminating arbitrary fee increases and ensuring transparency across private institutions. Therefore, the discussion

focused on striking a balance between affordability for students and financial sustainability for institutions. During the meeting, various proposals were presented and reviewed critically.

However, initial recommendations from private institutions did not align with public expectations. After extensive deliberations, the PM&DC and stakeholders reached a consensus on revising tuition fees to ensure they remain within reasonable limits while allowing institutions to maintain high-quality education.

In the meeting, several key points were discussed, including auditing the operating costs of medical colleges, such as faculty salaries, infrastructure maintenance, lab expenses, and administrative costs and strategies for achieving a reasonable profit margin to ensure sustainability while preventing overcharging were also explored.

In the meeting, PM&DC emphasized the importance of setting a maximum tuition fee limit that private institutions cannot exceed. PM&DC also instructed private medical and dental colleges to display their fees on their websites and admission brochures.

The committee also discussed the establishment of an oversight com-

mittee once the fee structure is standardized to ensure that colleges adhere to uniform fees, moreover, the committee will implement penalties and sanctions against institutions that overcharge students.

Furthermore, the committee also proposed that colleges must introduce scholarships and installment-based payment plans in the future to support students from low-income backgrounds.

The President PM&DC Prof.Dr. Rizwan Taj in the statement said that the outcome of this initiative will establish a maximum tuition fee cap for private institutions, providing financial relief to students and parents while upholding academic excellence.

All the final proposals of the subcommittee will be presented to the Medical Education Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

PM&DC has assured that further details and the finalized fee structure will be shared soon through official channels. Students, parents, and stakeholders are encouraged to stay updated on this crucial development, as it will have a lasting impact on medical and dental education in Pakistan.

Saif deeply saddened over attack on Mufti Munir Shakir

PESHAWAR (APP): Barrister Saif has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the tragic death of Mufti Munir Shakir, who was injured in a recent explosion in Peshawar.

In a statement here Saturday, Barrister Saif strongly condemned the attack, terming it "deeply concerning and highly condemnable." He stated, "Those who target innocent lives are enemies of humanity."

He further emphasized solidarity with the affected families, assuring them that the government shares their grief and stands by them during this difficult time.

Barrister Saif also pledged that the elements responsible for disturbing peace and committing such heinous acts would be brought to justice. "We will ensure that these enemies of peace are held accountable," he affirmed.

FIA arrests 330 human smugglers

LAHORE (APP): The FIA Gujranwala Zone arrested 330 human smugglers, including seven most wanted in the Red Book, during the last three months.

According to the performance report of FIA Gujranwala Zone, nine declared human smugglers of the Libyan boat accident 2023 were also arrested during the last three months, 18 human smugglers involved in the Greek boat accident 2024 were also arrested.

The report stated that 11 suspects involved in the Moroccan boat accident 2025 were also caught by the FIA, and properties worth more than Rs 530 million of the suspects involved in human smuggling were seized. According to the authorities, bank accounts worth Rs 52.9 million used by elements involved in human smuggling were frozen, a total of 31 red notices were issued through Interpol for the arrest of suspects involved in human smuggling.

Hamza condoles death of party worker

LAHORE (APP): PML-N leader Hamza Shehbaz on Saturday offered condolences to the family of the late party worker Syed Hassan Asghar, known as 'Gudu Shah'.

He said that 'Gudu Shah' was a honest, hard working and loyal worker of the party. Talking to party workers here he said that with the grace of Allah Almighty and under the able leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the country was moving in right direction. He said that peace was imperative to materialize the dream of development.

Hamza said that during the current month the country's remittances had reached 13.1 billion dollars which was very encouraging and a good sign. He said, "We need to increase the country's exports as well." The PML-N leader strongly condemned terrorism incidents and said that the entire nation was standing with Pak armed forces to completely root out terrorism from the country.

13 gangs smashed in last 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): On the instructions of Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Punjab Police's intelligence-based operations against organized criminals and proclaimed offenders are underway across the province.

In continuation of which 13 gangs involved in heinous incidents were smashed and 28 operatives were arrested during the last 24 hours. Similarly, 280 proclaimed offenders, 199 court fugitives and 67 targeted offenders were arrested. Two Kalashnikovs, 13 rifles, 90 pistols, 09 guns, revolvers and hundreds of bullets were recovered from the possession of the criminals, while 2.70 crore rupees in cash, 4 vehicles, 85 motorcycles, 15 mobile phones, 05 cattle and gold were also recovered from the possession of the accused. The IG Punjab said that intelligence-based operations and crackdowns should be continued without interruption to eliminate organized crime.



LAHORE: Federal Minister Hanif Abbasi is being briefed by the IG Railways Police on the performance of the Railway Police and the security of the Railways.

Hanif Abbasi vows action against terrorism, railways reforms

LAHORE (APP): Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi has said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief of Army Staff have decided that terrorists, whether in Pakistan or those who have fled to other countries, will not be spared.

Speaking at a press conference at the Pakistan Railways Headquarters on Saturday, Abbasi criticised elements

within Pakistan who failed to condemn the Jaffar Express attack, despite China and the United States expressing their condemnation. He urged political parties to set aside differences and unite for national security.

The minister pointed out that Pakistan, as a nuclear power, is the first among 57 Islamic countries, making it a target for destabilisation by

global forces. He accused India of supporting terrorist activities by opening 22 consulates in Afghanistan and facilitating terror attacks in Pakistan. He added that some Pakistanis have become facilitators of terrorism, calling the Jaffar Express attack, targeting women, children, and vacationers, one of the largest such incidents worldwide.

SITUATION VACANT

Online applications are invited from suitable candidates having domicile of District Tank for the following vacant position in Health Department Tank. However the candidates having Domicile of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can apply.

S.#	Nomenclature of Post	BPS	No. of Posts	Age Limit	Prescribed Qualification
01	PHC Tech: MP	12	4	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any Recognized institution registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
02	PHC Tech: MP	12	10	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science (EPI) from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
03	CT Dental	12	4	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
04	CT Pathology	12	1	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
05	CT Radiology	12	2	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any Recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
06	PHC Tech: MCH	12	2	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science / FA from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma of LHV with Midwifery from nursing examination Board Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Registered with PNC.
07	Clinical Tech: Pharmacy	12	5	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science Pharmacy from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
08	Female Medical	12	2	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science Technician from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
09	Medical Technician	12	4	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science Technician from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
10	Lab: Assistant	12	1	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
11	EPI Technician	12	2	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
12	Radiographer	12	1	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
13	Lady Health Supervisor	11	1	18-30 Years	At least BA/BSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board
14	Store Keeper	07	1	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board & having Two years Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty or Diploma in the relevant Paramedical Technology from any recognized institution provided that the name is registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Faculty.
15	Lady Health Worker	05	9	18-30 Years	At least SSC 2nd Division with Science from recognized Board.

TERMS & CONDITIONS.
01. Candidates will be provisionally allowed to appear in the ETEA screening test where applicable. However detailed scrutiny will be carried out by the ETEA and then by selection committee concerned and if any candidate is found ineligible in any respect at any stage of the recruitment process, he/she will be disqualified by the ETEA or selection committee concerned. 02. All the candidates will be required to create profile on ETEAs website, after creating the profile and before applying/depositing fee for any post, such candidates will have to print E Sahulat Token from ETEAs and get their CNIC No verified from any NADRA E Sahulat Franchise (Kiosk), without such verification, they will not be able to apply for any post. 03. Interview calls letter will be issued to short listed candidates on the basis of scrutiny only. 04. Screening of candidates will be based on test conducted by ETEA. 05. Candidates should be eligible in all respects by the last date of receipt of the applications. 06. Incomplete applications and applications received after due dates will not be entertained. 07. Relaxation of age will be admissible as per existing Govt. Rules. 08. The candidates working in Government/Semi-Government bodies should apply through proper channel. 09. Candidates intending to apply for more than one post shall apply separately for each post with separate fee. 10. Preference will be given to the candidates having domicile of District Tank and other District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be considered subject to the fulfillment of all codal formalities. 11. Competent Authority reserves the rights to cancel/reject any application with assigning. Reason or if any changes made in Service Rules /ATP Rules, the committee will follow the Government rules strictly. 12. Errors/Omissions in number of posts are subject to rectification and number of vacancies can be increased/decreased according to ID position. 13. Not fulfilling any of the written statement in the application form or any misinformation will automatically exclude the candidate from the whole recruitment process at any stage. 14. All such information will be displayed on the notice board of DHO Tank. 15. Shortlisted candidate will provide attested photocopies of each document immediately to DHO Office Tank for scrutiny. 16. Shortlisted candidates should bring original documents along with CNIC & attested photocopies of each documents at the time of Interview. 17. The verification fee of each document of the selected candidate will be paid by the concerned candidate, in case of fake misinformation / documents were found, their appointment order will be canceled automatically. 18. 10% quota will be reserved for female candidates, 2% quota will be reserved for disable and 5% quota will be reserved for minorities candidates. 19. No TA/DA will be admissible for test/interview. 20. In case of foreign degree, equivalent certificates from HEC must be provided.

HOW TO APPLY
01. Interested candidates may first visit www.etea.edu.pk and apply for the posts online. 02. After successful submission of online application, a prescribed UBL/Easy paisa/JazzCash online deposit slip (having token number, Project code and candidates personal information) will be generated. 03. Take a printout of the generated deposit slip and deposit the prescribed test fee (nonrefundable) in any branch of UBL Bank at UBL OMNI agent. Easy paisa app or agent. Jazz Cash app or agent. 04. After successful fees submission, please keep the original deposit slip (candidate copy) having agent's stamp with yourself and do not share it with anyone else. 05. After online apply don't send documents/testimonials to ETEA office, copies of testimonials /documents will however, be provided by the candidates who qualify the screening test, as and when required or appointing authority for scrutiny purposes. 06. Availability of online Application Form on www.etea.edu.pk on 20th March, 2025. 07. Last date for submission of online Application is 10th April, 2025. 08. Candidates will be informed through SMS by ETEA to download and Print their Roll No. Slips from www.etea.edu.pk. Candidates are directed to do not give ported/converted mobile number. 09. Test or interview (where applicable) Date, Time & Venue will be mentioned on Roll No. Slip (where test/s) is applicable) or call letter for interview (where applicable). 10. No separate call Letter will be issued to candidates for screening test through post / courier means. 11. The interviews call will be issued to candidates by the concerned Chairman Selection committee as deemed appropriate, through postal/courier means.

INF(P) 1056/25

District Health Officer | District Tank

ATC provides three-day remand in Priest’s killing

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar Judge Muhammad Iqbal Khan has granted a three-day physical remand of the suspect named Nabil, arrested in connection with the murder of a priest.

The investigation officer from the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) stating that Nabil, along with an accomplice, was involved in the priest’s murder on January 30, 2022, on Ring Road.

During the investigation, Nabil was nominated in the case, and after his temporary bail expired, he was taken into custody.

The investigation officer requested the court to grant a physical remand to further investigate the suspect, which was approved by the court, handing Nabil over to the CTD for three days.

The investigation officer stated that further investigation is required to uncover the facts of the case. The court accepted the investigation officer’s request and granted a three-day physical remand of Nabil, handing him over to the CTD.

AD&SJ grants bail to alleged smuggler: Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) has granted bail to alleged smuggler in narcotics smuggling case.

According to the prosecution, the accused named Abubakar was taken into custody by the police, and 421 grams of ice (a type of narcotics) were recovered from his possession. A case was registered against the accused.

During the hearing, the lawyer, Zar Shad Khan advocate, informed the court that there was no solid evidence against the accused to justify his detention. He stated that the evidence against the accused was insufficient and requested the court to grant the bail.

AD&SJ granted bail application and issued orders for the release of the accused.

KP Food Safety & Halal Food Authority launches crackdown



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety & Halal Food Authority launched major operations in Peshawar and Mardan, confiscating and discarding a significant quantity of substandard and hazardous food items.

According to the Food Authority spokesperson, early morning checking points were set up at Nowshera Road and Rashakai Interchange in Mardan, where food safety teams rigorously inspected vehicles transporting edible goods. During the operation, more than 10,000 kilograms of substandard and underage chicken meat were seized from a vehicle and destroyed on the spot.

Additionally, 200 kilograms of substandard fish were recovered and disposed of per food safety regulations.

Further inspections revealed that another vehicle was carrying 525 kilograms of substandard and hazardous spices along with 500 kilograms of mislabeled cream, which were subsequently confiscated. Heavy fines were imposed on the owners, and further action was initiated under the Food Safety Act.

The spokesperson extended that in Peshawar, the Food Safety Team, in collaboration with the Cantonment Board, conducted a joint operation at several branded bakeries, uncovering poor hygiene conditions, substandard ingredients, and expired products.

Inspections uncovered that many workers lacked medical certificates and gloves, while one bakery unit did not possess a Halal certification.

Additionally, food safety teams discovered insect killers were also switched off, expired products, and substandard cooking oil in multiple establishments.

The Food Safety Authority teams also collected samples of bakery products and dispatched them for laboratory testing. Several establishments were issued violation notices, and their owners were summoned for legal proceedings.

KP FS& HFA Director General Wasif Saeed warned that those involved in food adulteration and selling substandard food items must either cease their activities or be prepared for strict legal action.

Meanwhile, Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru reaffirmed the government’s commitment to ensuring safe, Halal, and high-quality food for the public. He stated that the sale of substandard and hazardous food products will not be tolerated and warned that those compromising public health will face strict punitive action.

The provincial government remains dedicated to ensuring food safety, and a crackdown against violators will continue across the province, he added.

Raising rare Koklass Pheasant in captivity: Young wildlife conservationist achieves breakthrough

PESHAWAR (APP): A dedicated and passionate wildlife conservationist from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has achieved a remarkable milestone of successfully raising a pair of rare Koklass pheasant in captivity with primary goal of studying breeding ecology and reintroduction of the unique and stunning wild bird.

Mohibullah Naveed, a young wildlife conservationist from Haripur district, wanted to utilize the initiative of captive growing of Koklass pheasant for breeding purpose and for reintroduction of birds in regions from where it has become extinct.

Known for its striking beauty and elusive nature, Koklass pheasant is a medium-sized bird confined to high altitude forests from Afghanistan to central Nepal, and in northeastern Tibet to northern and eastern China.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Koklass pheasants are found in different forests at Kohistan, Hazara, Gilgit Baltistan, AJK, Galliat.

Upper parts of male koklass pheasant are covered with silver-grey plumage streaked velvety-black down the centre of each feather, and it has the unique feature of a black head, chestnut breast and prominent white patches on the sides of neck.

“This is the first time that growing of Koklass pheasant in captivity is achieved in Pakistan and would contribute valuable insights to its conservation,” claims Mohibullah.

Talking to APP, the young wildlife preservationist informed that he got a chance of purchasing eight eggs of Koklass from a Bukkarwal (a member of goat rearing pastoral community) during his research based field visit in forest.

After collecting the eggs, he placed them in an incubator, successfully hatching all of them into eight chicks of the rare bird species.

Since Koklass chicks were being raised in captivity for the first time, a lack of knowledge about their feeding habits led to the loss of six chicks. However, two survived and have now grown into healthy adult birds, Mohib told APP.

After researching online, I found that Koklass chicks thrive on a high-protein diet consisting of green forage, insects, larvae, and other protein-rich sources, he added.

He informed that several attempts by Wildlife Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with support from World Pheasants Association for Ex-Situ conservation of Koklass pheasant through breeding of chicks in captivity were made but results were not successful due to lack of expertise and knowledge about feeding requirement of the bird.

“This captive breeding program for Koklass pheasants in Haripur offer students a valuable opportunity to study the birds’ behavior, habitat, and susceptibility to various avian diseases,” he added.

With the captive Koklass pheasant pair now a year old, Mohibullah expects them to lay eggs in April. He hopes to expand captive breeding efforts and eventually reintroduce the birds into their native habitats, restoring populations in areas where they have disappeared.

He said by following Ex-Situ conservation protocols, wild species grown up in captive breeding can be released in wild.

In the same manner Pakistan has successfully reintroduced Cheer pheasant which had become extinct in most part of the country due to excessive hunting, poaching and habitat loss, he disclosed.



PESHAWAR: Mayor City Haji Zubair Ali listening people issues.



PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsood giving a shield to PRO Feroz Shah Mohmand over his best performance in ‘Drug Free Peshawar’ campaign.

5 including sub-registrar arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): The KP Anti-Corruption Department has arrested five persons including a sub-registrar for using a forged power of attorney.

After receiving a complaint filed by a woman about a forged power of attorney being used in land transfer case, anti-corruption department started verification of the document.

Arrest was made after competent authority declared the document forged after proper verification. The arrested persons included a sub-registrar, stamp paper vendor and three other persons.

PBF calls for long-term export strategy

PESHAWAR (APP): President Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), Khawaja Mehboob ur Rehman, has urged upon the government to develop a long-term strategy aimed at boosting Pakistan’s exports, a move he believes will foster economic stability and investor confidence.

The PBF emphasized the importance of having a strategy endorsed by Parliament, ensuring that export policies are consistent and remain in place beyond electoral cycles.

“A long-term, cohesive export strategy, backed by Parliament, would not only stabilize the business environment but also provide confidence to investors, businesses, and trade partners,” Rehman stated.

Need stressed to promote ethical, efficient judicial system

PESHAWAR (PPI): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy (KPJA) hosted a one-day Professional Development Programme on Workplace Ethics, aimed at improving professional conduct among staff members from the Peshawar High Court and KPJA. Thirty participants from both institutions engaged in the training, underscoring the importance of ethical behavior in the judiciary.

Jehanzeb Shinwari, Director General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy (KPJA), highlighted the necessity of ongoing development in promoting an ethical and efficient judicial system.

He stressed that ethical behavior in the workplace enhances institutional integrity and contributes to a credible judiciary.

The program covered essential aspects of workplace ethics, such as punctuality, dress codes, respectful communication, and inclusivity.

Expert-led sessions included a presentation by Lal Shad on the religious perspective of workplace ethics, followed by Shahab Faheem discussing conduct and discipline.

Ziaul Hassan provided insights into etiquettes and mannerisms, while Ms Rakhshanda Naz addressed gender sensitivity and workplace harassment, advocating for a safe and inclusive environment.

The event concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony, where Shinwari commended participants for their dedication to professional growth.

He reiterated that workplace ethics are vital for a just and responsible judicial system, emphasizing the importance of continuous learning for institutional excellence.

Heroic rescue during 2024 Hajj: Pride of KP Award announced for Asif Bashir

PESHAWAR (APP): Metrix Pakistan in collaboration with the Directorate of Youth Affairs, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to recognize individuals who have demonstrated exceptional service and dedication to society, said Hassan Nisar, CEO Metrix Pakistan.

“Asif Bashir’s heroic efforts during the 2024 Hajj disaster saved numerous lives in a critical situation, recognizing him as a true hero. His courage and commitment to humanity deserve the highest recognition,” Hassan told APP.

It merits a mention here that Asif Bashir, a dweller from Peshawar has gained widespread recognition for his lifesaving efforts during the 2024 Hajj disaster.

Amid intense heat conditions, he played a vital role in rescuing 26 distressed pilgrims, personally carrying some for several kilometers to safety.

His swift intervention saved 17 lives, including those of Indian, British, and Canadian nationals. His tireless efforts during the crisis earned him titles such as “Angel of Mina” and “Pakistani Bajranghi Bhaijaan”, with his bravery even being acknowledged by the Government of India.

Graduated from COMSATS University Peshawar with a degree in Computer Systems Engineering, Asif currently serves as a Database Supervisor at the Chief Minister’s Secretariat and has previously worked at the Deputy Commissioner’s Office as a rescue worker.

His humanitarian efforts span years, including work in flood relief, avalanche rescues, and emergency disaster response operations.

The Pride of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Award is among the province’s most prestigious honors, recognizing individuals who have made a significant impact on society.

The award ceremony will take place later this month, where Muhammad Riaz, a celebrated footballer from Hangu, will also be honored for his contributions to Pakistani football.

The award celebrates his unwavering commitment to helping others in need, even at great personal risk.

Asif Bashir’s actions during Hajj 2024 have not only brought honor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but also highlighted the values of unity and humanity that the holy pilgrimage represents.

Ramazan nutrition: Avoiding junk food for healthier fast

PESHAWAR (APP): Emerging as a great dilemma, the excessive use of unhealthy food by people during iftar parties are causing negative effects on their health.

Exposing people especially youth and children to various fatal ailments including obesity, piles and stomach disorders, the extreme use of junk and expired food including burger, shawarma, chicken rolls, chips, snacks, burgers besides low fat yogurt and cheese, high carbohydrate fatty food alongwith beverages were one of the major causes of this ailment.

Like Ehtisham, thousands of college and school students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were exposed to unhealthy junk foods being sold openly outside of the educational institutions, villages and cities’ shops adversely affecting their health.

The visitor would be extremely disappointed to see an abundance of such shops and vendors food stalls opened at historic Qissa Khwani bazaar, Namak Mandai, Karimpura, Charsadda Road, Faqirabad, Tehkal, Board bazaar, Lateef Abad, Hayatabad, Warsak Road, Dalazak Road, Chamkani, GT Road, and other localities, which are mostly selling unsafe cuisines and expired foods, thus exposing many young to different diseases including obesity, overweight, piles and stomach disorders.

Professor Dr Malik Riaz, head of the children department at Govt Hospital Pabbi advised people to avoid junk foods in iftar parties for a healthy fast.

He said Pakistan like other countries are confronted to the monster challenge of an overweight, piles and obesity mostly contracted by children and schools students, who are excessively consuming unhygienic and substandard food in shops and vander stalls.

Declaring obesity, piles and overweight mostly as the fifth leading cause of global death, Dr Riaz said that obesity contributes to about 60-70% deaths besides non-communicable diseases in the world including Pakistan.

While referring to a WHO report, he said that the number of children and youth aged five to 19 with obesity have increased from 11 million in 1975 to 124 million in 2016 in the world including Pakistan due to consumption of excessive unhealthy junk food during school and college time.

Terming obesity a salient killer, he said that about 30 percent of the world population was overweight while 44 percent of the burden of diabetes, 23 percent of heart diseases and seven to 41 percent of certain cancers attributed to being overweight and obesity.

Pakistan had ranked 10th out of 188 countries with about 50 percent population being overweight or obese, and according to World Obesity Foundation report, about 5.4 million school-aged children in our country would be obese by 2030 if the unchecked open sale and manufacturing of unsafe food including chips and snacks continued with such a high rate in markets in the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.”

Professor Dr Muhammad Naeem, former Chairman, Economics Department, University of Peshawar said that Pakistan with a youth population of about 64% aged 30 years was unfortunately exposed to obesity and overweight due to excessive use of junk foods courtesy to the social media’s publicity.

“Due to the projection of fast food on social media, the youth, mostly the working class, are tempted to buy burgers and shawarma etc and eat it hurriedly despite checking its quality landing them to hospitals,” he said, adding special legislation required to curb its unchecked sale.

Dr Malik Riaz while citing the report of Pakistan Health Commission 2018 said that about 11 percent of children in the country were suffering from overweight and more than five percent of obesity while

Authority (KPF&HFA) told APP that operation against unsafe and substandard food has been accelerated across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that thousands of litres of counterfeit beverages and adulterated milk were discarded after its detailed examination being not safe for human consumption.

The spokesman said that zero tolerance has been adopted against elements involved in sale and purchase of adulterated and junk food items in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Mobile food testing laboratories were established in all divisional headquarters with latest technology testing’s equipment with an ability to test over 20 food items instantly.

These labs cover a range of food tests, including testing of milk, flour, edible oil, ghee, water, and other food items on the spot. He said the government has planned to establish such

Authority (KPF&HFA) told APP that operation against unsafe and substandard food has been accelerated across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that thousands of litres of counterfeit beverages and adulterated milk were discarded after its detailed examination being not safe for human consumption.

The spokesman said that zero tolerance has been adopted against elements involved in sale and purchase of adulterated and junk food items in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Mobile food testing laboratories were established in all divisional headquarters with latest technology testing’s equipment with an ability to test over 20 food items instantly.

These labs cover a range of food tests, including testing of milk, flour, edible oil, ghee, water, and other food items on the spot. He said the government has planned to establish such

Authority (KPF&HFA) told APP that operation against unsafe and substandard food has been accelerated across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that thousands of litres of counterfeit beverages and adulterated milk were discarded after its detailed examination being not safe for human consumption.

The spokesman said that zero tolerance has been adopted against elements involved in sale and purchase of adulterated and junk food items in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Mobile food testing laboratories were established in all divisional headquarters with latest technology testing’s equipment with an ability to test over 20 food items instantly.

These labs cover a range of food tests, including testing of milk, flour, edible oil, ghee, water, and other food items on the spot. He said the government has planned to establish such



In brief

Rain, snowfall continue F.P. Report

ABBOTABAD: The series of rain and snowfall continues in Abbottabad, Murree, and Galyat. Abbottabad, Murree, Galyat, and Mansehra have been gripped by intense cold winds, which have increased the severity of the cold in these areas. An official report said today that due to snowfall, the traffic flow on the main highway leading to Murree was being affected. The district government has issued precautionary measures in this regard. The local administration has advised the public to exercise caution while traveling. The traffic police have recommended travelers avoid unnecessary travel. In view of the weather conditions, attendance in schools and offices has also been low. Local residents prefer to stay at home.

SHO dismissed over corruption F.P. Report

MUZAFFARGARH: District Police Officer (DPO) Dr. Muhammad Rizwan Khan held an orderly room session, leading to the dismissal of former SHO Qureshi Police Station, Sub-Inspector Sabira Klasra, on proven charges of corruption and links with criminals. The DPO asserted that no officer involved in corruption or criminal activities would be tolerated in the police force. According to details, a departmental inquiry was conducted by gazetted officers against Sub-Inspector Sabira Klasra following allegations of corruption, facilitating criminals, and maintaining close ties with offenders. During the investigation, all available evidence was analyzed, and the accused officer was given a chance to defend herself. However, she failed to present any credible evidence in her defense. The inquiry findings were presented before DPO Muzaaffargarh in the orderly room, where the accused officer could not establish her innocence. Consequently, DPO Dr. Muhammad Rizwan Khan ordered her dismissal from service. Speaking at the session, the DPO emphasized that strict departmental actions were being taken against corrupt officers, reaffirming the commitment to maintaining integrity and accountability within the police department.

Man shoots two sisters-in-law dead F.P. Report

CHINIOT: A man shot two sisters-in-law dead and injured his wife over a domestic dispute in the limits of City Police Station in Chiniot. According to initial reports, Rustam son of Boota opened fire on his in-laws at their house over a domestic dispute, killing two sisters-in-law, Shumaila and Sana, residents of Puran Pilad locality. Police said Ruby, wife of the accused, was seriously injured in the firing and was referred to Allied Hospital in Faisalabad. As soon as the information about the Chiniot incident was received, senior police officers and the city police station personnel reached the spot. Evidence was collected from the crime scene and a PFSA team also visited the house. The investigation and legal action in the Chiniot incident was under way and bodies were shifted to a hospital for post-mortem. Meanwhile, organized Crime Unit along with Assistant Sub-Inspector Nasrullah Khan's team conducted an operation in the area of City Police Station. On a confidential tip off, the police team arrested a drug peddler from Gulshan Town.

KP leads in prisons' reforms across the country

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Inspector General Prisons has said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a clear advantage over other provinces in terms of reforms in prisons and provision of facilities to prisoners. Woodwork, shawls, marble and detergent factories are functioning in various jails of the province, in which 30% of the profits are given to the working prisoners.

Similarly, post office facilities are also being made available along with drug rehabilitation centers. He was interacting with the media after inaugurating post office, e-visit booths, drug rehabilitation center,

day care center and functionalization of family quarters for convicted prisoners at Central Jail Mardan. IG Prisons reached Central Jail Mardan where Jail Superintendent Najamul Hasan Abbasi along with jail officials welcomed him.

A squad of jail police presented salute to the IG Prisons. Muhammad Usman Mehsud inaugurated the post office set up by the Post Office Department in the jail. Postmaster General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ihsanullah Marwat informed that the prison post office will provide registry, parcel including money order and other services of the post office for the prisoners, staff and general public. He said that post office is already functioning in Central Jail Hariapur while work is going on to provide this facility in other jails as well.

On this occasion, an MoU was also signed between Central Jail Mardan and Post Office. IG Prisons said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the only province where convicted prisoners are provided family quarters to spend three days with their families for conjugal rights. He said that the number of e-visit booths has been increased where the prisoners can meet their families with the facility of video link.

FDA building turns into cultural, historical emblem

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: The facade of the main campus building of the Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) has been given a new look after renovation and improvement, which reflects the historical and cultural building.

This project of renovating the front of the complex is a manifestation of the development vision of Director General FDA Muhammad Asif Chaudhry, which has been completed by preparing a beautiful and untouched design under the supervision of the Engineering Department of FDA. Director General Muhammad Asif Chaudhry inaugurated the completion of the renovation and improvement project of the facade of the FDA complex.

Additional Director General FDA Qaiser Abbas Rind, Chief Engineer Mehar Ayub, Directors

Yasir Ijaz Chatha, Junaid Hassan Manj, Asma Mohsin, Asim Mahmood, Deputy Directors Omar Iqbal, Imran Khan, Iqra Murtaza, PSO Shabbir Sajid and other officers were present on the occasion. The Director General FDA, while praising the completion of the project to beautify the half-century-old building of the FDA Complex, said that in view of the importance and significance of the FDA in terms of urban development and construction, its new design of facade has been approved with the idea of giving a unique status to the building of its complex in accordance with local traditions and culture, and said that this building will now give attractive look and become a historical reference of the city.

He said that earlier, the offices of the FDA Complex have been renovated and decorated

according to new requirements, which has resulted in a clean and pleasant office environment. These measures have not only increased the efficiency of the staff but also created a good impression at the public level. DG said that the buildings of institutions engaged in national development activities and public service are of great importance and become an important part of the historical heritage of any city and area, therefore, to maintain the splendor of the buildings, the offices working in them should be the best model of performance.

He directed to maintain the aesthetic beauty of the FDA complex and to take full care and protection of all the installations/properties. Chief Engineer Mehar Ayub informed about the details of the implementation of the project for the renovation and improvement of the facade of the FDA complex.

Sindh celebrates 204th Urs of Sachal Sarmast

F.P. Report

SUKKUR: The 204th annual Urs celebrations of renowned Sufi saint Hazrat Sachal Sarmast commenced on Saturday and will continue until March 16, 2025, at Daraza, Khairpur. A grand ceremony was held at the Sachal Sarmast shrine, where Commissioner Sukkur Division Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi, Director General Manzoor Hussain Mahesar, and SSP Khairpur Tauheed Rehman Memon were the guests of honor.

In his address, Commissioner Sukkur Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi acknowledged Hazrat Sachal Sarmast's invaluable contributions to promoting unity, peace, and love among Muslims. He emphasized the importance of following the teachings of Sufi saints like Sachal Sarmast to promote harmony and tolerance in society.

Director General Manzoor Hussain Mahesar highlighted the significance of Sufi shrines in promoting peace, love, and tolerance. He praised the efforts of the Sachal Sarmast Shrine Committee, led by Deputy Commissioner Syed Ahmed Fawad Shah, for organizing the Urs celebrations and promoting the teachings of the Sufi saint.

The ceremony also included the distribution of

awards to individuals who have made significant contributions to promoting the teachings of Sachal Sarmast. The awardees included: Sachal Award: Dr. Fiaz Latif Chandio, Sachal Sarmast Sufi Singer Award: Syed Arshad Ali Shah, 0Best Article Writer Award: Dr. Fiaz Latif Chandio, Best Folk Singer Award: Rashid Ali Hyderi, Best Sufi poet Award: Syed Arshad Ali Shah, Best Organizer Award: Wasim Gul Solangi and Best Media Coverage Award: Deputy Director Information Syed Sajid Hussain Shah.

The ceremony concluded with a mesmerizing performance by Raja Suhrab Faqir, who presented a traditional Sufi dance, leaving the audience spellbound. Prominent personalities, including Deputy Commissioner Khairpur Syed Ahmed Fawad Shah, AC Arbab Hussain Shah, SSP Khairpur Tauheed Rehman Memon, and others, attended the ceremony.

SALU students receive prestigious national awards: Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU) on Saturday has announced that three of its exceptional students from the Student Societies Center have been honored with prestigious national awards. These awards recognize their outstanding contributions to

student leadership and youth initiatives.

Tarique Gilal received the International Students Convention and Expo (ISC&E) Alumni Award 2025 at Government University, Faisalabad. This award acknowledges his remarkable efforts in student leadership and engagement.

Ms Haseen Zehra and Ms Qalab Fatima were awarded at the 4th Sindh Youth Convention in Hyderabad. They were recognized for their active participation and significant contributions to youth development programs. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Yousuf Khushk congratulated the awardees, praising them as role models for their peers. He emphasized the importance of youth leadership and commended the Student Societies Center, led by Dr. Ali Raza Lashari, for its dedication to fostering talent and empowering students.

Prof. Dr. Mehon Khan Laghari and Dr. Ali Raza Lashari were also present on this occasion. The Student Societies Center at SALU remains committed to providing students with opportunities for academic excellence, leadership development, and national recognition. This ensures their continued success at both national and international levels.

Police martyrs' families honoured with gold medals

F.P. Report

DERA GHAZI KHAN: Top police and administration officials decorated families of 34 police martyrs with gold medals on behalf of IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar at a grand Iftar dinner hosted in their honour to acknowledge the meritorious sacrifices made by their loved ones in the line of duty.

Regional Police Officer (RPO) Captain (Retired) Sajjad Hassan Khan and DPO Syed Ali received the families of the martyred

police officials of DG Khan including women and children after they reached the venue as part of an official motorcade with VIP protocol, police spokesmen said.

The RPO presided over the ceremony and he along with Commissioner Ashfaq Ahmad Chaudhry presented gold medals to the families of each police martyr. The RPO and commissioner met with the families of Shuhada and spent some time with them. During the conversation, the problems being faced by the martyrs'

families also came under discussion and orders were issued on the spot to resolve these on priority.

Speaking on the occasion, the RPO said that police can never forget martyrs who rendered sacrifice and laid down their lives in the line of duty to protect the countrymen from the evil designs of criminals and enemies of Pakistan. The RPO spent considerable time with the kids of the martyrs and exchanged pleasantries with them besides giving them gifts.



MULTAN: A motorcyclist riding along the road with a huge birdcage attached to his motorcycle, heading towards his destination.

Food Authority intensifies crackdown F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Punjab Food Authority intensified crackdown against food adulteration during Ramazan, inspecting 124 Sehri food points and imposing fines, on Saturday.

According to details, three production units were sealed, one FIR registered and large quantities of banned China salt, expired drinks and hazardous food items were destroyed. During entry-point checks, 43 vehicles carrying 30,000 liters of milk were inspected. Major violations, including poor hygiene, insect infestations and unsafe storage conditions were found. Authorities also disposed of toxic chemicals, including banned ammonia and artificial colors.

The Food Safety teams are operating 24/7, ensuring strict monitoring of Sehri and Iftar food points. Citizens are urged to report adulteration, as profit-driven food adulterators are a threat to public health, the spokesperson warned.

Wheelchairs distributed F.P. Report

MATLI: The National Disability & Development Forum (NDF) Pakistan, in collaboration with Indigo Textile Karachi, successfully distributed 25 wheelchairs to persons with disabilities in Tando Ghulam Ali.

This initiative aims to enhance mobility and independence for individuals facing mobility challenges in rural Sindh. Speaking at the ceremony, Abid Lashari, President of NDF, emphasized the critical need for mobility aids for persons with disabilities. He urged local philanthropists to step forward and contribute to providing assistive devices, ensuring an inclusive society. "Mobility is a dire need for persons with disabilities. We call upon the local business community and philanthropists to support such initiatives, enabling individuals to live with dignity and independence," said Lashari.

Indigo Textile Karachi generously sponsored the wheelchairs, a contribution highly appreciated by the local community. Mir Hajan Talpur Chairman Town Committee Tando Ghulam Ali expressed his gratitude to NDF and Indigo Textile for their valuable assistance in providing mobility aids to the deserving individuals in the region.

Potest against proposed Indus canal system held

F.P. Report

THATTA: A protest erupted in Thatta, as hundreds gathered at the historic Doolah Darya Khan Bridge to commemorate the International Day of Action for Rivers. The Awami Tehreek and Sindhiyan Tehreek organized the protest, which drew attention to the plight of the Indus River and the struggles of the Sindh people.

The protesters, including workers and leaders from both organizations, offered flowers and staged a sit-in, demonstrating against the six strategic canals and corporate farming that they believe threaten their livelihoods. Leaders from the Awami Tehreek emphasized the significance of the Indus River, stating that it is the "lifeline of Sindh and the guarantor of Sindh's existence."

Workers and leaders of the Awami Tehreek and the Sindhiyan Tehreek, including Awami Tehreek's Central Senior Vice President Noor Ahmed Katiar, Abdul Qadir Ranto, Ali Muhammad Kalmati, Majid Sagor Parihar, Abdul

Razzaq Chandio, Aziz Memon, Sindhyani Tehreek's Central Leader Salma Lashari, Sajida Parhiar, Aamna Zaur, Shazia Bhayo, Darya Khan Zaur, Ghanwar Khan Zaur, Miitha Khan Lashari, Shah Muhammad Chang, Bilawal Lashari, Aman Hussain Azad, Amanullah Brohi, Ghulam Ali Zaur, Habib Khoso, and others, gathered at the river to offer flowers and stage a sit-in. The representatives of Fishermen community Dada Adam Gandhro and Ayoub Mallah also led rallies in Sujawal and Thatta.

The protesters criticized the government, accusing them of selling out Sindh's water resources to foreign companies and backing plans that would lead to the "genocide of Sindh." They also expressed concerns about the occupation of water resources, including Keenjhar Lake and Haleji Lake, and the seizure of millions of acres of Sindh's land for corporate farming projects.

The Awami Tehreek and Sindhiyan Tehreek have been at the forefront of this

movement, advocating for the rights of the Sindh people and demanding an end to the exploitation of their resources. The protest was a testament to the growing concerns of the Sindh people about the exploitation of their natural resources and the impact of corporate farming on their livelihoods.

This movement has its roots in the past, with the Sindhiyan Tehreek emerging in the 1980s as a women-led organization that fought against the dictator General Zia-ul-Haq's regime. The organization played a crucial role in mobilizing rural Sindh women for the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD).

Today, the struggle continues, with the Awami Tehreek and Sindhiyan Tehreek leading the charge against the exploitation of Sindh's resources. The protesters vowed to continue their daily struggle for survival and existence, and their peaceful democratic resistance will persist with vigor until their demands are met.

Tribesman distances himself from son

F.P. Report

WANA: In a rare and emotional public appeal, a respected elder of the Sarki Khel tribe Azlay, also known as Azalmir Sarki Khel, has categorically distanced himself from his son, Fazal Khan. According to Azlay, his 30-year-old son has been an active member of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for the past two years, and he no longer holds any connection with their family.

Azlay Sarki Khel expressed his anguish, stating that his family is bearing the brunt of Fazal Khan's actions. He lamented that security forces have repeatedly raided their home, violating their privacy and disrupting their lives.

He firmly declared that if his son is killed in any security operation, he would raise no objection, but he pleaded for the release of his other sons, whom he insists are innocent and have been wrongfully detained.

In a strong message to security agencies, Azlay assured that if Fazal Khan

is ever found in his home, he will willingly accept responsibility before the government. He further disclosed that he has no contact with his son and, in fact, fears him.

His statement comes at a critical time when security forces are intensifying their crackdown on militancy in South Waziristan, targeting individuals suspected of having links to extremist activities. This public disavowal underscores the deep divisions within families and the struggles faced by those left behind.

SBBMU inks MoU with COMSTECH

Allah Dad Chandio

LARKANA: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Medical University (SBBMU) Larkana and COMTECH Islamabad to increase cooperation in the field of health, research, artificial intelligence, technology and innovation.

This agreement was signed for joint academic and scientific research programs, exchange of students and faculty and providing opportunities for students and researchers of

OIC member countries. This agreement was signed in Islamabad by Vice Chancellor of SBBMU Prof. Dr. Nusrat Shah and Coordinator General of COMSTECH Prof. Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Chaudhary, while ORIC Director of SBBMU Prof. Mir Hasan Khoso and Program Manager of COMSTECH Mr. Haris Akram were also present.

International Rivers Day observed: On the occasion of the International Day of Rivers, various political and social organizations and ordinary

citizens took out a wonderful rally in Bاده city from Ghazi Chowk to Hyder Chowk, which turned into a demonstration.

On this occasion Leaders of Sindh Nationalist Party, Sindh United Party, Sindh Progressive Party and social organizations, Dodo Deshi, Comrade Asghar Noonari, Muhammad Saleh Junejo, Iqbal Khokhar and others addressed the demonstration and said that the green and fertile lands of Sindh are not being settled by 6 canals over the Indus River.

Protection of lives, property a constitutional responsibility: RPO

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Regional Police Officer Gujranwala, Tayyab Hafeez Cheema, held 'Kuli Katcheri' at District Police Office and visited Sahulat Bazar Hafizabad to review security arrangement.

He listened complaints of people and directed to his subordinate officers to address grievances of plaintiffs on priority basis on merit under the vision of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif to provide relief and justice to people at their doorsteps.

DPO Hafizabad and other police officers were also present in the 'Kuli Katcheri'. RPO said that protection of

life, property and honour of people is the top priority of the police and police is taking all steps to eliminate anti-social elements to make the area a bode of peace. He directed the police officers to ensure provision of relief and justice to people in their jurisdictions to come up expectations of the people and the Chief Minister of the Punjab.

While talking to a delegation of traders, RPO said that cooperation of business community is vital to maintain peace and police is committed to provide business friendly atmosphere as well as prevail sense of security among traders. He also visited Sahulat Bazar Hafizabad and reviewed security

arrangements made for protection of consumers and shopkeepers.

Man's death due to rain lightning: A 45-year-old motorcyclist died due to lightning during rain. According to Rescue 1122, Mati-Ullah Son of Riaz resident of village Thahta Langar was on its way to his village among with her wife and daughter from Pindi Bhattian during rain.

When he reached near Fatahki Bridge on Sukheki Mandi Road, suddenly lightning fall on motorcycle. As a result of which, Mati-Ullah was received burn injuries and died the spot. However, his wife and daughter remained save. Rescue 1122 handed over dead body to his family.



Residents remain wary after violence in Syria

QAMISHLI, Syria (AP): Residents in northeastern Syria danced in the streets to celebrate a breakthrough pact between local Kurdish-led authorities and the new central government, while thousands of people continued to flee other areas where sectarian violence has targeted Alawites.

The mostly ethnic Kurdish revelers in the northeastern city Qamishli chanted "One, one, one - the Syrian people are one," as cars drove by honking in celebration following night's declaration, which includes a ceasefire and integration of Kurdish forces into the national army. It was in sharp contrast to the grim scenes elsewhere in the aftermath of sectarian violence that broke out following clashes between government-linked forces and groups associated with deposed President Bashar Assad.

Monitoring groups said hundreds of civilians were killed in revenge attacks in coastal communities, primarily targeting members of the Alawite religious minority to which Assad belongs. Thousands fled to neighboring Lebanon, mostly through irregular border crossings in the country's north. The UN refugee agency reported at least 7,616 people had fled to northern Lebanon where humanitarian organizations were handing out food and blankets. Lebanon is hosting more than 755,000 registered Syrian refugees, with hundreds of thousands more believed to be unregistered. Since the fall of Assad, the flow had begun to reverse, with the UN reporting that nearly 260,000 Syrian refugees have returned home since November, about half of them coming from Lebanon. But the outbreak of violence last week has

threatened to reverse that flow again.

While a tense calm prevailed over most of the Syrian coast, families were still wading across a river marking the border between Syria and northern Lebanon's Akkar province, some carrying children on their backs. Radwan Alo fled his home in the countryside outside Qardaha, the hometown of the Assad family, and crossed the river into Lebanon. Alo said his twin uncles were killed by armed men, who he believes aimed at "a complete extermination of the Alawite sect." He has been unable to reach his wife and children who stayed behind to find out if they are safe. The UN Human Rights Office has documented the killing of 111 civilians so far, saying in a statement, "the process of verification is ongoing, and the actual number of people killed is believed to be significantly higher." The U.K.-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, has reported nearly 1,000 civilians killed. The Associated Press has not been able to independently verify the figure.

Syrian authorities have formed a committee tasked with investigating the attacks on civilians and in recent days announced a series of arrests of people who allegedly took part in the massacres. At a news conference, Yasser Al-Farhan, spokesman for the committee, promised that "no one is above the law" and said that the panel will present its findings to the president's office and the judiciary. He said the committee will set up a witness protection program for those who come forward to report crimes. Some families took refuge in a Russian air base in the coastal province of Latakia. At a store in

Qamishli, Russian soldiers stationed at a nearby military airbase were buying baby formula, diapers and food to send to the displaced people staying in the Hmeimim airbase on the coast.

At the Hmeimim base, Syrian Arab Red Crescent staff were evacuating wounded people to take them to a hospital in Latakia. Amjad Sultan, a local official from the nearby town of Jableh, who came with a delegation bringing aid to the base, said they were trying to "bring a message to the people in Hmeimim that the situation outside has become safe and the security forces have spread out to control the area." But many of the families remained unconvinced. In Jableh, people were beginning to return to the streets, although many of the stores remained shuttered.

"We were under siege for three days with no electricity or water, but thank God now life is returning, people are returning to their homes," said resident Mohammad al-Hamoud. Louay Bogha blamed "remnants of the regime" for sparking the conflict, which he said reminded him of the fighting that had spurred him to flee Aleppo more than a decade earlier during the country's civil war. Militants "didn't distinguish between Alawites and Sunnis, they burned all the stores," he said. "People were killed who had nothing to do with anything." Meanwhile, Kurds in northeast Syria were hopeful that the agreement announced, which includes a ceasefire and the merging of the US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces into the Syrian army, would end years of fighting between Kurdish forces and Turkish-backed groups in northern Syria and allow displaced people to return home.

SK charges air force pilots with criminal negligence

SEOUL (Reuters):- South Korean military investigators charged two Air Force pilots with criminal negligence over an accidental bombing of a village last week during a training exercise, which injured at least 29 people and caused extensive property damage.

Defence ministry investigators have confirmed that errors by the pilots when they entered coordinates into the aircraft systems were "direct factors" behind the accidental bombing, the ministry's Criminal Investigation Command said in a statement. The pilots were charged with criminal negligence causing bodily harm, the command said, adding the investigation of the incident is ongoing.

Eight unguided air-to-surface bombs were launched from two fighter jets and landed on a village in Pocheon near the border with North Korea during live-fire exercises.

Several areas in Pocheon and neighbouring regions have training grounds used by the South Korean and US militaries. Residents have for years complained about potential safety risks and disturbance from military units being mobilised in the area. The two pilots have been taken off flight duties and a review of their flight mission certification has been scheduled, a ministry official said.

The Air Force chief of staff has apologised for the accident and pledged to review mission procedures to prevent similar incidents. North Korea, which routinely denounces military drills by the South Korean and US militaries, has said the accident showed the risk of the drills triggering armed conflict, citing the possibility the bombs could have dropped north of the border.

Syrians flee sectarian killing into Lebanon

MASOUDIYEH, Lebanon (Reuters): Fearing for their lives, Syrian men, women and children waded through a river to safety in Lebanon, among hundreds of people who have fled to the neighbouring country to escape sectarian killing targeting their Alawite community.

A woman who made the crossing said she'd seen the bodies of seven slain people in her village. Another said she'd spent three days trapped at home by heavy gunfire. A man said militants had threatened to kill all the people in his village because they are members of the minority Alawite community. Days after the killing began in Syria's coastal region, the steady stream of refugees continued: Reuters reporters saw more than 50 cross the knee-high waters of the Nahr El Kabir River into Lebanon during a half-hour period, carrying children and whatever possessions they could gather.

Nada Mohammed, who crossed into Lebanon, said her village near the border, Karto, was woken up by a phone call at 4 a.m. from relatives telling her the militants had arrived in the village and she should pack her things. "We saw seven people they slaughtered," she said.

Her daughter, Sally Rajab Abboud, described bearded foreigners with long hair who spoke formal Arabic rather than Syrian dialect. More than 350 families had made the same journey into Lebanon in recent days, according to local Lebanese authorities, fleeing the violence in which the UN human rights office said entire families including women and children had been killed. Violence began to spread through the coastal region, home to many Alawites, when Syria's Sunni Islamist-led government said its forces were attacked by remnants of the regime of Syria's ousted leader Bashar al-Assad, an Alawite.

Security forces poured into the region to crush the insurrection, while mosques in areas loyal to the government issued calls for jihad, or holy struggle. During violence that followed, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says more than 1,200 civilians were killed, the vast majority of them Alawites.



DARFUR: A woman and baby at the Zamzam displacement camp, close to El Fasher in Sudan.

G7 foreign ministers meet in Canada amid tensions with Trump

OTTAWA (Reuters): Foreign ministers of leading Western democracies meet in Canada after seven weeks of rising tensions between US allies and President Donald Trump over his upending of foreign policy on Ukraine and imposing of tariffs.

The Group of Seven ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, along with the EU, meet in the remote tourist town of La Malbaie, nestled in the Quebec hills for two days of meetings that in the past have broadly been consensual on the issues they face. Top of the agenda for Washington's partners will be getting a briefing on US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's talks with Kyiv in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where Ukraine said it was ready to support a 30-day ceasefire deal.

But in the run-up to the first G7 meeting of Canada's presidency, the crafting of an agreed all-encompassing final statement has been tough. A US decision to impose 25% tariffs on all steel and aluminium imports immediately drew reciprocal measures from Canada and the EU, underscoring the tensions. Washington has sought to impose red lines on language around Ukraine and opposed a separate dec-

laration on curbing Russia's so-called shadow fleet, a murky shipping network that eludes sanctions, while demanding more robust language on China.

Rubio cautioned that Washington did not want language that could harm efforts to bring Russia and Ukraine to the table. Speaking to reporters he said a good G7 statement would recognise that the United States has moved the process to end the war forward. G7 diplomats said the positive outcome from Jeddah may at least ease talks on Ukraine. The United States, since Trump's return to office on January 20, has taken a less-friendly stance on Ukraine, pushing for a quick deal to end the war, demanded European partners take on more of the burden without openly endorsing their role in future talks, and warmed Washington's ties with Moscow. Even Japan, so reliant on American security guarantees, has found itself in Trump's firing line.

"It's very difficult. Maybe we should wait for the G8," said one European diplomat ironically. Trump has suggested the G8 might be revived with the return of Moscow 11 years after its membership in the group was suspended

over its annexation of Crimea. Nowhere have the difficulties for US allies been more apparent than in Canada. Relations between the United States and Canada are at an all-time low, thanks to Trump's threats to impose tariffs on all imports from Canada and his constant musing about annexing the country to make it the 51st US state. "We're going to be focused in the G7 on all of those things. That's what the meeting is about. It is not a meeting about how we're going to take over Canada," Rubio told reporters, highlighting how offbeat their ties have become.

That may not appease Ottawa. Foreign Minister Melanie Joly said she would be on the offensive at the G7. "In every single meeting, I will raise the issue of tariffs to coordinate a response with the Europeans and to put pressure on the Americans," she said. European diplomats said they hoped to use the G7 to assess directly how much influence Rubio has on US foreign policy. Trump has used a wide array of officials not linked to the State Department in talks ranging from Ukraine to the situation in the Middle East, where allies have been alarmed by some of the erratic statements coming from Washington.

Europe seeks to avoid Russian energy if sanctions eased

HOUSTON (Reuters): European buyers are unlikely to return to Russia's energy sector if sanctions are lifted, as the bloc has diversified its power mix with renewable energy and alternative gas suppliers, ministers and executives said at a conference in Houston. Ukraine has agreed to accept a US proposal for an immediate 30-day ceasefire and to take steps toward restoring durable peace after Russia's invasion, according to a joint US-Ukraine statement.

The US government is studying ways it could ease sanctions on Russia's energy sector as part of a broad plan to enable Washington to deliver swift relief if Moscow agrees to end the Ukraine war, Reuters reported last week. "Do we really want to be dependent on energy from an aggressor like Russia? Obviously not," European Union (EU) Energy Commissioner Dan

Jorgensen said during a panel discussion at the conference. The bloc currently receives 13% of its natural gas from Russia, down from 45% in February 2022, owing to the fast deployment of renewable energy, Jorgensen added. The European Commission put forward an Action Plan last month which will speed up permits for renewable energy projects, change how energy tariffs are set, and increase state aid for clean industries and more flexible power generation.

"We want to be independent of fossil fuels, especially from countries like Russia, for our security," Jorgensen said of the plan. Solar generation provided 11% of the EU's electricity mix in 2024, up from 9.3% in 2023, overtaking coal, according to energy think tank Ember. Coal-fired generation fell to less than 10% for the first time since Ember began collating those fig-

ures in 2011, according to data in January. Gas-fired power production fell to a 15.7% share from 16.9% in 2023, according to Ember. "My magic word in energy security is diversification," said Fatih Birol, executive director of the Paris-based International Energy Agency, on the CERAWeek panel alongside Jorgensen.

While renewable sources are helping Europe shift away from fossil fuel power generation, new markets which emerged following Russia's invasion of Ukraine are likely here to stay. "We have managed to change from Russian gas to other gas suppliers," Holger Lösch, deputy director general of the Federation of German Industries said in an interview. "I think the truth is that Europe probably will try to diversify its gas supply further on," Lösch added.

In January, Venture

Global Inc's Plaquemines LNG export plant in Louisiana exported more than half a million tonnes of LNG, all to Europe, LSEG, ship tracking data showed.

Europe has other options as well as US LNG, including gas from the Middle East, North Africa and Azerbaijan Lösch said. "I don't anticipate Europe going back to a place where they're buying significant amounts of energy from Russia. I think that was a lesson learned," Toby Rice, CEO of EQT said in an interview at the conference. Market participants may be less keen to commit to staying weaned off Russian supplies if it would lead to cheaper energy, other executives warned.

"Why would we shoot ourselves in the foot by having the highest energy costs?" said Torbjorn Tornqvist in an interview. CEO of one of the world's largest oil traders, Gunvor.

EU wants to increase deportations and supports 'return hubs' in third countries

STRASBOURG (AP): The European Union wants to increase deportations and is opening the way for "return hubs" to be set up in third countries for rejected asylum-seekers, according to a new migration proposal unveiled. Only 20% of people with a deportation order are effectively removed from EU territory, according to the European Commission, which presented the "European System for Returns" in Strasbourg as a potential solution.

The proposal aims to set a standard for all 27 members of the bloc and allow national authorities from one country to enforce the deportation order issued by another. Such rules were missing from the EU's migration and asylum pact approved last year. "The European system needs to be clear that when someone is issued a return decision they are being told to leave, not just the country but the entire European Union," said Magnus Brunner, the EU's commissioner for migration, who called the current 20% removal rate unacceptable. "Any figure would be an improvement, but we don't want to pin down any specific figures," he added.

For the proposal to work, however, the EU needs to get countries of origin to readmit their citizens. Brunner acknowledged that the commission and member states are still working on improving that. The "return hubs," a euphemism for deportation centers, would apply only to people whose asylum requests have been rejected and exclude unaccompanied minors, Brunner said. He added that any future deal would have to include safeguards to ensure international law and human rights are respected. The EU wouldn't set up or manage such centers, which could be in Europe or elsewhere, but would create the legal framework to allow states to negotiate with non-EU

countries willing to take the rejected asylum-seekers. This differs from the existing but so-far ineffective deal signed by Italy with Albania to offshore the asylum processing of migrants rescued at sea. At the time, the contentious plan was applauded by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen as an "out-of-the-box" solution to manage irregular migration but courts in Italy have repeatedly blocked it. Brunner reiterated the need for "innovative" solutions to manage irregular migration and asylum - a highly politicized issue that the far right has used across the continent to gain votes. While the potential "return hubs" were the most striking aspect of the proposal, it also included stricter punishments for those absconding deportations and extends the detention of rejected asylum-seekers posing a flight or security risk from 18 months to 24 months.

The commission did not provide any data on how many people currently pose a "security risk." European Commission Executive Vice President Henna Virkkunen, who presented the new migration reform alongside Brunner, said the proposal was tougher but fair and would encourage migrants to leave voluntarily before they had to be forcibly removed.

Migrant rights groups criticized the proposed reform saying it undermined the right to asylum and would lead to more detentions. "We can likely expect more people being locked up in immigration detention centers across Europe, families separated and people sent to countries they don't even know," said Silvia Carta of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants. The proposal will now be sent to the European Parliament and member states for approval.

Israeli settlers stole hundreds of sheep

WEST BANK (Reuters): Armed Israeli settlers stole hundreds of sheep from a Bedouin community in the Jordan Valley, local residents say, in one of the largest recent incidents in which Bedouins in the area have reported being attacked and harassed.

Such attacks in the area have increased since the Gaza war began but witnesses said the scale incident near Ein al-Auja, north of the city of Jericho in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, went far beyond anything witnessed previously. "This was the biggest one there has been," said Hani Zayed, a resident of the community, who said he lost 70 sheep in the attack. After years of experience in dealing with local law enforcement, the idea of appealing to the police to help elicited nothing more than a shrug.

"The police don't do anything, they have never helped us in anything. If you tell them the settler is taking your sheep, they'll ask 'Are you sure it's yours?'" Local residents said about 1,500 sheep and goats were taken by settlers, who drove the ani-

mals from the village under the eyes of police and soldiers or loaded them onto pickup trucks. An Israeli police statement denied the incident had taken place as described. Israel's military did not comment, nor did a group representing settlers in the area.

The Jordan Valley, a relatively sparsely populated area close to the Jordan River, is now under increasing pressure from settlers, local residents and human rights groups say. For many Bedouin herders, the loss of a flock means the loss of any way of earning a livelihood. Like many Palestinians, the semi-nomadic herders in Ein al-Auja believe the larger goal is to force them from the land to allow a full takeover by Israel. Fuelled by speculation that US President Donald Trump, who has lifted sanctions on violent settlers, will give the green light to a full annexation of the West Bank, Israeli ministers have spoken openly about a complete takeover of the territory Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war and has occupied ever since. The encampment, which locals say was

established around 40 years ago, has no electricity apart from what is produced from mobile solar panels. Water is brought in by tankers, despite a large spring a couple of hundred metres (yards) away which is reserved for settlers' use.

"The aim of these attacks is to empty the area of its inhabitants," said Musa Abayat, who was staying with his father-in-law in the encampment. "This is the only source of livelihood." Bedouin families say incident began at around 9.00 p.m. (1900 GMT) when Israeli settlers drove some of their own sheep into the Bedouin encampment and called the police, accusing the Bedouin of theft. Dozens of armed settlers in pickup trucks arrived with police and soldiers who, they said, stood by or joined in as settlers pushed their way into people's houses and drove sheep and goats from the pens. "We were terrified when the settlers attacked," said Nayfeh Salameh, a mother of five. "The children jumped out of bed when they heard the shouts and the voices of the settlers. It was a horror for them."

Spanish fossils may represent unknown ancient human species

MADRID (Reuters): Scientists have unearthed in Spain fossilized facial bones roughly 1.1 million to 1.4 million years old that may represent a previously unknown species in the human evolutionary lineage - a discovery that rewrites humankind's early history in Europe.

The fossils from the Sima del Elefante cave site near the city of Burgos comprise fragments spanning 80 percent of the left side of an adult individual's middle face, including parts of the cheekbone and upper jaw with the nasal structure. They are among the oldest-known human fossils from Europe. The researchers nicknamed the fossil "Pink," honoring the band Pink Floyd.

Pink's facial anatomy was more primitive than that of Homo antecessor, a species known to have inhabited

Western Europe roughly 850,000 years ago whose slender midface resembled modern people. Pink possessed a more projected and massive midface than Homo antecessor, and displayed some similarities to - but also differences with - Homo erectus, thought to be the first human species to have migrated out of Africa.

The researchers said the fossils were not complete enough to conclude that Pink belonged to a yet-unnamed ancient human species but said this was a real possibility. They assigned the fossil the provisional name Homo affinis erectus in recognition of its affinities to certain Homo erectus traits. "These findings open a new line of research in the study of human evolution in Europe, as they introduce a new player in the early occupation of Europe," said archaeologist Rosa Huguet of the Catalan

Institute of Human Paleocology and Social Evolution (IPHES-CERCA) in Spain, lead author of the study published in the journal Nature.

"When we have more fossil remains, we will be able to say more about this species," Huguet said. Our species Homo sapiens did not appear until roughly 300,000 years ago in Africa, later migrating worldwide, including into Europe. Homo erectus first appeared in Africa roughly 1.9 million years ago, with body proportions similar to modern people. Homo antecessor also had modern body proportions as well as modern-looking facial anatomy.

Pink's midface resembles Homo erectus with its flat and underdeveloped nasal structure, unlike the prominent nasal bone structure of Homo antecessor and Homo sapiens.

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: 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

Is Putin ready for a ceasefire

RUSSIA is ready for a halt in fighting, says Vladimir Putin, but "there are nuances". Those nuances that he laid out ahead of talks with US envoys at the Kremlin are so key to his thinking they could scupper any hope of a 30-day ceasefire. They are demands that he has had throughout Russia's full-scale invasion, and before. And for Ukraine and its Western partners, many of them are going to prove unacceptable or impossible to fulfil.

"We agree with the proposals to cease hostilities," he started positively, only to add: "This cessation must be such that it would lead to long-term peace and eliminate the root causes of this crisis." Nobody would disagree with the need for long-term peace, but Putin's idea of the root causes of the war revolve around Ukraine's desire to exist as a sovereign state, beyond Russia's orbit. Ukraine wants to be part of Nato and the European Union - so much so, it is enshrined in the constitution. President Trump has already cast doubt on Nato membership, but Putin has repeatedly dismissed the idea of Ukraine as a state at all. And that underpins many of the nuances he sketched out. He wants to stop Ukraine from reinforcing its army and replenishing its weapons supply - so there would be no more deliveries from the West. He wants to know who would ensure that was verified.

From the start of this war, Putin has demanded the "demilitarisation" of Ukraine, which is anathema to Kyiv and its allies. In essence, Putin is looking for security guarantees in reverse. Would Russia agree to halt rearming or mobilising its forces? That seems implausible and there was no hint of any concession on his part, as he addressed reporters in the Kremlin. Putin has just come back in bullish mood from a visit seemingly close to the front line in Kursk, a Russian border region that has been partially occupied since last August by Ukraine. Russia has the upper hand in Kursk. Putin clearly feels he is negotiating from a position of strength and doesn't want to lose it. "If we stop military actions for 30 days, what does that mean? Will everyone who is there leave the battle?" Russia's defence ministry announced on Thursday that its forces had now taken full control of the biggest city the Ukrainians had managed to seize, Sudzha. Putin says all the Ukrainians have left is a wedge, so why would Russia stop now? "If a physical blockade occurs in the coming days, no-one will be able to leave at all. There will be only two options - to surrender or die." The same applied to the whole of the 1,000km (620-mile) front line, where he claimed the situation on the ground was changing rapidly, with Russian troops "advancing in practically all areas". That is not the case, as most of the front is at a stalemate, even if Russia has had some recent success in the east. Putin believes a 30-day ceasefire would deprive Russia of its advantage and enable the Ukrainians to regroup and rearm. "What are our guarantees that nothing like that will be allowed to happen," he asked rhetorically.

As yet, no mechanism has been offered to ensure that the terms of any ceasefire would hold. Although 15 Western countries have tentatively offered peacekeeping troops, they would only come in the event of a final peace deal, not a ceasefire. Not that Russia would allow that arrangement anyway. Given all these "nuances", Putin appeared to be sceptical of how a ceasefire could benefit Russia, especially when his troops were on the front foot. His entire outlook was "based on how the situation on the ground develops". Putin was meeting Trump's envoys on Moscow late on Thursday, notably Steve Witkoff. Whatever happens in those talks, Putin knows that ultimately, his most important conversation will be with the president. "I think we need to talk to our American colleagues... maybe have a phone call with President Trump and discuss this with him," he said. But Putin was setting out his stall ahead of those conversations, with a message that the road to a ceasefire was littered with conditions that would be almost impossible to meet.

Kursk offensive

TERRIBLE though it is, Ukraine's forced withdrawal from Kursk makes peace negotiations with Russia more likely. Indeed had Putin not been able to drive the Ukrainian army out, he is unlikely to have even contemplated peace talks. He would have demanded that Kyiv pull out of his territory first. That would have been a huge political challenge for Zelensky, on top of all the others he faces: the idea of voluntarily withdrawing from conquered Russian land while at the same time ceding large areas of his own country to the enemy.

Putin has the whip hand, and one of the strategic objectives of the Kursk offensive - gaining a bargaining chip for future peace negotiations - could never realistically have paid off. General Oleksandr Syrskyi, Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian army, now knows that, which is why in recent days he has been talking about preserving as many of his soldiers' lives as possible rather than fighting to hold his ground.

Although battles and wars are sometimes won by high stakes gambles, the strategic wisdom of the Kursk offensive was always questionable. It may be that in Kyiv's high command, political rather than military considerations dominated the decision making. When the operation began, the US election was looming very close and there was the need to strengthen support in both the Republican and Democratic camps as well as in Europe.

Since the failed counter offensive in 2023, Western hopes that Ukraine might prevail had sharply fallen away, and after that, much political bandwidth was diverted to the Middle East. At Kursk, Kyiv hoped to galvanise international support through replicating the optimism created by successful counter attacks around Kharkiv and Kherson in 2022. With this bold new offensive Zelensky wanted to again show the world that Ukraine was still in the fight and could win, if only provided the tools to do so.

But by then it was too late. Governments in the US and Europe had given up on Ukraine being able to push the Russians out and were focused only on some kind of negotiated settlement. That sorry state of affairs had come to pass due to their own timorousness since the war began. Following Putin's invasion in February 2022, fearing Putin's wrath, Joe Biden and his European counterparts had supplied Ukraine with barely sufficient military resources to defend itself but nowhere near enough to win. Even Kursk, the first invasion of Russian territory since the Second World War, could not change that. Self-evidently, it is vital to show strength ahead of negotiations and the West's failure over three years to adequately bolster Ukraine's fighting capability has led us to the opposite position. The defeat at Kursk is a tragic allegory for the dire situation that the country now faces.

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.



Putin's stalling on US plan

Stephen Collinson

PRESIDENT Donald Trump rarely stops bragging about his "great relationship" with Vladimir Putin. A skeptical world will soon find out whether the supposed mind-meld counts for anything.

The Russian president, author of an unprovoked and brutal invasion of Ukraine, responded in time-honored Moscow fashion Thursday to the US plan for an immediate ceasefire that the administration forced Kyiv into supporting. Putin produced a long set of obfuscations and new demands that would be unacceptable to Ukraine. But they may have been designed to tempt a US president who is desperate for the kind of win a truce would represent.

Putin did not reject Trump's overture. He called it "great and correct" and said he supported it in principle. He was careful not to alienate a US president who has already offered a series of concessions to Russia before formal peace talks begin, including an understanding that Ukraine would never have a path to NATO membership.

But Putin's objections and calls for further discussions, including with Trump, were an attempt to buy time, with his troops on the cusp of pushing Ukrainian forces out of Russia's Kursk region - one of the few bargaining chips Kyiv would have at future peace talks.

Putin also raised questions about the monitoring of any ceasefire, and whether Ukraine would be allowed to rearm during any cessation of fighting, in a way that suggested he was already seeking to shape any eventual agreement to ensure Russian dominance. Putin also referred to the need to tackle the "root causes" of the war. This is code for a number of Russian grievances that include the existence of a democratic government in Kyiv. It also refers to Moscow's claims that it is threatened by NATO expansion after the Cold War and to its desire to see alliance troops withdrawn from former communist states once in the Soviet Union's orbit, such as Poland and Romania.

Russia's response is out of its classic diplomatic playbook, which typically seeks to suck interlocutors into exhausting negotiations that stack up delays and conditions that enable the Kremlin to pursue its strategic goals in the meantime. Thursday's events showed just how hard it will be for the Trump administration to move Russia away from its position and into serious negotiations

on a ceasefire. Russia's stalling contrasted with Trump's rush for a valuable breakthrough as his trade policies set off stock market slumps and cast a cloud over the economy. "I think we're going to be in very good shape to get it done. We want to get it over with," Trump said at the Oval Office on Thursday, in an outburst of optimism that jarred with reality.

Trump put the best spin on Putin's response, saying he'd issued a "very promising statement, but it wasn't complete." He added: "Now we're going to see whether or not Russia's there. And if they're not, it will be a very disappointing moment for the world." Trump's optimism was understandable as he seeks to build momentum for a fledgling diplomatic initiative. But his willingness to ignore a new set of onerous conditions from Putin made for a stark contrast with his fury when Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky sat in the Oval Office and tried to explain why he wouldn't trust Russia's word in a peace deal without security guarantees.

Retired Adm. James Stavridis said Thursday the Russian leader was staking out a careful line: "If you put it on a scale between 'nyet,' 'no,' and 'da,' yes, he's right in the middle," he told CNN's Jim Sciutto. Stavridis, a former NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, said the Russian president would take a couple of punches from Trump but would not stop pressing toward his own goals.

Trump repeated Thursday his frequent refrain that there is ocean between the continental US and the largest land war in Europe since World War II. Those closer to the threat are far less optimistic about America's peace proposals. "I am pessimistic and skeptical about Russia's intentions and Russia's will to proceed with a just and sustainable peace," Latvian Defense Minister Andris Spruds told Isa Soares on CNN International. He said that Russia was using its typical "salami" tactics to reach its strategic goals, namely by slicing up its overarching political goals and dealing with them "piece by piece."

Should Trump forge a lasting, sustainable peace in Ukraine, he will deliver a great achievement that might be worth the Nobel Peace Prize that he reportedly craves. More importantly, thousands of lives - Ukrainians and Russians - will be saved. There may also

be some truth to the frequent claim of administration officials that only this president has a chance to end the war. While President Joe Biden rallied the Western alliance effectively to provide Ukraine with arms, ammunition and financial aid that saved its independence, there was never a track for peace talks with Putin, who was ostracized after his invasion of Ukraine three years ago.

Trump may also be tapping into fatigue among many Americans at the cost of that support, although his claim that the US has spent \$350 billion is a wild exaggeration. And some analysts believe that the new administration is only stating the obvious - that Ukraine will be unable to liberate eastern regions captured by Russia and Crimea, annexed by Putin in 2014. Furthermore, there's agreement, even among European governments that have sided with Zelensky after Trump's bullying, that some kind of partition will be needed to end the war.

But Trump's excessive deference to Putin in his first term and his early praise for the invasion of Ukraine, along with his longtime fascination with the Russian leader, raise doubt about his motives in his push to quickly end the war. Since taking office for a second term, the president has strong-armed Zelensky in a notorious Oval Office photo op and switched official American government sympathies from the victim of a vicious onslaught to its perpetrator, Putin. The president cut off vital US intelligence-sharing that helps Ukraine on the battlefield and to protect its civilians from waves of drone attacks. He also halted US military assistance to force Zelensky to accept his demand for an immediate ceasefire. US supplies and intelligence are flowing again, but the interruption sent a clear message to Zelensky that Trump could end the war on his terms if he wanted.

But will any such pressure be brought to bear on Putin, now that he, unlike the Ukrainian leader, has spurned Trump's terms? After all, the US president has said for weeks that he was convinced that Putin wanted to stop the fighting. Thursday's response shows that, at least for now, the Kremlin wants to keep the war going. The president has this week threatened tariffs on Russian imports and banking sanctions that he said would devastate Moscow's finances - but

after three years of efforts to cut Russia out of the global economy, business interactions between it and the United States are minimal. And Moscow has established channels, including through China, to support its wartime economy.

Trump refused to say on Thursday what leverage he could bring to bear on Putin that might work. But it's been clear ever since the president took back the White House that he sees Ukraine as a stepping stone on the way to a restored superpower relationship with Russia. The president has, for example, called for Moscow's return to the Group of Seven. The rich-nations club was known as the G8 until Russia was kicked out after it snatched Crimea. He appears barely able to wait for the opportunity to hold a summit with Putin in person that would restore the Russian leader's place on the world stage. And Trump's expansionist rhetoric about folding Canada and Greenland into the US recall Putin's justifications for the invasion of Ukraine. So there could come a time when the incentives for a broader relationship with Washington convince Putin that it's time to shelve, probably temporarily, his obsession with Ukraine.

In Trump's first term, there was rampant speculation about whether he was compromised by Russia; why Moscow intervened in the 2016 election to help him, as US intelligence agencies assessed; and why he admired Putin so much. The roots of Trump's obsessions remain unclear, though the allegations he's an asset of Moscow were never proven and still seem far-fetched.

But in his second term, Trump has attacked longtime US allies and blamed Zelensky for the war instead of the Russian leader who started it. That's why traditional US foreign policy experts and governments worry about what the answer would be if Putin asked Trump to help out Zelensky as a condition for a peace deal - especially since the US president has already suggested, falsely, that the Ukrainian leader who got caught up in his first impeachment was a dictator. And how would the president respond if the Russians called for him to withdraw NATO troops in Eastern Europe to address what Putin falsely calls "the root causes" of the Ukrainian conflict? The question is whether Trump is negotiating with Putin or whether the Russian leader is manipulating him.

CNN

Starmer shifting dramatically to the right

Sherelle Jacobs

SIR Keir Starmer has, until now, struggled to cut through as a leader. His vow, upon entering office, to oversee a "return of politics to public service" was soon derailed by a catastrophic Budget, broken public services, overflowing prisons and his inability to grip immigration. His war on private schools and his tax rises infuriated Middle England. His attacks on farmers and his inflexibility on net zero sent his poll ratings tanking and those of Reform surging. His staunchly human rights-based view of the world and the Chagos fiasco threatened to define what appeared to be an increasingly failed premiership. Relaunch after relaunch achieved little.

But all of this appears to be changing. Fate is moulding Starmer into the kind of leader he never really wanted to be: a conservative who in reality if not in spirit is now to the Right of the Tories on a whole range of issues. This is an astonishing development. Worse still, for those who hoped the Starmer who served under Corbyn would one day return, it is Donald Trump who is driving his metamorphosis. Having upended assumptions about US foreign policy, Trump has compelled Starmer - who marched against the Iraq War - to rise to the occasion. He performed well with Trump and his plan for a coalition of the willing on Ukraine shifted the narrative. Expectations were low, but he defied them when making his debut on the world stage. For the first time since the election, he has been on the front foot in recent weeks, thanks to foreign policy.

But that was just the start of Trump's impact. In a remarkable upending of political orthodoxy, he is slashing the foreign aid target, one of David Cameron's flagship policies, and increasing defence spending, partly undoing the Tories' shameful depletion of the country's military and industrial capacity. Behind the scenes, Whitehall is shocked. Insiders working on the defence review admit that, after "plodding along" with their report, suddenly they're being pushed over a "cliff edge".

Starmer's blueprint for reforming the state, which includes a bonfire of the quangos and the slashing of Civil Service jobs, while ramping up the use of efficiency-driving tech, is clearly influenced by Musk's Doge. At home, he is steeling himself for battle with his own party, as he draws up plans to cut the deficit by slashing welfare (even castigating the "broken welfare system") and promising to finally contain the annual increase in NHS spending. It is quite something to watch Keir Starmer undo so many Lefty Tory policies.

But perhaps the one move by Starmer that is the most humiliating for the Tories is his abolition of their most egregious creation, NHS England. Accurately described by Wes Streeting as "the world's biggest quango", it repeatedly missed targets, only to then pressure the government of the day for higher funding. Even medics who worry about "distracting" top-down Labour reforms concede that NHSE lost its grip some time ago. Would Labour really be abolishing it had the climate of opinion not been drastically shifted by Trump and Musk's war on bureaucrats?

More importantly, Starmer is reversing one of

the Tories' most naive errors in government, which was to try and reform the NHS whilst at the very same time decentralising it. Labour knows that it must shift resources from hospitals to preventative healthcare programmes that will tackle the root causes of illness and encourage people to take more responsibility for their health. Achieving this sort of shift is impossible as long as the levers of power remain beyond the grasp of No 10.

Of course, the Tory party is keen to impress that Labour hardly has an encouraging track record on managing healthcare systems, having "run NHS Wales to the ground". Time will tell, but right now the Opposition's protestations are falling on deaf ears.

If Trump is the storm that has driven Labour to veer-rightwards, then Starmer's closest aides, Cabinet Secretary Pat McFadden and Chief of Staff Morgan McSweeney are the captains steering the ship. According to a No10 insider, the duo's brains have effectively merged into a single "McWorldview". Their politics is infected with galvanising terror, stemming from McFadden's "brush with death" when he almost lost his rock solid Labour seat in the 2019 election - and has been heightened by the normalised chaos of the Trump era.

Their approach boils down to the political "will to live", and to retain power at all costs. All of Labour's major policies - from ramping up defence, slashing aid, overhauling the NHS and benefits and ignoring environmentalists and "Nimby's" as it presses on with a third runway - are, I'm told, part of a coherent strategy. The Starmer-McSweeney-McFadden triumvirate has two aims: shore up the Red Wall, and convince the Office for Budget Responsibility (and the markets) that the Government is serious about growth and fiscal prudence.

They also agree with the Blairite tenet that idealists must modermise or die; that Left-liberals must adapt to the reality of circumstance or fade away. Blairism is often mistaken as a dogma that favoured the embrace of globalisation. In fact, what Blair did was force his party to reconcile itself with the nature of the times. This masterplan is not without risk. Progressive voters may get fed up and drift to the Lib Dems, Greens, SNP or independents campaigning on a Gaza platform. Starmer, McFadden and McSweeney are now believed to be united in their detestation of the hard-Left.

Nevertheless, the centrists in Labour are worried that an authentically Left-wing rival party could emerge. Some also fear that having been instrumental in helping Starmer win back much of the Red Wall in the last election, the Blue Labour faction under Maurice Glasman is taking things too far in its bid to neutralise Reform. And that's before you get to the dangers to British prosperity of Labour's Employment Rights Bill, educational vandalism and the many other nefarious policies still being implemented or proposed by the Government. Yet it is a fact that Starmer is moving Labour to the Right. That has seismic implications for the country - and it won't be good news for Reform or the beleaguered Tory party.

The Telegraph

Costs of nuclear sovereignty

Tom Sauer

that nuclear deterrence works is uncertain. Advocates of nuclear weapons believe that it works. They forget that in history many nuclear weapon states (including Israel, India, the UK) have been attacked by non-nuclear weapon states. In theory, it is very hard to make it work as it assumes for instance a rational enemy. It also assumes that the possessor is really prepared to use them. However, if used on a massive scale, it means the annihilation of the planet. In the war in Ukraine, French President Emmanuel Macron for that reason stated that even if Russia uses a tactical nuclear weapon in Ukraine, France would not retaliate with nuclear weapons.

Secondly, emerging and disruptive technologies (like AI) and weapon systems (like hypersonic missiles) will further undermine the so-called nuclear stability. Ideally, conventional deterrence (using hypersonic missiles) could and should replace nuclear deterrence on the condition that all nuclear states agree.

Thirdly, extended nuclear deterrence, read the atomic umbrella, is even more incredible. As early as the 1970s, Henry Kissinger cautioned Europeans against assuming that the US would employ nuclear weapons for their defense. That is also the reason why France did not want to shelter under the US umbrella, and why it built its own nuclear arsenal in the 1950s. Ironically, France now offers its umbrella to its European partners.

Fourthly, as long as there is no EDU, the question will be whose finger will be on the button. Macron is very clear: it will be his finger. The question then becomes whether German taxpayers would be interested in co-financing a strategic weapon system that they cannot con-

rol in times of war.

Fifthly, by Europeanizing the French nuclear weapons, the EU legitimizes nuclear weapons. This complicates the fight against proliferation. How sustainable is it to ask Iran not to produce nuclear weapons when the EU itself is setting up a nuclear arsenal?

There are also concerns about whether Europeanization aligns with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, particularly if Germany and Poland were to develop their own nuclear capabilities. Both ideas also go against the spirit and the letter of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017) that in the meantime has been signed by more or less 100 states.

Sixthly and lastly, it would be much better if the leaders of the EU spend as much time on diplomacy with Russia than in building up European defense. It is high time that the war in Ukraine ends, not only for humanitarian

but also economic reasons. A peace agreement ideally includes a beginning of a restructuring of the European collective security architecture that includes both Russia and Ukraine, either in a transformed NATO or an upgraded Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). If such an agreement is reached, there would be little justification for further fragmenting European defense into over 25 separate, small-scale military forces. Nowadays already the European NATO member states spend \$485 billion on defense, much more than Russia (\$120 billion). The primary challenge for EU defense today is not the absence of a Eurobomb but the lack of coordination in pooling, sharing, and special-izing. Instead of investing in weapons of mass destruction, making EU defense more efficient should be the priority as well as integrating Russia into a larger collective security organization.

What is the economy like in Russia? Just ask ordinary people

Jeremy Morris

“Yes, inflation is out of control. But it looks like there’ll be a ceasefire soon. We can put up with more disruption until then. And, after all, it’s not like Russians don’t know how to make sacrifices. Fancy foods are not the main thing in life,” said Katya from Moscow in a bizarre recent conversation. Even the capital’s cosseted middle classes can hardly deny that real inflation remains high on all kinds of foods, from dairy staples to gourmet items.

One can see various projections at work in this kind of talk. When dealing with cognitive dissonance, people reveal their true feelings about the difficult, gradually worsening economic circumstances in Russia during the fourth year of war. For one thing, there is this fatalist optimism as if it was possible defer the political reckoning of the economic costs of the war indefinitely. In turn, magical thinking that things will turn out fine is predicated on dangerously naive assumptions about normalization with the West and — more importantly — a massive shift in spending from weapons to more useful investments that actually improve citizens’ lives. But as Andras Toth-Czifra recently argued, spending is likely to remain skewed towards military purposes regardless of any negotiations, to the detriment of social priorities and especially regional budgets.

In other words, it looks very much like people will be left gravely disappointed and resentful whatever the outcome of the negotiations. Furthermore, it is revealing to hear from Muscovites the old chestnut that Russians are a stoic nation while people in the capital have lived a life wrapped in cotton wool, even during the war.

Katya had just visited one of the vast French supermarkets on the edge of the city (which continues to operate in Russia “for the good of the country’s population”). She complained about the poor quality of

products, the lack of choice and the high prices of once-affordable specialty cheeses and cold cuts. Katya does not need to work because, somewhat typically for a wide segment of the capital’s upper-middle class, she can live on rental incomes from two flats she owns and lets out. Next week she will take a holiday to Turkey. The exchange rate does not bother her. Well, not too much given how much she has been able to raise rents. One of my academic colleagues just got her EU visa approved. But all she can talk about is going shopping in a “normal country.” The wife of a security officer in a large southern city jokes with me that she must be okay given how overweight she still is, despite having to drop her cleaner and one of the tutors for her kids. The 20,000 rubles (\$227) the cleaner asked for in return for a few hours of work a week was apparently too much.

Meanwhile, my provincial interlocutors are storing potatoes and taking second jobs. My long-standing interlocutor-cum-motorcycle-nut, Gosha, had to sell his Harley and — perhaps more tellingly — give up on his mortgage and move back in with his parents in Kaluga. His sister’s husband now has to commute to a new job at the aluminium factory — three hours one way and so necessitating a stay in a hostel. But even in these cases, trying to get people to explicitly connect their experiences to the war is difficult, even if they obviously are. I wrote at the end of January in greater depth about the divergent economic experiences of war among my interlocutors.

So far, so unremarkable: even in big wars those with access to unearned wealth are good at maintaining their standards of living. But the thrust of recent Chronicles findings is that few have escaped the sense of the economic dislocation of

the war. As always with polling, the findings probably understate the issue significantly: 9% think the conflict has led to improvements in their everyday lives while 54% report adverse effects.

Putin is surely channelling the general mood when he recently said: “Inequality is the real scourge of the modern world. Within countries, inequality gives rise to social tensions and political instability.” However, Russia remains one of the most unequal countries in the world. The war has not changed the country’s GINI coefficient. Economists report that wages are outpacing inflation. But there are big questions as to the veracity of these data and, in any case, a so-called Keynesian effect of the war economy should be visible in things like the share of wealth accruing to labour (or a falling GINI). None of these things are happening. Even pliant press reports like from RBC cannot mask this problem fully. At the bottom of this article, an economist admits that the war’s main result is giving the wealthiest a significant boost via investment instruments (a good deposit in roubles returns 25% annually) and rental payments.

Meanwhile, it is worth repeating a point frequently made by one of the most respected economic geographers in Russia, Natalia Zubarevich. Given the decades-long tradition of very low pay and low productivity in Russian enterprises, even two or three years of real wage increases hardly scratches the surface. If the sense of inflation that people have is around 20% or more then that puts the nominal wage growth of 18% in 2024 into some kind of perspective. The slice of the economic pie going to wages and social insurance has always been surprisingly low in Russia (up to 10% of GDP lower than in other high human development countries). War or no war, that will

not change.

Indeed, just look at what the US Chamber of Commerce in Russia would prioritize in its anticipation of sanctions relief: luxury clothes and shoes (worth over \$300), financial instruments and spare parts for the aviation industry. These are their priorities at the same time as a general sharp slowdown in the main part of the consumption economy and no sign of inflation slowing.

Fatigue, both moral and economic seems still to be the motif of this stage of the war — even if it heralds the beginning of a new stage. As war commodities analyst Nick Trickett recently wrote, “regime confidence in sustaining the war isn’t the same as believing things won’t become more difficult at home.” Anthropologist Myriam Amri remarked recently that in countries going through a crisis, inflation defines how the economy feels for most people. Indeed, we need to remember that Russians know very well that official statistics are manipulated even more than before and that the financial press is subject to strict self-censorship even on mundane economic issues.

The so-called expertise of ordinary people — through their feelings about the economy — should be recognized beyond the attempts of experts to fix the boundaries of knowledge. Inflation matters as a social concept because it transcends abstract and technical measurements into a phenomenon that allows ordinary people to talk about the system around them. These discussions activate other fears and apprehensions about the future of Russia, the war and its conduct. A feeling of ratcheting inflation has crystalized the sense of the war economy since 2022 and being able to uncover this is one of the advantages of looking beyond headline figures to talk to people about their experiences is essential to understanding what it is like to live in an authoritarian state.

Taiwan’s daunting defense challenges

Gabriel Dominguez

missiles.

Experts from the Global Taiwan Institute say the program has so far been a success, noting that the National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology, part of the Ministry of National Defense’ Armaments Bureau, was on track last year to produce 1,000 missiles — two years ahead of schedule — for less than \$1.5 billion, a fraction of the money being spent on similar US systems.

Advances also extend to sea mines, with Ou saying the Taiwanese Navy has built up a new mine warfare flotilla that can help counter Chinese amphibious landing attempts using a combination of older and advanced smart mines. But there might be other challenges ahead, especially in terms of funding, as Taiwan struggles with political gridlock in its legislature, a situation that has limited the government’s ability to ramp up defense spending.

The KMT says it pursues a China policy focused on both deterrence and dialogue with China, with some members saying that certain military acquisitions

Taiwan has also been making progress in other asymmetric capabilities, especially after a \$7.4 billion special budget was passed in 2021 to expand the island’s defense-industrial base, including through the production of advanced missiles. Experts from the Global Taiwan Institute say the program has so far been a success, noting that the National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology, part of the Ministry of National Defense’ Armaments Bureau, was on track last year to produce 1,000 missiles — two years ahead of schedule — for less than \$1.5 billion, a fraction of the money being spent on similar US systems. Advances also extend to sea mines, with Ou saying the Taiwanese Navy has built up a new mine warfare flotilla that can help counter Chinese amphibious landing attempts using a combination of older and advanced smart mines.

advanced smart mines. But there might be other challenges ahead, especially in terms of funding, as Taiwan struggles with political gridlock in its legislature, a situation that has limited the government’s ability to ramp up defense spending.

Also not helping are delays in the delivery of critical American equipment, with the US arms sales backlog to Taiwan valued at \$21.95 billion as of late last year, including \$8.4 billion for asymmetric capabilities, according to the Cato Institute. The reasons for the backlog include production capacity issues due to a surge in demand for US equipment by Washington’s partners and allies, including military support for Ukraine.

Raymond Greene, head of the American Institute of Taiwan, the de facto US Embassy on the self-ruled island, told Taiwanese media that Washington has been working “very hard” to accelerate deliveries, especially of asymmetric systems. Taipei is aware of the issue, with the administration of President Lai Ching-te leaning heavily into drone manufacturing, which it views as a key element of Taiwan’s defense infrastructure.

In recent years, the government has been expanding national defense programs focusing on autonomous swarms, setting up a state-run drone research-and-development center in Chiayi County, working toward a civil-military fusion and collaborating more closely with like-minded partners. Taiwan’s small and midsize drone manufacturers need economies of scale, Ou said, which is why Taipei is also looking at opportunities to co-produce with American companies and establish “a non-red (China) supply chain.”

Taiwan has also been making progress in other asymmetric capabilities, especially after a \$7.4 billion special budget was passed in 2021 to expand the island’s defense-industrial base, including through the production of advanced missiles. Experts from the Global Taiwan Institute say the program has so far been a success, noting that the National Chung-Shan Institute of Science and Technology, part of the Ministry of National Defense’ Armaments Bureau, was on track last year to produce 1,000 missiles — two years ahead of schedule — for

less than \$1.5 billion, a fraction of the money being spent on similar US systems.

Advances also extend to sea mines, with Ou saying the Taiwanese Navy has built up a new mine warfare flotilla that can help counter Chinese amphibious landing attempts using a combination of older and advanced smart mines. But there might be other challenges ahead, especially in terms of funding, as Taiwan struggles with political gridlock in its legislature, a situation that has limited the government’s ability to ramp up defense spending.

The KMT says it pursues a China policy focused on both deterrence and dialogue with China, with some members saying that certain military acquisitions

could be considered provocative by Beijing. This approach, however, has led to criticism, not only at home but also from US legislators, with Republican Sen. Dan Sullivan accusing the KMT last week of “playing a dangerous game” with the defense budget.

Huang said that going forward, the KMT plans to move beyond the parliamentary limitations of cutting and freezing budgets and take a more “proactive” stance. “We will change our approach from ‘waiting for the executive branch’s budget proposals’ to ‘forming a KMT initiative,’” he said, indicating that the party will engage both Pentagon and Taiwanese Defense Ministry “interlocutors” to discuss ways to increase the budget to “meet our defense needs and effectively enhance our warfighting capabilities.”

But while Taiwan may eventually free up more money for US-made acquisitions, the ongoing quarrel over defense spending means the road ahead may be more challenging for home-made asymmetric capabilities. One important issue has been the opposition’s decision to freeze funds for some homeland programs, including 50% of the money due this year for the island’s indigenous submarine prototype — the first of a planned fleet of eight locally developed and produced subs.

The KMT and TPP say they will eventually release the funds but only under the condition that the largely untested prototype not only successfully completes harbor trials set to end in April, but also sea acceptance trials by October to ensure that any additional money would be spent on a viable system. However, INDSR’s Ou, said that such an approach would risk delaying the transition into the program’s production phase at a time when the subs are urgently needed.

The growing political divisions come as the military gap between China and Taiwan keeps widening. Unless Taipei finds viable ways to step up its game, whether on its own or with partners, it is unlikely to deter the increasingly mighty Chinese military. Taipei’s best bet lies in asymmetric capabilities, but as it tries to overcome key technical challenges, it will also have to find ways out of the political impasse at home.

The Japan Times

Greenland faces new political reality after election surprise

Ahmet Gurhan Kartal

DURING his first term in office, Trump attempted to buy Greenland, citing its rich mineral resources and strategic location. Now, he has placed the island at the top of his geopolitical priorities, alongside Canada and the Panama Canal. While Denmark dismissed his previous proposal outright, speculation over renewed US interest has remained a key issue in Greenlandic politics.

This week, Nuuk, Greenland’s capital, saw an influx of journalists covering the country’s pivotal parliamentary election on Tuesday, March 11. Interest in the vote has been higher than ever due to its significance amid Trump’s renewed focus. Against expectations, the ruling coalition — comprising the left-wing Inuit Ataqatigiit and Siumut parties — suffered a major defeat. Near complete counts showed both parties, which had firmly rejected Trump’s ambitions to acquire Greenland, secured only about 21% and 15% of the vote, respectively. This marks a dramatic decline from the previous election, when they commanded two-thirds of the electorate. In a surprising turn, the center-right Demokraatit party emerged as the biggest winner, securing 30% of the vote in what is now being described as a seismic shift in Greenlandic politics.

“We did not expect this outcome, but we are very happy,” Demokraatit leader Jens-Frederik Nielsen said after the results. “I think this is a historic result in Greenland’s political history.” In the wake of the election, Nielsen emphasized the importance of a steady and pragmatic approach to Greenland’s relationship with the US. “We must have a calm course in

relation to the USA,” he told local broadcaster KNR. While independence from Denmark remains a long-term goal for many Greenlandic parties, Nielsen cautioned against rushing the process, stressing the need to first establish a strong economic foundation. “In relation to state formation, we must first build the foundation. We must not build the house from the chimney down,” he said. Nielsen also acknowledged the role of Naleraq, another right-wing party with a strong nationalist stance on Greenlandic independence, noting that it could not be ignored in coalition talks.

“It’s the second-largest party, so you can’t avoid them. But we don’t want to rule out the other parties in advance,” he said, signaling a willingness to negotiate with multiple factions to form a stable government. He also called for unity within Greenland amid growing external pressures. “Many big things are happening on a global scale, and it is important that we have one voice and one common vote,” he added.

“Greenland needs us to stand together in a time of great interest from outside. There is a need for unity, so we will enter into negotiations with everyone.” Both Demokraatit and Naleraq support Greenland’s independence, but they differ on how to achieve it. Demokraatit, which is set to lead the next coalition government, advocates a gradual transition, arguing that Greenland must first achieve economic self-sufficiency before separating from Denmark.

A Nuuk taxi driver, who asked to

remain anonymous, said he supports this cautious approach. “Greenlanders want independence, but we need money,” he said. “If the economy gets better, then we can think of an independent Greenland.”

He also suggested that Greenland should explore business opportunities with US companies to create jobs. “Yes to independence, but when it is right,” he added. Greenland’s wealth of natural resources has long made it a focus of geopolitical interest. While Trump has framed his push to take over the territory as a matter of national security, many believe the real driving force is the island’s untapped mineral potential.

A government employee from Greenland’s Mineral Resources Authority, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the island possesses vast reserves of nickel, cobalt, and copper, with further potential for zinc, rubies, and even diamonds. “Climate change and the melting ice sheet that covers 80% of the island are revealing more and more resources every day,” the employee said. “This is what Trump is after.”

With Arctic ice receding at an accelerated pace, Greenland’s mining sector is expected to play an even larger role in global resource extraction in the coming years. While Demokraatit’s election victory was unexpected, the primary reasons behind this result were not solely related to independence from Denmark. Many voters, particularly those in Greenland’s critical fishing industry, are frustrated by a controversial new fisheries law passed last year. The law introduced a 10-year

transition period requiring all commercial fishing companies to be based in Greenland and created flexible individual species quotas that could be fished or traded. It also expanded coastal fishing rights from three miles offshore to 12 miles and set minimum prices for fish.

The law has proven unpopular for many Greenlanders who depend on the seafood industry, which remains the backbone of Greenland’s economy and accounts for 90% of the island’s export value and 30% of its total export volume. A fisherman from Sisimiut, who voted for Demokraatit, said he was angered by how the previous government handled the law.

“We are already struggling with the cost of fuel, and then they make new rules without thinking about us,” he said. “This is why I voted for change.” Economic concerns and dissatisfaction with healthcare services also contributed to the ruling coalition’s defeat and the rise of the two right-wing parties.

With Demokraatit at the helm, the next government is expected to take a more business-friendly and pragmatic approach, focusing on economic growth, responsible resource management, and strengthening Greenland’s financial independence before pursuing full sovereignty. As coalition negotiations begin, Nielsen and his party will need to navigate delicate discussions with Naleraq and other parties to form a stable governing bloc. Greenland’s future remains uncertain, but one thing is clear: the political landscape has shifted dramatically at a time when the island’s global footprint is only growing.

AA

We can’t know if Putin will accept a ceasefire in Ukraine

Orysia Lutsevych

AT this stage of the crisis, it is important to be clear-sighted. The US-Ukraine meeting in Jeddah was a damage-control operation. Both parties reset relations that had been damaged, largely by Washington’s impatience. The US reversed its previous decisions in exchange for something Ukraine was ready to provide anyway: privileged access to Ukraine’s natural resource wealth and a willingness to start a peace process.

It is encouraging to see renewed US-Ukraine dialogue to end the war. As Churchill said, the only thing worse than fighting with allies is fighting without them. The public mugging in the Oval Office, calling Volodymyr Zelenskyy a dictator and the pause in military and intelligence support were hard to fathom. Ukrainians wondered why President Trump was putting the blame and the pressure on the victim, and protecting the aggressor. Trump’s “beautiful” deal involved bullying the weaker and reassuring the stronger. He finds it more natural to put pressure on allies, be it Ukraine or Canada, and relax it on adversaries.

This week’s meeting in Jeddah may have been an effort by the White House to re-balance the pressure scale and expose Vladimir Putin’s real intentions. By the beginning of this week the US had lifted the pause on intelligence-sharing and resumed security assistance. This intelligence is critical

for defending Ukrainian cities from the nightly aerial bombings. US satellite images and communication systems sustain several targeting and air-defence platforms. The night the delegations met in Saudi Arabia, the port of Odesa was hit, killing four people in a strike on a grain vessel. Ukraine is waging a defensive war and perhaps the White House has understood that the best leverage over Putin is powerful and well-equipped Ukrainian armed forces.

Nobody wants peace more than Ukraine. When President Trump was accusing Zelenskyy of not wanting peace, it must have pleased the Kremlin immensely. Trump was reciting Russian talking points. The US-Ukraine meeting dispelled that falsehood and demonstrated Kyiv’s constructive and cooperative position.

The joint statement points out that “Ukraine expressed a readiness to accept the US proposal to enact an immediate, interim 30-day ceasefire, which can be extended by mutual agreement of the parties, and which is subject to acceptance and concurrent implementation by the Russian Federation”. So what will be Putin’s move? I think his agreement on a ceasefire will be driven by two factors: whether his country can stay in the fight for much longer and the terms of the arrangement imposed on Ukraine. Putin may decide that the cost of losing a seat at the superpower table with the US president out-

weighs any benefits of conquering a few more villages in eastern Ukraine. Putin may, therefore, settle for a ceasefire that secures his interim gains: he gets his “grey zone” with a weakened Ukraine outside Nato and an unresolved war that can be reignited at any time. This would mean Ukraine would need to continue to spend a huge portion of its national budget on defence, straining its economy and struggling to deliver on the EU integration agenda. Putin, meanwhile, gets a secure “land bridge” connecting Crimea to Russia via the coast of the Azov Sea.

A ceasefire would bring Russia much-needed economic relief and buy time for a military reconstitution. Given Ukraine’s persistent destruction of Russian oil refineries, it will need time to rebuild those too. For this, the lifting of energy-related western sanctions will be key to get new equipment in. And a pause allows for regrouping of manpower, since Ukraine has killed or wounded nearly 80% of the ground troops that Russia has mobilised for this war. Russia has struggled to take large chunks of Ukraine because of a deficit of men and equipment. The final incentive to pause the war may come from Putin’s confidence in his ability to wreck Ukraine from within. Recent US insistence on elections and calls for Zelenskyy to resign are also part of the Kremlin’s plans. Putin is deter-

mined to destroy Zelenskyy’s government. The grey zone scenario enables the forces of chaos, fuelled by disinformation, to damage pro-democratic parties. The blame for this neither-war-nor-peace situation will fall on Zelenskyy. Issues of war trauma, lack of foreign investment and new outflows of people when travel restrictions are lifted make a ceasefire risky for Ukraine. A ceasefire that doesn’t lead to a just settlement will worsen regional security in the long run.

Ukraine may not “have all the cards”, but nor is it bluffing when it says it will not capitulate to Moscow’s demands. Support for Zelenskyy remains high. Despite its own difficulties with military personnel, only 38% of Ukrainians believe Kyiv should agree to relinquish Ukraine’s sovereign territory to Russia. This is mainly driven by the understanding that Russia is waging a genocidal war to destroy the Ukrainian nation — 87% of Ukrainians believe Moscow will not stop at the current frontlines.

If the US manages to curtail Russian appetites and pressure it to approach a ceasefire as the start of a genuine settlement, peace has a chance. If not, it will create a quagmire that will sink Ukraine and further weaken the rest of Europe. Moscow is already in a non-kinetic war with the west; but western intelligence assessments show it is preparing for a “hot”, conventional conflict. The stakes of these peace negotiations could not be higher.

The Guardian

SAPM: Sick industrial units’ revival top priority

LAHORE (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan said on Saturday that revival of sick industrial units is top priority of the government.

Talking to business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), he said, no department should take action against business community without consulting the chambers of commerce, saying that restoring business confidence is essential for economic growth.

He said that business community must be given freedom to contribute to national development through industrialization and investment. He disclosed that the government is introducing a bankruptcy law to facilitate the businesses.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad, Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry, former president Muhammad Ali Mian and former senior vice president Ali Hassam Asghar also spoke on the occasion while members of the Executive Committee were present.

He said that effective measures are being put in place to improve and simplify the regulatory processes, enabling the industries to operate efficiently.

He expressed pride in the fact that both Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar had

previously served as LCCI Presidents, further strengthening the bond between the government and the business community.

Haroon Akhtar Khan emphasized the importance of policy continuity, citing China as an example of a country that has achieved sustainable development through consistent economic policies.

The SAPM said that markup rate has declined from 22 percent to 12 percent and the stock market is reaching new heights, however, more focus is needed on GDP growth and industrialization. He reassured that the government is making substantial efforts in this regard. The government has reduced power rates and expressed optimism that the markup rate would also decrease further.

He stated that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is keen to encourage local investors to attract foreign investments. He proposed an incentive scheme for overseas Pakistanis to repatriate their declared assets worth approximately US \$ 30 billion.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad described recent meetings with the Prime Minister as highly productive. He hoped that electricity prices would be brought down to Rs. 30 per unit, while the markup rate is expected to decrease by another two percent. He raised concerns about the rising cost of doing business due to increasing input

cost, along with MDI charges on closed industrial units. He said that while the policy rate has been reduced to 12 percent, it remains high compared to regional competitors and should be brought to a single-digit range. He also highlighted high prices of land in industrial estates, which have reached Rs. 500 million per acre, making industrial expansion difficult.

Mian Abuzar Shad proposed several recommendations, including complete vehicle assembly in Pakistan, development of local raw material industries such as metals, alloys, steel, petrochemicals, minerals and textiles, with minimal duties on these materials. He stressed the importance of a cascading tariff structure to prevent industrial disruptions and recommended establishing Export Promotion Sectoral Councils under the Ministry of Industries, led by the private sector. He also emphasized the urgent need for new Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in Lahore, as existing industrial estates like Sundar and Quaid-i-Azam Industrial Estates have reached full capacity. He proposed the development of a 20-year Industrial Master Plan to set up industrial estates in every district of Pakistan.

Furthermore, he called for initiatives to promote electric vehicles (EVs),

including special loan schemes, EV charging stations and mandating EVs in government fleet purchases. He suggested prioritizing local solar panel production through joint ventures with major Chinese companies and emphasized the need for increased financing and technology access for SMEs.

He said that SMEs in Pakistan receive less than six percent of private sector financing, despite 65 percent of them being based in Punjab and called for collateral-free, low-interest financing to support their technological advancement.

LCCI Vice President Shahid Nazir Chaudhry stressed the importance of regularizing industrial clusters and eliminating excessive conversion fees. He said that many industrial clusters around Lahore are not officially recognized and should be regularized without commercialization fees. He also urged the government to expedite infrastructure development in Quaid-i-Azam Business Park to support industrial growth.

Former LCCI President Muhammad Ali Mian emphasized that LCCI budget proposals should be considered and incorporated into the federal budget. Former Senior Vice President Ali Hassam Asghar urged the government to give due attention to the rice sector, which holds significant export potential.



BAHAWALPUR: People purchasing traditional food items for iftar from roadside stall.

Gold prices decrease by Rs300/tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs.300 and was traded at Rs.313,700 on Saturday as compared to its sale at Rs314,000 on previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs.257 to Rs 268,947 from Rs 269,204 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold also went down by Rs.236 to Rs.246,543 from Rs.246,779 respectively.

The prices of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.3,530 and Rs.3,026 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$4 to \$2,984 from \$2,988 whereas that of silver remained unchanged at \$33.86, the Association reported.

SMES to battle major challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of Pakistan's economy, contributing 40% to GDP and 30% to exports, yet they continue to battle major challenges, says Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

In a discussion with visiting business leaders, Qureshi highlighted critical roadblocks—limited financing, outdated technology, and lack of skilled human resources—stressing the need for targeted solutions to boost productivity and competitiveness, said a release issued here on Saturday.

He urged the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) to focus on youth employment and accelerating economic growth. “ICCI is dedicated to working alongside government bodies to build a business-friendly ecosystem,” he added.

To fuel innovation, Qureshi announced ICCI's plan to launch a cutting-edge Research and Development Centre in collaboration with top universities.

This initiative, alongside ICCI's MoUs with regional universities, aims to close the academia-industry gap and empower youth to become job creators, not just job seekers.

“By championing startups, driving innovation, and tackling SME challenges, we can unlock economic growth and generate countless job opportunities,” Qureshi concluded.

Chief concerned over abrupt changes in net-metering policy

— Moqem terms govt’s move a major hurdle in uplift of renewable energy sector

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqem Khan strongly reacted over the government's move to bring sudden and drastic changes in net metering policy, calling it a major hurdle in promotion of renewable energy sector and asked to immediately withdraw it.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, SCCI chief stated reduction in power purchase for solar panel owners at Rs10/unit from Rs27/unit unfair, even though it would be very harmful.

He said the major cut of 63 percent would not only discourage new investment in the solar energy sector but it could also inflict losses in achieving the government's targets in renewable energy.

Moqem said it is completely incomprehensible to force solar energy consumers to buy electricity over 550 percent from the national grid, which is unfair and unacceptable.

Furthermore, he said it is totally incomprehensible that the government, under the guise of changes in the policy, would charge additional 90 paisa per unit from non-solar consumers, which is highly deplorable.

The reality is that the government is attempting to divert attention from Rs18/unit to non-functional capacity payments and approximately annual Rs600billion losses on account of power theft and non-payment of power bills, Moqem remarked.

The chamber president urged the government to review its decision and give priority to such durable energy solutions that would serve the interests of consumers from all categories, instead of benefiting only a few segments.

Moqem said the uplift renewable energy sector is highly essential for the country's energy prosperity, economic growth and environmental stability.

SCCI chief urged the government to consult with the business community along with relevant stakeholders and frame such a balanced and comprehensive energy policy that could ensure promotion of the renewable energy sector and protect the interest of power consumers of all categories.

FRIA concerned over rising losses of DISCOs due to inefficiencies

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has raised its serious concern over power distribution companies' huge losses of billions of rupees in the first half of the fiscal year due to inefficiencies, which need to be taken care of seriously.

FRIA Chairman Shahbaz Aslam said that the primary challenge remained the losses caused by power distribution companies due to theft, inefficiency, and under-recovery of bills.

These companies also caused Rs52 billion in losses due to under-recoveries, which was Rs97 billion less than the comparative period.

The FRIA Chairman said that it is good that the government is working to resolve issues in appointing independent Boards of Directors for DISCOs to further reduce losses.

Shahbaz Aslam suggested that the circular debt actually increased by Rs463bn in the first seven months of the current fiscal year, averaging Rs66bn monthly, compared to Rs408bn in the same period last year. However, after accounting for stock payments worth Rs137bn from June 2023 to January 2024, the net increase in circular debt was Rs325bn.

The payables to power producers, which stood at Rs1.434tr at the beginning of FY2023, jumped to Rs1.77tr by the end of January 2023 and remained almost unchanged at Rs1.760tr by the end of January 2024 — a minuscule difference of Rs8bn. The stock of permanent debt guaranteed by the government of Pakistan remained unchanged at Rs765bn during the period.

The increase in circular debt can be attributed to poor recoveries by distribution companies, high system losses, pending generation costs, non-payments by K-Electric, and interest charges, despite the government's efforts to recover about Rs116bn from consumers in the previous year.

The business leader said that the cumulative losses due to under-recoveries and inefficiency amounted to Rs158 billion. These were partially offset by gains from monthly and quarterly tariff adjustments and prior-year recoveries.

The government collected an additional Rs67 billion from quarterly and monthly fuel adjustments and another Rs140 billion through other price adjustments, according to the report.

Experts added that discoms alone contributed Rs82 billion of the Rs158 billion losses, with an increase of Rs28 billion from last year. This clearly means that the government's policies to appoint independent Boards of Directors at State-Owned Enterprises are yielding results, they said.

He said that the circular debt amounted to Rs2.384 trillion by the end of December, according to a report by the Power Division. The report further showed that after injecting Rs20 billion from the budget to reduce the stock of debt, there was a net reduction of Rs9 billion in circular debt compared to the Rs2.393 trillion level recorded in June 2024.

ment of Pakistan remained unchanged at Rs765bn during the period.

The increase in circular debt can be attributed to poor recoveries by distribution companies, high system losses, pending generation costs, non-payments by K-Electric, and interest charges, despite the government's efforts to recover about Rs116bn from consumers in the previous year.

The business leader said that the cumulative losses due to under-recoveries and inefficiency amounted to Rs158 billion. These were partially offset by gains from monthly and quarterly tariff adjustments and prior-year recoveries.

The government collected an additional Rs67 billion from quarterly and monthly fuel adjustments and another Rs140 billion

through other price adjustments, according to the report.

Experts added that discoms alone contributed Rs82 billion of the Rs158 billion losses, with an increase of Rs28 billion from last year. This clearly means that the government's policies to appoint independent Boards of Directors at State-Owned Enterprises are yielding results, they said.

He said that the circular debt amounted to Rs2.384 trillion by the end of December, according to a report by the Power Division. The report further showed that after injecting Rs20 billion from the budget to reduce the stock of debt, there was a net reduction of Rs9 billion in circular debt compared to the Rs2.393 trillion level recorded in June 2024.

think anyone is looking at me and saying 'I want to look like that'. Perhaps some people are looking at me and saying 'she has a similar body type to me'.

“When I get a message from someone saying ‘we are the same size and you’ve inspired me to wear what I want’, it takes away from every hate comment I get.

“If I’ve helped one person accept their body then the hate comments don’t really bother me.”

Fashion journalist Victoria Moss believes the “depressing” debate shows society is not used to seeing bigger bodies in advertising campaigns.

“You’d be pretty hard pushed to find genuine plus-size models on retailers’ websites because even a mid-size is a 10/12 and plus is 14/16 which is actually around the average size for a woman in the UK,” she says.

“The issue with adverts showing very small or very big models is the context and the provocation. We know people with eating disorders seek out images of very thin people as ‘thin-spiration’. But if anyone sees a picture of a bigger person they’re not going to drive to buy 10 McDonald’s to try to get fatter.”

Jess Tye at the ASA told the BBC the watchdog gets about 35,000 complaints a year about all advertising, and in 2024 received 62 adverts relating to the model’s weight.

Clothes brand gets 100 complaints a day that models ‘too fat’

LONDON (BBC News): The boss of online clothing brand Snag has told the BBC it gets more than 100 complaints a day that the models in its adverts are “too fat”. Chief executive Brigitte Read says models of her size 4-38 clothing are frequently the target of “hateful” posts about their weight.

The brand was cited in an online debate over whether adverts showing “unhealthily fat” models should be banned after a Next advert, in which a model appeared “unhealthily thin”, was banned.

The UK’s advertising watchdog says it has banned ads using models who appear unhealthily underweight rather than overweight due to society’s aspiration towards thinness.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) received 61 complaints about models’ weight in 2024, with the vast majority being about models who appeared to be too thin.

But it only had grounds to investigate eight complaints and none were about Snag.

Catherine Thom read the BBC report about the Next advert ban and got in touch to say she found it “hypo-critical to ban adverts where models appear too thin for being socially irresponsible, however when models are clearly obese we’re saying it’s body positivity”.

The 36-year-old from Edinburgh was one of several people who contacted the BBC with this view, while a Reddit thread had more than 1,000 comments with many along the same theme.

Mrs Thom says she was “bombarded with images of obese girls in tights” after buying from Snag when she was pregnant.

“I see Snag tights plastering these morbidly obese people all over social media,” she says.

“How is that allowed when the photo of the Next model isn’t? There should be fairness, not politically correct body positivity. Adverts normalising an unhealthy weight, be it obese or severely underweight, are equally as harmful.”

‘Fat phobia’

But Snag founder Ms Read says: “Shaming fat people does not help them

to lose weight and actually it really impacts mental health and therefore their physical health.”

She thinks the idea of banning adverts showing models with bigger bodies is a symptom of society’s “fat phobia”.

Of her 100 staff, 12 are dedicated “just to remove negative comments and big up those promoting body positivity”.

“Fat people exist, they’re equally as valid as thin people, they buy clothes and they need to see what they look like on people that look like them,” she says.

“You are not worth less the bigger you are. Models of all sizes, shapes, ethnicities and abilities are valid and should be represented.”

Sophie Scott is a 27-year-old salon owner from Lossiemouth in Scotland who has modelled for Snag, and received positive and negative comments about her size on social media.

“I get either ‘you’re so beautiful’ or ‘you need to lose weight’. When I started modelling I was a size 30. Having lost weight since then I’m still on the receiving end of hate comments because it will never be enough for some people.”

Sophie is used to online comments telling her she is “unhealthy”, but says, “fitness is not measured by the way you look. They are making assumptions, they don’t know me or my activity levels.”

“People say ‘you’re glorifying obesity’ but I don’t

think anyone is looking at me and saying 'I want to look like that'. Perhaps some people are looking at me and saying 'she has a similar body type to me'.

“When I get a message from someone saying ‘we are the same size and you’ve inspired me to wear what I want’, it takes away from every hate comment I get.

“If I’ve helped one person accept their body then the hate comments don’t really bother me.”

Fashion journalist Victoria Moss believes the “depressing” debate shows society is not used to seeing bigger bodies in advertising campaigns.

“You’d be pretty hard pushed to find genuine plus-size models on retailers’ websites because even a mid-size is a 10/12 and plus is 14/16 which is actually around the average size for a woman in the UK,” she says.

“The issue with adverts showing very small or very big models is the context and the provocation. We know people with eating disorders seek out images of very thin people as ‘thin-spiration’. But if anyone sees a picture of a bigger person they’re not going to drive to buy 10 McDonald’s to try to get fatter.”

Jess Tye at the ASA told the BBC the watchdog gets about 35,000 complaints a year about all advertising, and in 2024 received 62 adverts relating to the model’s weight.

think anyone is looking at me and saying 'I want to look like that'. Perhaps some people are looking at me and saying 'she has a similar body type to me'.

“When I get a message from someone saying ‘we are the same size and you’ve inspired me to wear what I want’, it takes away from every hate comment I get.

“If I’ve helped one person accept their body then the hate comments don’t really bother me.”

Fashion journalist Victoria Moss believes the “depressing” debate shows society is not used to seeing bigger bodies in advertising campaigns.

“You’d be pretty hard pushed to find genuine plus-size models on retailers’ websites because even a mid-size is a 10/12 and plus is 14/16 which is actually around the average size for a woman in the UK,” she says.

“The issue with adverts showing very small or very big models is the context and the provocation. We know people with eating disorders seek out images of very thin people as ‘thin-spiration’. But if anyone sees a picture of a bigger person they’re not going to drive to buy 10 McDonald’s to try to get fatter.”

Jess Tye at the ASA told the BBC the watchdog gets about 35,000 complaints a year about all advertising, and in 2024 received 62 adverts relating to the model’s weight.

Court Notice

In the Court of Quarat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/Judge Family Court Swabi, Mst. Romia Naz VS Syed Waqas, Suit No. 298/FC, Institution date 07-10-2024, hearing date 05-04-2025. Subject: Dissolution of marriage, Notice to (1) Syed Waqas Bacha son Syed Sartaj, (3) Syed Owais Bacha son Syed Sartaj R/o Mohallah Qazi Sahib, Gujjar Garhi, Mardan, Tehsil Takhat Bahi, District Mardan, presently abroad. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 05-04-2025 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. Romia Naz VS Syed Waqas, Suit No. 298/FC, Institution date 07-10-2024, hearing date 05-04-2025. Subject: Dissolution of marriage, Notice to (1) Syed Waqas Bacha son Syed Sartaj, (3) Syed Owais Bacha son Syed Sartaj R/o Mohallah Qazi Sahib, Gujjar Garhi, Mardan, Tehsil Takhat Bahi, District Mardan, presently abroad. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 05-04-2025 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. Romia Naz VS Syed Waqas, Suit No. 298/FC, Institution date 07-10-2024, hearing date 05-04-2025. Subject: Dissolution of marriage, Notice to (1) Syed Waqas Bacha son Syed Sartaj, (3) Syed Owais Bacha son Syed Sartaj R/o Mohallah Qazi Sahib, Gujjar Garhi, Mardan, Tehsil Takhat Bahi, District Mardan, presently abroad. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 05-04-2025 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. Romia Naz VS Syed Waqas, Suit No. 298/FC, Institution date 07-10-2024, hearing date 05-04-2025. Subject: Dissolution of marriage, Notice to (1) Syed Waqas Bacha son Syed Sartaj, (3) Syed Owais Bacha son Syed Sartaj R/o Mohallah Qazi Sahib, Gujjar Garhi, Mardan, Tehsil Takhat Bahi, District Mardan, presently abroad. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 05-04-2025 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.

S&P lifts Saudia’s rating on sustained economic shift away from oil

RIYADH (Arab News): Global ratings agency S&P raised Saudi Arabia's rating to 'A+' from 'A' with a stable outlook on Friday, underpinned by the ongoing social and economic transformation in the country.

Fitch said the country's Vision 2030 project provides some flexibility in managing capital expenditure and debt issuance.

The sustained momentum in this project can help boost activity in construction, logistics, manufacturing and mining sectors, prompting GDP growth over 2025-28, the report said.

Earlier this week, the ratings agency had said it expects Saudi government to cut capex and associated current spending in 2025.

With Saudi's main aim to diversify its economy away from its reliance on the hydrocarbon sector, Fitch said the current investments should boost consumption by Saudi Arabia's young population and increase the productive capacity of the economy.

Last week, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund had signed a new memorandum of understanding worth \$3 billion with Italy's state export credit agency SACE. The ratings agency said this will help maintain the country's debt.

Fitch also anticipates that current sensitivity to oil prices will weaken fiscal and external imbalances through 2028.

It expects that Saudi's giant Aramco's decline in dividend will further dampen oil revenue.

“Large hydrocarbon reserves and low cost of production provide Saudi Arabia some resilience to a global energy transition to low-carbon alternatives, especially in a future scenario where fossil fuel demand will largely be met by a smaller number of the most efficient producers,” S&P said.

It added that the Kingdom also “maintains its unique position as the world's largest swing oil producer (with spare installed production capacity permitting it to cut or raise production levels relatively quickly), as well as its leadership role in OPEC+ and its consequent ability to influence global oil price trends.”

standing worth \$3 billion with Italy's state export credit agency SACE. The ratings agency said this will help maintain the country's debt.

Fitch also anticipates that current sensitivity to oil prices will weaken fiscal and external imbalances through 2028.

It expects that Saudi's giant Aramco's decline in dividend will further dampen oil revenue.

“Large hydrocarbon reserves and low cost of production provide Saudi Arabia some resilience to a global energy transition to low-carbon alternatives, especially in a future scenario where fossil fuel demand will largely be met by a smaller number of the most efficient producers,” S&P said.

It added that the Kingdom also “maintains its unique position as the world's largest swing oil producer (with spare installed production capacity permitting it to cut or raise production levels relatively quickly), as well as its leadership role in OPEC+ and its consequent ability to influence global oil price trends.”

standing worth \$3 billion with Italy's state export credit agency SACE. The ratings agency said this will help maintain the country's debt.

Fitch also anticipates that current sensitivity to oil prices will weaken fiscal and external imbalances through 2028.

It expects that Saudi's giant Aramco's decline in dividend will further dampen oil revenue.

“Large hydrocarbon reserves and low cost of production provide Saudi Arabia some resilience to a global energy transition to low-carbon alternatives, especially in a future scenario where fossil fuel demand will largely be met by a smaller number of the most efficient producers,” S&P said.

It added that the Kingdom also “maintains its unique position as the world's largest swing oil producer (with spare installed production capacity permitting it to cut or raise production levels relatively quickly), as well as its leadership role in OPEC+ and its consequent ability to influence global oil price trends.”

standing worth \$3 billion with Italy's state export credit agency SACE. The ratings agency said this will help maintain the country's debt.

Fitch also anticipates that current sensitivity to oil prices will weaken fiscal and external imbalances through 2028.

It expects that Saudi's giant Aramco's decline in dividend will further dampen oil revenue.

“Large hydrocarbon reserves and low cost of production provide Saudi Arabia some resilience to a global energy transition to low-carbon alternatives, especially in a future scenario where fossil fuel demand will largely be met by a smaller number of the most efficient producers,” S&P said.

It added that the Kingdom also “maintains its unique position as the world's largest swing oil producer (with spare installed production capacity permitting it to cut or raise production levels relatively quickly), as well as its leadership role in OPEC+ and its consequent ability to influence global oil price trends.”



In brief

Marquez storms to record Argentina MotoGP pole

TERMAS DE RÍO HONDO (AFP): Marc Marquez stormed to pole for the Argentina MotoGP on Saturday to maintain his perfect start to the new season. The six-time world champion's dream start to life on board the factory Ducati continued as he posted a new lap record of 1min 36.917sec in qualifying at the Termas de Río Hondo circuit. The Spaniard was lowering the record he had set 24 hours earlier in practice. The winner of the sprint and main race at the season-opening weekend in Thailand a fortnight ago will start hot favourite to follow that up in the 12-race sprint later Saturday and Sunday's 25-lap main race. This was the 32-year-old's first back-to-back poles since 2019, the season he won the last of his six MotoGP titles. He is joined on the front row by his brother Alex Marquez on board Ducati's satellite Gresini bike, and the Honda of Johann Zarco. Francesco 'Pecco' Bagnaia, Marc Marquez's Ducati teammate, starts on the second row after the double former world champion posted the fourth fastest time in qualifying. "I told you yesterday I expected to go even faster!" said pole-sitter Marquez. He added: "I'm happy with the bike, it looks like Alex and Pecco are closer than Thailand but we'll see how we can manage. "It's difficult to work out what the limit for the bike is." Missing again this weekend from the second leg of the 22-race season is world champion Jorge Martin. The Spanish Aprilia rider has still not recovered from the injuries which sidelined him in Thailand. Martin said Thursday that he will also sit out the third round in Texas at the end of March and may still not be ready by the time the Qatar MotoGP rolls around in mid-April.

Kohli rules out T20 comeback

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India batter Virat Kohli has ruled out a T20 international comeback at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028. Cricket will return to the Olympics for the first time since 1900 at the Games in LA as one of five new sports. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has said the tournament will be a T20 event but has yet to confirm how teams will qualify. However, organisers have been keen to utilise cricket as a way to increase India's interest in the Olympics given the commercial opportunities, and their participation would seem extremely likely. Kohli retired from T20 duty with India after they won the World Cup in 2024, but will continue to play the format domestically in the Indian Premier League (IPL). The 36-year-old said at a sports summit in conjunction with his IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bengaluru that cricket at the Olympics was a "great opportunity for some of our guys". But when asked if he could be coaxed out of retirement to play at LA 2028 Kohli said "no", though he joked that if India were playing for the gold medal he "may come back for one game, get a medal and come back home". Kohli played 125 T20s for India, scoring 4,188 runs at an average of 48.69, hitting one century and 38 half-centuries.

Salman Agha eyes redemption against New Zealand ahead of T20I clash

CHRISTCHURCH (Agencies): Pakistan's T20 International (T20I) captain Salman Ali Agha seems ready for redemption as he expressed optimism ahead of the series opener against New Zealand on Sunday. At a pre-series press conference, the 31-year-old all-rounder highlighted the team's strengths and voiced confidence in their performance. "We didn't play up to our own standards or the expectations of our fans, which is why they are disappointed. But we have a new team, and that doesn't mean it's not a good team. "There are experienced players in the squad as well, and we believe we have a strong combination to play good cricket and win," Salman stated. His remarks come after the Black Caps trampled the Green Shirts in back-to-back tournaments, including the Tri-Nation Series and the International Cricket Council Champions Trophy — both times on home soil. He acknowledged the importance of spinners despite the green pitch and provided updates on injured players Fakhar Zaman and Saim Ayub.

"The pitch looks green, but spinners will also get some assistance. Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf have performed well in T20 cricket, and we will miss Fakhar Zaman and Saim Ayub, who are key players. Thankfully, they are recovering quickly and should be back in action for the upcoming series," he said. Additionally, he discussed the ongoing transition phase in Pakistan cricket, stressing the necessity of developing new combinations after years of dependence on stalwarts Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan. "Babar Azam and Rizwan have contributed a lot to Pakistan cricket, and now we are working on building a new combination. The playing XI has not been finalized yet, but we are confident in our squad and focused on delivering strong performances," he added. It is pertinent to mention that the white-

ball series between the Men in Green and the Blackcaps consists of five T20Is, followed by three One Day Internationals (ODIs), running until April 5. The series also marks the debut of young talents Abdul Samad and Hassan Nawaz, who have earned their maiden call-ups to the national team. The last T20I series between Pakistan and New Zealand took place in April 2024, when the Blackcaps toured Pakistan. The five-match series ended in a 2-2 draw after the first game in Rawalpindi was washed out due to rain. New Zealand T20I Squad: Michael Bracewell (capt), Finn Allen, Mark Chapman, Jacob Duffy, Zakary Foulkes, Mitchell Hay, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Daryl Mitchell, James Neesham, Will O'Rourke, Tim Robinson, Ben Sears, Tim Seifert, Ish Sodhi. Pakistan T20I Squad: Salman Ali Agha (capt), Shadab Khan (vice-capt), Abdul Samad, Abrar Ahmed, Haris Rauf, Hasan Nawaz, Jahandad Khan, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Haris, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Omair Bin Yousaf, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufyan Moqim, Usman Khan. Schedule for Pakistan's tour of New Zealand March 16 – First T20I, Hagley Oval, Christchurch March 18 – Second T20I, University Oval, Dunedin March 21 – Third T20I, Eden Park, Auckland March 23 – Fourth T20I, Bay Oval, Mount Maunganui March 26 – Fifth T20I, Sky Stadium, Wellington March 29 – First ODI, McLean Park, Napier April 2 – Second ODI, Seddon Park, Hamilton April 5 – Third ODI, Bay Oval, Mount Maunganui.

Storer wins penultimate Paris-Nice stage in the snow



AURON (AFP): Australian rider Michael Storer won the seventh stage of the Paris-Nice cycling race on Saturday, outpacing a pursuing peloton on a steep final climb through the snow. The 28-year-old from Perth was part of a 12-man breakaway that only splintered in the closing stages of the 109km run from Nice to Auron, where it was snowing at the 1600m altitude finish line. Storer shook his head in disbelief as the snow fluttered around him at the line of the 'Race to the Sun' which finishes on the Riviera on Sunday. Benefitting from teammate Julian Alaphilippe's work during the breakaway, Storer then went it

alone with 2.5km to go and picked up his eighth career win. "That was great. Julian knows racing like nobody else and he was really precious. But if only it hadn't been so cold," Storer said shivering at the finish line. The performance also lifted Storer from 13th to fourth overall with a good shot at the podium on Sunday's final mountain run and fast descent to downtown Nice. He is also second placed in the 'King of the Mountains' battle due to the 20 points he picked up. Rain was falling as the stage left Nice's famous Promenade des Anglais with all the talk this week about the dreadful weather. Some 13 riders pulled

out during stage seven, among them Dane Mattias Skjelmose, who had been third and left the race in an ambulance after hitting a traffic island at full speed. It was a good day for German Florian Lipowitz, who climbed to second just 37 seconds adrift of race leader and defending champion Matteo Jorgenson. Former cross-country skier Lipowitz is also well ahead in the best young rider standings in the eight-day race. "I come from winter sports, so cold conditions don't bother me," said the Bora rider. Another Dane Mads Pedersen retains the green points jersey, two ahead of Tim Merlier but only seven ahead of Jorgenson.

Odermatt sweeps to fourth overall and giant slalom titles

HAFJELL (AFP): Swiss skier Marco Odermatt swept up his fourth consecutive World Cup overall and giant slalom crystal globes after finishing second on Saturday behind compatriot Loic Meillard in Hafjell. Odermatt now has 1,596 points and a 635-point lead over Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen and cannot be caught with five races left this season. A lacklustre Kristoffersen finished 16th in Saturday's race more than two seconds off the pace after failing to recover from a poor first run. "It's incredible to win two more globes," said Odermatt, who also claimed the super-G for a third time to bring his World Cup trophy tally to 12 titles and is leading the way in the downhill. "To push yourself over and over and over again in a

long season is very tough, so I'm happy that this very successful Norway trip for me is over and now just a cool final week in Sun Valley." Aside from slalom, a discipline in which he does not compete, Odermatt has won in every discipline this season -- downhill, super-G, and giant slalom — for eight victories before the final World Cup stage in the United States. Six years after his first podium finish, the 27-year-old becomes the second skier to win four consecutive overall globes, after Austrian great Marcel Hirscher, who held the title from 2012 to 2019 and won eight in total. With four victories, he also equals Austria's Hermann Maier, Italy's Gustav Thöni, and his compatriot Pirmin Zurbriggen. On Saturday, only Meillard was faster in both runs,

beating "Odi" by 0.14 seconds with Thomas Tumler completing a Swiss podium sweep for the third time this season. "Marco won a few. Tumler won one - we've all had a pretty good season," Meillard said. "Everyone is in form and it just paid off today, we worked all together perfectly." 45 World Cup wins After his first World Cup victory in 2019 in the Beaver Creek super-G, Odermatt took centre stage in the overall standings the following season, finishing second behind Frenchman Alexis Pinturault. Since then he has dominated, breaking the points record for a single winter in the 2022-2023 season (2,042 pts) and equalled the record for wins in a single season with 13 victories in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. This winter, he became



MANCHESTER: Stefan Ortega looks on as teammate Abdukodir Khusanov of Manchester City scores Brighton & Hove Albion FC's second goal with an own goal during the Premier League match.

Man City held by Brighton to leave Champions League hopes in balance

MANCHESTER (AFP): Manchester City twice blew the lead in a 2-2 draw against Brighton on Saturday as Abdukodir Khusanov's own goal dented their bid to qualify for the Champions League. Pep Guardiola's side led through Erling Haaland's early penalty at the Etihad Stadium. But Pervis Estupinan hauled Brighton level and, although Omar Marmoush restored City's lead just before the interval, the Seagulls levelled again in the second half thanks to Khusanov's mistake. City remain in fifth place in the Premier League, one point behind fourth-placed Chelsea, who visit Arsenal on Sunday, and one point ahead of Newcastle and seventh-placed Brighton. The top four are guaranteed a Champions League place, while fifth is also likely to be enough depending on the result of the English clubs remaining in European competitions this term. Reduced to fighting for a Champions League berth after a shockingly bad season, City are still far from certain to qualify for Europe's elite club competition. That would have been unthinkable just 12 months ago, when City were marching towards a fourth consecutive English title and a sixth in seven

years. Since losing 7-0 at Nottingham Forest, Brighton had reeled off four consecutive league wins and this was another impressive display from Fabian Hurlzeler's side, who still harbour genuine hopes of reaching the Champions League for the first time. Guardiola made four changes from the 1-0 defeat at Nottingham Forest as Phil Foden, Bernardo Silva, Ederson and Matheus Nunes were replaced by Marmoush, Ilkay Gundogan, Stefan Ortega and Rico Lewis. Sloppy City City won a penalty in the 11th minute when Haaland found Marmoush in the Brighton area and the Egyptian was brought down by Adam Webster. Haaland took the spot-kick, firing low into the bottom corner for his 100th Premier League goal involvement (84 goals and 16 assists) in just 94 appearances. The Norway striker is the first Premier League player to reach 100 goal involvements in fewer than 100 games. Not for the first time in their turbulent season, sloppy City were unable to hold onto their lead as Brighton drew level in the 21st minute. Estupinan let rip with a fierce

free-kick from 20 yards that caught out the wrong-footed Ortega, who was rooted to the spot as it hit the post and flashed into the net. City tried to respond but Haaland lashed over from Gundogan's pass and Savinho's shot was blocked by Jan Paul van Hecke. Guardiola's men kept pressing and were rewarded in the 39th minute. Gundogan picked off a mis-cued Brighton pass and unfurled a precise pass to set up Marmoush for a blistering finish. City were still fortunate to go in ahead at half-time after a mix up between Nico Gonzalez and Ruben Dias left space for Joao Pedro to shoot just wide. It took City's leaky defence just three minutes of the second half to surrender the lead for a second time. Adam Webster crossed into the area and Jack Hinshelwood's shot appeared to be going wide until it took a deflection off City defender Khusanov. With City's rearguard in disarray, Brighton should have gone ahead, but Yankuba Minteh shot wastefully wide from close-range after Diego Gomez picked out the Gambian. In a frantic finale, Brighton's Carlos Baleba smashed over with the goal at their mercy.

Injured Neymar out of Brazil World Cup qualifiers

PARIS (Agencies): Brazil star Neymar was on Friday ruled out of upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifiers against Colombia and Argentina after a thigh injury scuppered his recall to the national team. Neymar has spent almost a year and a half out of the Brazil side due to injuries, but had appeared rejuvenated since his return to Santos in February. But in the past two weeks he has been plagued by the left thigh injury. In an Instagram story, the striker expressed his disappointment at missing the games. "The return seemed so close, but unfortunately I won't be able to wear the most important jersey in the world for the moment," he wrote. "We had long conversations and everyone knows of my desire to return, but we agreed that it's best not to take any risks and prepare as best as possible to completely eradicate the injury," he added. With Brazil down in fifth place in South American World Cup qualifying, coach Dorival Junior had recalled Brazil's top scorer with 79 goals to the side he last represented in October 2023. Real Madrid striker Endrick will take his place. Brazil play Colombia in Brasilia on March 20 and face bitter rivals and defending champions Argentina in Buenos Aires five days later. Neymar, 33, scored for the first time in over 14 months two weeks ago, opening his account for Santos since his return to his boyhood club.

the most decorated Swiss in the history of the world tour, surpassing Zubbriggen's 41 wins when he won the Alta Badia giant slalom in December. He has since raised the men's national record to 45. "It's truly something very special to become the best Swiss skier in history after Pirmin Zurbriggen, who is a legend for us," Odermatt said, now aiming to equal his compatriot Vreni Schneider's 55 victories.

Andreeva to face Sabalenka in Indian Wells final



INDIAN WELLS (Agencies): Rising Russian star Mirra Andreeva became the first 17-year-old player to reach the women's final at Indian Wells since 2001 after overcoming defending champion Iga Swiatek in the last four. She beat the world number two for the second time in as many tournaments, after knocking her out at the quarter-final stage in Dubai in February on her way to becoming the youngest winner of a WTA 1000 tournament. Andreeva extended her winning streak to 11 matches as she bounced back

from losing a one-sided second set to beat the experienced Pole 7-6 (7-1) 1-6 6-3. She will face top seed Aryna Sabalenka in the final after the Belarusian avenged her defeat by American Madison Keys at the Australian Open in brutal fashion to win 6-0 6-1. "I feel that I was dealing with the nerves and the pressure pretty good, so I just feel proud of myself," said ninth seed Andreeva on her recovery in the final set. "After she literally killed me in the second set, I was just 'well, OK, might just try to fight'. There is not much I could do about it.

She was playing amazing. "And I just kind of decided to grind and fight for every point. It doesn't matter how I put the ball in. But I have to put it in. So I just try to do everything and in the end, it was not too bad." Andreeva is the youngest woman to reach the Indian Wells final since Kim Clijsters, who lost to Serena Williams in 2001. She will face another big test in world number one Sabalenka, who took just 51 minutes to dismiss fifth seed Keys. It was a repeat of their Australian Open final, which Keys won 6-3 2-6 7-5 to end Sabalenka's hopes of a third consecutive title in Melbourne. "That Australian Open match was really heart-breaking for me, and I really needed some time to recover after that," said Sabalenka. "And if I would lose today again, it would get in my head and I didn't want that to happen. I was really focused, so I was just really hungry to get this win against Madison."

Ireland squeeze past Italy to stay in Six Nations title hunt

ROME (AFP): Ireland remained in the Six Nations title hunt on Saturday with a thrilling 22-17 win over Italy in Rome which moved Simon Easterby's team top of the championship. Dan Sheehan scored a hat-trick of tries as the Irish got the bonus-point victory they needed to go three points clear of favourites France. However, Ireland still need results to go their way later on Saturday in order to secure a third straight tournament crown on the day Peter O'Mahony and Conor Murray said goodbye to international rugby in front of an army of travelling fans. Ireland had to come through a tough clash with battling Italy who played a huge chunk of the match with fewer men on the field due to Michele Lamaro and Giacomo Nicotera both being yellow carded and Ross Vintcent's red card for a reckless tackle on Ireland's other try scorer Hugo Keenan. Ireland now have to wait for the results of third-placed England's clash with Wales in Cardiff and above all what happens between France, who started the day two points ahead of the Irish, and Scotland in the late match in Paris. "We can't impact that now, so I think we're back to the hotel and get a change and then share a bit of time together," Easterby told reporters. "We've enjoyed

the last eight weeks, the experiences, but it's only this time after the game that you enjoy the most because it's time that you share with people that you know have put a lot of work in and a lot of effort." Italy were again undone by the ill-discipline which has so often cost them in the Six Nations and could leave them holding the wooden spoon even though they collected a defensive bonus point. 'Better team' Gonzalo Quesada's side remain fifth on five points, two points above bottom side Wales who will avoid finishing last with a victory over England or even if they fail to win and collect enough bonus points while maintaining their superior points difference on the Italians. "Obviously we're disappointed at the end of the match because it was a day in which 15 against 15 we were for long periods the better team," Quesada told reporters. "We were not all that far away of getting a win which would have been incredible but at the same time there's a lot of which we can be proud." The hosts were on top of lacklustre Ireland in the opening period but went in behind at the break in large part due to Lamaro getting his yellow card and giving away a scrum which led to Sheehan putting the away side ahead with their second try of the game.



In brief

Magistrates tasked for ensuring controlled prices

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Engineer Amir Khattak has urged for more stringent steps to control prices during Ramadan. He said that profiteers and hoarders create a lot of inconveniences for the general public so they deserve no leniency. Price Magistrates should ensure their presence in important bazars. The activities of price magistrates should not be targeting specific places rather they should take action across the board. He said this while presiding over a meeting in his office on Saturday. He also reviewed the operations against the overpricing across the division. It was briefed that the number of price magistrates deployed across the division is 181. During the last 24 hours, 30,753 inspections have been conducted, of which 860 violations were identified. A fine of Rs 690,000 was imposed with 1 FIR has been registered. Further, 80 shops were sealed and 102 people were arrested. Moreover, under the Punjab Socio Economic Registry (PSER), the progress in distribution of the Rs 10,000.0 pay order among deserving people was reviewed. The briefing regarding the delivery of this package said that there are a total of 27,9438 people registered in Rawalpindi Division. So far, the division has received 27,3876 pay orders, of which 26,2080 have been delivered so far. Engineer Amir Khattak said that the delivery of the pay order should be completed by 100 % as soon as possible. The review meeting, held at the Rawalpindi Commissioner's Office, was attended by Additional Commissioner Syed Nazart Ali, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Dr. Hassan Tariq, Director Local Government Syed Sabitin and other concerned officers.

Police nab 18 criminals

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Saturday continued the crackdown against criminals and arrested 18 accused including drug peddlers, liquor suppliers and illegal arms owners. Besides illegal weapons with ammunition, more than 4.5 kilograms charas and 25 litres of liquor were recovered from the criminals, the police spokesman said. The City Police nabbed accused Aamir recovering 1.4 kg charas from him and Shafiq with 520 grams of the contraband item. Similarly the Race Course Police recovered 1.1 kg charas from accused Ehtesham and the Rawat Police held accused Shahid with 540 grams of the contraband item. The Wah Saddar Police also caught two accused, including Umar with 700 grams and Faizan with 600 grams charas. Likewise the Airport Police netted two accused Adnan and Suleman with 10 litres and 5 litres of liquor respectively, while the Dhamial Police recovered 10 litres of liquor from accused Farhan. Meanwhile, nine suspects were held during operations against illegal arms owners. The Gujar Khan Police recovered a 30-bore pistol with ammunition each from accused Hassan and Zeeshan, while the R A Bazaar Police also caught two accused Sarfaraz and Shehryar with a 30-bore pistol each. The Naseerabad Police recovered a Kalashnikov from accused Saifullah and Khan Nawaz, while the Airport, Waris Khan and Sadiqabad nabbed accused Mohiul Islam, Muhammad Ali and Muzammil respectively with a 30-bore pistol each.

Governor Kundi hosts Iftar dinner for Muslim Ambassadors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi hosted an Iftar dinner in honor of ambassadors from Muslim countries in Islamabad to come together and formulate a comprehensive strategy to counter Islamophobia. The event was graced by Acting President of Pakistan and Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, who attended as a special guest.

The Iftar gathering saw participation from ambassadors of Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Morocco, Bahrain, Tunisia, Jordan, Azerbaijan, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, and Somalia. Additionally, representatives from Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt, and Libya were also present.

Prominent political figures in attendance included Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Interior Perviz Khattak, Members of the National Assembly Asma Arbab Alamgir and Sardar Fatehullah Khan Miankhal, Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Program Rubina Khalid, and Members of the Provincial Assembly Ahmad Karim Kundi and Arbab Zarak. Senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also participated in the event.

During the Iftar dinner, discussions revolved around the unity of the Muslim Ummah and the rising trend of Islamophobia globally. The ambassadors praised the role of Pakistan's government and people in fostering unity among Muslim nations. They also acknowledged Governor Faisal Karim Kundi's efforts for development and peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In his address, Governor Kundi expressed gratitude to the ambassadors for attending and emphasized that Ramadan is a sacred month symbolizing unity, brotherhood, and peace for the Muslim world. He urged Muslim nations to come together and formulate a comprehensive strategy to counter Islamophobia and safeguard the interests of the Muslim Ummah. He reiterated that Islam is a religion of peace and harmony that advocates for the well-being of humanity and respect for all religions.

Politics not above the Pakistan: Abdul Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has stated that there is no doubt that if the Pakistan Army did not exist, the country would not survive for even a single day.

He condemned the practice of insulting those defending the nation, stressing that this is not service to the country. He further emphasized that politics is secondary to the nation if Pakistan exists, we all exist and in Sha Allah negative forces will be eradicated at any cost.

He made these remarks during his address at the inauguration of the Kot Pindi Das Interchange on Motorway M-2 near Sheikhupura, said a press release. Abdul Aleem Khan pointed out that sacrificing one's spouse, child, father, and loved ones is not easy while it is much easier to use foul language on social media. He challenged those who indulge in such ugly behavior to go to the borders and offer their lives. Federal Minister for Communications emphasized that a new era of development, prosperity, and improvement is beginning questioning what the opposition did in their four years.

He assured that the nefarious designs of the enemies would be thwarted at any cost and those responsible for tragic incidents like the Jaffar Express would be brought to justice. He also highlighted the significance of the Kot Pindi Das Interchange project for the residents and commercial users of Sheikhupura District.

Abdul Aleem Khan mentioned that as the Minister for Communications he is bringing fundamental changes within the department working to eliminate corruption, inefficiency, and laziness and ensuring the rapid completion of delayed projects.

On this occasion, Member of National Assembly from the area and Federal Minister for Food Security, Rana Tanveer Hussain expressed his gratitude for the swift completion of this long-standing Interchange at M-2. He acknowledged that this project had been delayed for four years under the PTI Government and praised Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan for his efforts which resulted in the timely completion of the project.

Earlier, at the inauguration of the Kot Pindi Das Interchange, Chairman NHA Shahriyar Sultan briefed the Federal Ministers and mentioned that the Interchange includes an Administration Building, solar street lights, fencing, and 710 meters of stone patching. He also confirmed that the Interchange is now fully operational from both sides of the Lahore-Islamabad Motorway. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan was warmly welcomed by the local people who appreciated his efforts by praised in glowing words.

Poliovirus detected in 12 environmental samples

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health (NIH) has confirmed detection of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in sewage samples of 12 cities.

According to official sources, 15 environmental (sewage) samples were collected from 14 districts between February 17 and February 26 and were tested at the NIH lab during the past week. The samples from Multan, Bahawalpur, Lahore, D.G.Khan, Kasur, Dera Bugti, Lasbela, Quetta, Sibi, South Waziristan Lower, Charsadda and Swabi were tested positive while samples from D.I.Khan, South Waziristan Lower and North Waziristan tested negative for poliovirus. They said that Pakistan's polio surveillance is among the world's best, with the largest and most sensitive detection system.

They said that the program has expanded its environmental surveillance sites from 65 in 2021 to 127 in 2025. Its efficiency in detecting poliovirus in sewage and cases ensures no transmission goes unnoticed, even in remote areas. The Programme is implementing a rigorous vaccination schedule to protect children from paralytic polio and interrupt virus transmission. Due to high-quality campaigns since September 2024, polio cases nationwide have declined. In February, a nationwide polio campaign vaccinated over 45 million children, alongside fIPV-OPV campaigns held in Karachi and Quetta blocks.

The second phase of the fIPV-OPV campaign is currently underway in Karachi and will continue until March 16 across 59 union councils. Additionally, a targeted vaccination drive in 104 union councils bordering Afghanistan or having Afghan refugee populations was conducted in the last week of February, reaching over 0.67 million children to reduce the risk of cross-border and internal virus transmission. The next nationwide campaign is scheduled from April 21 to 27, aiming to vaccinate 45.4 million children under the age of five across the country.

IG Islamabad issues directives for tight security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Inspector General of Islamabad Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi has directed enhanced security measures, including increased patrolling and surprise checkpoints, to ensure public safety in the federal capital.

A public relations officer told APP on Saturday that IG Rizvi chaired key meetings at the National Police Foundation, attended by senior officials from Islamabad Police and the National Police Foundation. The discussions focused on strengthening security arrangements across the city.

"The security measures across the district must be made more effective," IG Rizvi emphasized, calling for proactive policing strategies. IG Rizvi said that with increased public activity in markets, police patrolling should be intensified to prevent any untoward incidents. IG Rizvi further instructed the establishment of surprise check posts across the city for strict monitoring to maintain law and order.

The IG Rizvi also urged citizens to carry their identification documents while traveling and cooperate with law enforcement personnel during security checks. Regarding police welfare, IG Rizvi directed National Police Foundation officials to accelerate ongoing projects for the families of martyred officers, injured personnel, and serving police officials.

He also stressed the timely completion of existing welfare initiatives and stated that the National Police Foundation would be modernized to meet contemporary policing needs.

IGP Rizvi given additional charge as MD of National Police Foundation: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, has been given additional charge as the Managing Director (MD) of the National Police Foundation (NPF) Pakistan.

A public relations officer told APP on Saturday that the IG Rizvi formally assumed charge as MD of the National Police Foundation, where he will oversee welfare initiatives for police personnel and their families across Pakistan alongside his responsibilities as IGP Islamabad. He said Rizvi's leadership marks the beginning of a new era for the Foundation, as he aims to introduce modern innovations similar to those he implemented in Islamabad Police.

After taking charge, MD NPF Rizvi held several meetings with officers of the Foundation, reviewing policies related to the welfare of police personnel and their families. He issued directives to ensure the effective implementation of welfare programs.

Rizvi said new projects will be launched for the families of police martyrs, veterans, and officers, while the Foundation will be equipped with modern technology to update records and extend benefits to all martyrs and veterans of Pakistan Police. He emphasized that welfare initiatives would remain a top priority. Furthermore, he directed officers to take steps for providing residential facilities to police officers in the future. MD Rizvi also held meetings with officials from the IT, Technical, Legal, and Accounts departments of the Foundation.



ISLAMABAD Norway's Former Minister of culture and Former Deputy Speaker of Norwegian Parliament, Mr Abid Raja, along with his delegation called on President Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani at Aiwan-e-Sadr. —APP Photo

Afnan calls for collective action against terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Dr. Afnan Ullah Khan of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Saturday emphasized the need for a unified national response to combat terrorism.

The senator has reiterated the importance of eliminating terrorism from Pakistan, emphasizing that it is a collective responsibility that requires the active participation of all citizens, government institutions, and law enforcement agencies. The senator has emphasized the need to promote peace and stability

Ullah Khan has strongly condemned the recent terrorist attack in Balochistan, emphasizing the need for a unified national response to combat terrorism.

The senator has reiterated the importance of eliminating terrorism from Pakistan, emphasizing that it is a collective responsibility that requires the active participation of all citizens, government institutions, and law enforcement agencies. The senator has emphasized the need to promote peace and stability

in Balochistan and across Pakistan, recognizing that terrorism is a major obstacle to achieving these goals and undermining the country's progress and prosperity. Responding to a query, Dr. Khan called for strengthening national security measures, enhancing intelligence gathering and improving coordination between law enforcement agencies to prevent future terrorist attacks and ensure the protection of citizens.

"The government will not compromise on the

country's security and sovereignty and will take firm action against any external or internal threats," Dr. Khan emphasized.

He stressed that the safety and well-being of Pakistani citizens are the top priority and the government will leave no stone unturned to safeguard the country's interests and territorial integrity.

FGEI provides education to over 200,000 students

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI), operating under the Ministry of Defence (MoD), provide quality education to over 200,000 students across Pakistan.

Following a significant policy shift in 2018, 27 FGEI degree colleges were transitioned to four-year BS programs. However, discrepancies in affiliation with regional universities created challenges in standardizing the programs.

To address this, FGEI has proposed the establishment of the National University of Pakistan (NUP) in Islamabad, which is aimed at offering uniform academic programs and fostering knowledge across various disciplines.

According to an official document, a series of public service modernization initiatives have also been introduced. An online tax payment system, facilitated through iLink/IBill, now allows Cantonment residents to pay taxes and bills from anywhere using mobile applications or bank portals.

Complementing this system, CBCARE and Tax Facilitation Centers have been set up to improve public service delivery, resolve tax-related queries, and enhance the efficiency of service centers.

As part of its infrastructure development initiatives, the underground cabling project at Saddar Rawalpindi Cantonment has been initiated. The project aims to modernize the area's infrastructure by undergrounding electric cables along key roads, including Mall Road and Haider Road, to improve both aesthetics and the reliability of the power supply.

On the international front, Pakistan has signed several defence-related Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Malaysia, and Uzbekistan on military and academic cooperation.

Drug supplier gets 9 years imprisonment

RAWALPINDI (APP): A local court on Saturday sentenced a drug supplier, Nadeem Abbas, to nine years in prison with a fine of Rs 80,000.

According to the Rawalpindi Police spokesman, the convict was arrested by the Kalar Syedan Police in September 2024 after 2.21 kilograms of charas was recovered from him.

City Police Officer Syed Khalid Hamdani praised the investigation and legal teams for getting the culprit punished by presenting the case with solid evidence in the court.



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of flowers blooming on trees along expressway marking the arrival of the spring season in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

45 held on land-grab charges

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): Security forces in Ghazni have arrested 45 individuals in Gilan district on charges of grabbing state land. Police spokesman Abdul Khalid Sarhadi said that the arrests took place in Behbud and Chala areas. He added the arrested individuals would be handed over to judicial organs for further investigations. Sarhadi noted the campaign against land grab had recently been intensified in Ghazni City, the provincial capital, and surrounding districts.

18m SIM cards registered

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MoCIT) says about 18 million SIM cards have been registered since the launch of the documentation programme in the country. Inayatullah Alokozai, spokesman for MoCIT, acknowledged the issue of illegal SIM card sales in the market after the IEA takeover. He wrote on his X handle MoCIT had thrashed out a plan curbing the practice and shared it with telecom firms.

Efforts underway to complete construction of 32 schools in Paktia

PAKTIA (TOLOnews): The head of Paktia's education department has announced new initiatives to complete the construction of 32 school buildings in the province. According to officials, the Ministry of Education has prioritized these projects in its 1404 solar year (2025) plans, aiming to complete them next year. "From the previous government, 32 incomplete school construction projects remain in different districts. Some of these projects are new, while others are up to 30% completed. However, the Ministry of Education has prioritized these projects for 1404, and

they are expected to be completed next year," said Abdul Qayum Farooqi, the head of Paktia's education department. Several students say that the lack of school buildings has caused serious challenges in their education. "Construction of this building started some time ago but was halted again. This is a central high school, and we have urgent need for this building," said Naqibullah, a student. "Due to cold weather and rain, students cannot attend school regularly and end up missing classes, which disrupts their education. We hope these incomplete projects will be finished so a safe environment is provided for students," said Sahil, another student. "Dozens of school construction projects in Paktia remain unfinished, forcing students to study outdoors, which creates many challenges during rainy and hot seasons," stated Mohammad Wali Saeed, another student. According to Paktia's education department, out of 371 schools in the province, 183 lack proper buildings. However, recently, construction work on 18 schools has begun in collaboration with a supporting organization, and these are expected to be completed soon.

ished so a safe environment is provided for students," said Sahil, another student. "Dozens of school construction projects in Paktia remain unfinished, forcing students to study outdoors, which creates many challenges during rainy and hot seasons," stated Mohammad Wali Saeed, another student. According to Paktia's education department, out of 371 schools in the province, 183 lack proper buildings. However, recently, construction work on 18 schools has begun in collaboration with a supporting organization, and these are expected to be completed soon.

Recovering addicts seek jobs

GARDEZ (Pajhwok): A number of drug addicts undergoing treatment at a 30-bed rehabilitation hospital in Gardez, the capital of southeastern Paktia province, have urged the caretaker government to provide them with vocational training and employment opportunities after their rehabilitation. They said that unemployment was a major factor that led them to turn to drugs, and that access to vocational training could help them rebuild their lives and secure a better future. Gul Rahman, a drug addict at the hospital, told Pajhwok Afghan News that a lack of employment and family problems had pushed him toward drug addiction. He called on the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to support rehabili-

tated individuals by providing them with job opportunities. He added: "We are deeply grateful to the doctors and staff here for helping us recognise ourselves, our faith, and our society. Once we are discharged from this place, we request the government, our families, and the community not to leave us unemployed, as joblessness could lead us back to addiction." Another recovering addict, Mohammad Jawad, shared a similar sentiment, saying that many addicts resorted to drugs due to a lack of economic opportunities. "If we are given jobs and remain engaged, we will never turn back to drugs. We urge the government to provide us with vocational training and employment opportunities so that we can support our families," he



pledged. Many other patients at the rehabilitation centre echoed these demands and also called for the expansion of the facility's capacity and the improvement of its services. Aizzullah Azizi, the administrative chief of the hospital, said that 165 addicts had received treatment at the facility since the start of the solar year 1403. He highlighted that the rehabilitation process included both physical and psychological treatment. Meanwhile, the Public Health Department assured that it was working to identify, round up, and treat drug addicts in the province in coordination with the anti-narcotics department.

Dr Miraj Gul Adel, director of the department, assured that efforts were ongoing to provide addicts with vocational training after their rehabilitation in coordination with the Department of Labour and Social Affairs. "We work alongside the counter-narcotics department to gather and hospitalise addicts for treatment. Previously, we also sent our doctors to prisons to provide medical care for addicts. We have held meetings with the Department of Labour and Social Affairs to facilitate vocational training for rehabilitated individuals," he explained. Additionally, hospital officials reported that 43

addicts had received treatment at their homes last year. The Director of Labour and Social Affairs, Qari Mohammad Rahim Nasrat, told Pajhwok that vocational training programmes would be arranged for 300 recovered addicts in five different fields. He added that trainers had been hired and all necessary materials were ready, but they were still awaiting a suitable location for the programme. "Providing a training venue is the responsibility of the police headquarters. As soon as the location is arranged, vocational training will begin for the recovered individuals," the director concluded.

Afghanistan expands facilities for foreign airlines

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation of Afghanistan has announced the provision of facilities to resume operations for foreign airline companies in Afghanistan. Hikmatullah Asifi, the ministry's spokesperson, stated that currently, two domestic and seven foreign airline companies are operating in the country. Fly Dubai, Air Arabia, Turkish Airlines, Mahan Air, Taban Air, Iran Tour, and Iran Air are among the foreign airlines that have

resumed their flights to Afghanistan following the return of the Islamic Emirate to power. "The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation is committed to providing the necessary facilities in this regard. Work is ongoing to ensure that global airline companies operating in Afghanistan receive the same level of facilities available in other international airports," The spokesperson said. Asifi emphasized that Afghanistan currently has direct flights to Saudi

Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Turkey, China, Iran, and Pakistan. "If these flights increase, it will not only generate good revenue for the government but also facilitate transportation and trade development, enabling the government to invest in infrastructure," stated Economic analyst Abdul Naseer Reshtia. The Chamber of Commerce and Investment (CCI) said the operations of foreign airline companies are vital for the country's economic growth and for

providing convenience to travelers. "The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation has given special attention to this matter. The available resources have been utilized, but further efforts are needed to enhance facilities, expand airports, and improve terminals," said Khanjan Alokozai, member of CCI. According to the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, Afghanistan currently has 27 operational airports, five of which are international.

230 drug addicts rounded up

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): Police have rounded up 230 drug addicts from various parts of Ghazni province, transferring them to a 500-bed hospital for treatment. Police spokesperson Abu Khalid Sarhadi told Pajhwok the Counter-Narcotics Department conducted a week-long campaign to identify and collect addicts from different areas. During the drive, 230 drug addicts were collected from Ghazni City, Gilan, Maqur, Ab Band, Khwaja Omari, Andar, Qarabagh, Nawa, and Deh Yak districts and transferred to the rehabilitation facility, he said. Sarhadi added the addicts would remain under medical supervision until their full recovery. He added around 100 individuals, who had successfully completed their three-month treatment, were discharged from the facility last week. A rehabilitated addict, Dawood, urged the caretaker government to create job opportunities for the treated individuals to prevent them relapsing into drug use. The 500-bed addiction treatment centre, which started operations a year and a half ago, has treated approximately 1,400 individuals so far.

Cooking oil, flour & fuel prices down in Kabul

KABUL (Pajhwok): Following the rise in the value of the afghani against the US dollar, prices of cooking oil, flour and fuel declined during the outgoing week in Kabul, market sources said on Saturday. Haji Mohammad Husain, owner of the Sadaqat Money Exchange Service, said the local currency edged up during the week when one US dollar traded at 70afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees at 250afis. During the previous week, one US dollar accounted for 71.20afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 255afis. The spike in the afghani value is essentially linked to periodic dollar auctions by the central bank. Food items Zmarai Safi, head of the

Food Traders' Association, said the price of a 49-kilogram sack of Kazakh flour fell from 1,400afis to 1,380afis and a 16-litre bottle of Malaysian cooking oil from 1,800afis to 1,700afis. The price of a 49-kilogram bag of Indian sugar cost 2,500afis, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice stayed stable at 2,600afis, a kilogram of African black tea at 400afis and the same amount of Indonesian green tea at 350afis. Hamid Sufizada, a retailer at Dahna-i-Bagh market, put the retail price of a 49-kg bag of Kazakh flour at 1,430afis, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice at 2,650afis and a 49-kg sack of Indian sugar at 2,550afis. A 16-litre bottle of cook-

ing oil accounted for 1,750afis, one kilogram of black tea for 400afis and the same quantity of green tea for 450afis, he added. Fuel prices A worker at the Ahmadyar pump station told Pajhwok the price of one litre of petrol edged down from 62afis to 61afis and diesel from 58afis to 57afis. He also said the rate of one kilogram liquefied gas decreased from 60afis to 54afis. Gold prices up Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold went up from 5,450afis to 5,500afis and the same amount of the Russian variety from 4,350afis to 4,450afis.

Ramazan boosts street food business



B A D A K H S H A N (TOLOnews): With the arrival of Ramadan, several street food vendors in Badakhshan report an increase in demand and a boom in their businesses. The sales of mantu, bolani, and chutney have risen during this period, improving their income, the vendors say. Saadullah, who has been selling mantu in Wahdat

city, the center of Argo district, for over ten years, said his business has flourished since the beginning of Ramadan, earning up to 4,000 afghani daily. "Before Ramadan, we used to prepare one pot, but now we bring two. Our work has improved. Previously, we earned around 2,000 afghani daily, but now we make 4,000 afghani, stated Saadullah.

"These days, business is good. We sell between 6,000 to 12,000 afghani daily," stated Abdul Karim, another vendor in Badakhshan. The markets in Faizabad, the capital of Badakhshan province, take on a different atmosphere as Iftar approaches. "We have different spicy sauce or chutneys. The markets are better than

before, there's a lot of hustle and bustle, and security is maintained," said Ainullah, a street food vendor in Faizabad. "Compared to previous Ramadans, our business has improved. Last year, there wasn't this much movement," said Aminullah, another vendor. Several residents of Badakhshan expressed their happiness at having access to street and traditional foods close to Iftar time. "Bolani, mantu, and samosas are an important part of our Iftar meal, and people come to buy them near Iftar," said Sayed Moheb, a resident of Badakhshan. "Security is stable, so we came to the market to shop for Iftar. Thankfully, there is a lot of activity," said Hamid Haidari, another resident. Ramadan has created a great opportunity for small businesses to thrive in Badakhshan, with street foods like mantu, samosas, and bolani holding a special place on the Iftar tables of the province's people.

Kabul hails Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan deal

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has welcomed the border demarcation agreement between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan as a significant step toward regional stability and cooperation. The presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed the deal on Thursday on demarcating their shared

frontier, seeking to end a long-running border conflict that has seen dozens killed in skirmishes in recent years, Reuters reported. "IEA welcomes the border demarcation agreement signed between the Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) said. A statement from the mi-

nistry said Kabul viewed the resolution of the long-standing issue through mutual understanding as a positive step toward regional stability and economic growth. It added the caretaker government had always supported peace, dialogue and regional cooperation and believed the agreement would lead to enhanced sta-

bility and sustained cooperation in Central Asia. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, the European Union, as well as Kuwait, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Pakistan have also welcomed the agreement.

Half of Daikundi lacks access to potable water

NEILI (Pajhwok): The residents have expressed concern over the severe shortage of safe drinking water in various parts of central Daikundi province. They say the situation has made their lives increasingly difficult, with some families even being forced to leave their homes due to the lack of potable water. The water scarcity, attributed to prolonged droughts, diminishing underground resources, inadequate storage, population growth, increased consumption, and pollution, has become a major challenge for Afghanistan. The issue has had far-reaching effects on agriculture, livestock, public health and migration, with Daikundi being one of the provinces severely impacted by water shortages. Daikundi has nine districts and is one of Afghanistan's mountainous provinces. According to data from the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), the population of Daikundi is estimated at 553,372. Problems in finding potable water Fareed, a resident of Neili, the provincial capital,

has to travel long distances daily to fetch drinking water for his family. He shared his difficulties in securing the water needed for his household. He said: "We previously lived in Shahrak area in a rented house. When our water well there went dry, the landlord dug up another one, but it didn't have any water. We had to move to Dasht Neili area. "Now that we are here, the well has dried up again. I go out daily with a barrel; sometimes I find water near my house, and sometimes I have to travel long distances to get the drinking water I need." At times, he added, he had to buy water from his neighbours or fetch it from far-off sources, such as canals and water tankers. Fareed claimed many others in the area faced the same problem, with some families leaving their homes in search of water. Arif, a resident of the Zardaragi area of Miramor district, also voiced concern at the growing water shortage. Clean water sources that were once abundant have now vanished, forcing people to either leave their homes or

use unsafe water. He recalled: "The springs and canals used to had abundant clean water are now dry. Currently, people are using a public water stream, but this water is not safe because upstream residents wash clothes and dishes in it. We have no choice but to consume it." He explained while the nearby spring still provided some potable water in winter, finding safe water in summer and autumn was a significant challenge. Arif also referred to occasional warnings from health organisations about the risks of drinking this water. But due to economic difficulties, proplr cannot afford to dig wells or purchase safe water. He revealed his child was suffering from kidney problems, which doctors linked to the consumption of unsafe water. Over the past few years, Arif said, many families from the district, particularly from his area, had migrated to Iran and Pakistan due to the lack of water. Nassir, a resident of the "Sarasho" area of Miramor, confirmed the severe water shortage had forced him to leave his

home and land. "We used to plant crops and have livestock, but due to the water shortage, we could barely farm. Our only canal has dried up. We were left with no drinking water, and had to bring water from distant places using animals." This difficult situation ultimately led Nassir to get lease of agricultural land near Helmand River in the district, where he is currently trying to make a living. He pointed out almost everyone in their area had been hit by the water shortage, and those without external sources of income had been displaced. Nassir said some people with the requisite financial means had dug wells and gained access to drinking water. However, others continue to face severe lack of drinking water. Hujat Mousavi, another inhabitant of Neili city, also complained most people in the city do not have access to potable water. The water they collect from various sources is not safe. "Many wells have gone dry and people are forced to buy water from tankers. Even those tankers do not provide safe water. I have

often seen impure substances coming out of the tankers." Mousavi stressed using unsafe water led to dangerous diseases. Polluted water, increasing diseases Health experts warned lack of access to safe drinking water in Daikundi and other dry regions of Afghanistan had forced people to use unsafe and polluted water. This situation not only makes daily life difficult but also poses a significant threat to public health. Reza Amiri, a doctor, said the consumption of unsafe water had led to diseases such as kidney stones, bladder stones, severe diarrhoea and gastrointestinal illnesses. He explained: "Contaminated water creates bacteria, which leads to the transmission of diseases, causing severe diarrhea and vomiting. Unfortunately, most patients in hospitals are admitted due to illnesses caused by consuming this water." He admitted droughts had caused significant harm to public health, as most people were forced to drink unsafe water. He advised people to boil water before

using it. 52pc of Daikundi lacks safe water Sayed Noor Mousavi, head of the Rural Rehabilitation and Development Department, said according to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development's data, 58 percent of people had access to safe drinking water, but this has now fallen by 10 percent. He explained: "Due to droughts, most of wells and covered springs had dried up, and water resources have depleted. Therefore, we can now say 48 percent of the people in the province have access to safe drinking water..." He added the people of Daikundi were the hardest hit by droughts, with several families - though the exact number is unknown - being displaced from their homes due to lack of drinking water. He noted people in some areas, who once had access to safe drinking water, currently struggled to secure semi-safe or unsafe water. Mousavi highlighted Neili and Miramor district had been more affected by the lack of drinking water than other towns.

"In Neili city, access to safe drinking water is extremely difficult, and most wells have dried up. Over the past 10 years, the water level has dropped by at least 10 to 15 meters, and people are now forced to buy water from tankers." Improving water supply situation The rural rehabilitation and development director said his department had implemented 54 projects over the past year, focusing on the construction of water supply networks, reservoirs, water sheds and repairs of water systems. These projects have benefited 30,000 to 80,000 people. Several doctors in Neili have warned of the harmful consequences of using contaminated water, insisting on the cent percent safety of water sources for people. Management of water resources Qurban Aliyar, a professor at the Faculty of Agriculture at the Bamyan University, said: "Climate change is a global phenomenon that leads to droughts. Although the issue is not directly related to our actions, countries like Afghanistan are highly vulnerable to it, as climate

change disrupts the natural balance, causing a reduction in water resources and worsening people's livelihood problems." He cited reports and studies conducted between 1998 and 2010 in Afghanistan showing a significant reduction in rain and snowfall, with some areas being more affected by droughts than other parts of the country. Water scarcity has not only made life difficult for people but has also led to reduced incomes and increased forced migration. The professor emphasised on managing groundwater resources, storing rainwater and snow, building dams and reservoirs, developing drought-resistant agriculture and cutting greenhouse gas emissions as essential solutions to water scarcity challenge. He also stressed the importance of cooperation between governments and international organisations to tackle the issue. National Environmental Protection Agency of Afghanistan officials announced earlier this year 21 million people across the country are facing a shortage of drinking water due to climate change.

Trump admn weighs travel ban on dozens of countries

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The Trump administration is considering issuing sweeping travel restrictions for the citizens of dozens of countries as part of a new ban, according to sources familiar with the matter and an internal memo seen by Reuters.

The memo lists a total of 41 countries divided into three separate groups. The first group of 10 countries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Cuba and North Korea among others, would be set for a full visa suspension.

In the second group, five countries -- Eritrea, Haiti, Laos, Myanmar and South Sudan -- would face partial suspensions that would impact tourist and student visas as well as other immigrant visas, with some exceptions. In the third group, a total of 26

countries that includes Belarus, Pakistan and Turkmenistan among others would be considered for a partial suspension of US visa issuance if their governments "do not make efforts to address deficiencies within 60 days", the memo said.

A US official speaking on the condition of anonymity cautioned there could be changes on the list and that it was yet to be approved by the administration, including US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The New York Times first reported on the list of countries.

The move harkens back to President Donald Trump's first term ban on travelers from seven majority-Muslim nations, a policy that went through several iterations before it was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018. Trump issued an executive

order on January 20 requiring intensified security vetting of any foreigners seeking admission to the US to detect national security threats.

That order directed several cabinet members to submit by March 21 a list of countries from which travel should be partly or fully suspended because their "vetting and screening information is so deficient." Trump's directive is part of an immigration crackdown that he launched at the start of his second term.

He previewed his plan in an October 2023 speech, pledging to restrict people from the Gaza Strip, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and "anywhere else that threatens our security." The State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Reuters.

Starmer says coalition to beef up Kyiv security

LONDON: British Prime Minister Keir Starmer stresses the United Kingdom's intention to provide "robust and credible" security guarantees to prevent Russia from attacking Ukraine again as Russian President Vladimir Putin has yet to sign up to a US-brokered truce proposal as fighting rages on the ground.

"We will build up Ukraine's own defences and armed forces and be ready to deploy as a 'coalition of the willing' in the event of a peace deal to help secure Ukraine on the land, at sea and in the sky," Starmer said on Saturday after a virtual meeting with 25 European Union and other world leaders as well as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "We agreed military planners would convene again in the UK this week to progress practical plans for how our militaries can support Ukraine's future security," Starmer added.

The meeting was held after Putin agreed in principle to an immediate 30-day ceasefire put forward by Washington and already accepted by Ukraine. But on Friday, Putin said there were issues to work out. These included questions on who would monitor the ceasefire and whether the pause in fighting could be used for Kyiv to mobilise new forces at a time when Russia is regaining ground in Kursk. Part of the Russian region on the border with Ukraine was occupied by Ukrainian forces in a lightning offensive in August. Questions loom on whether Putin's response signalled a sincere step towards peace or a deflecting tactic to continue the war without fully rejecting the proposal by the United States -- a move that could have angered President Donald Trump. The Kremlin has so far benefited considerably as Trump drastically reverses decades of US foreign policy by upending the transatlantic alliance while opening up to Russia. — Aljazeera

G7 calls for resumption of aid for Gaza

CHARLEVOIX, Canada (AFP): The G7 on Friday called for the resumption of "unhindered" humanitarian aid for Gaza. In a final statement from their foreign ministers in Canada, the group of powerful democracies "reaffirmed their support for the resumption of unhindered humanitarian aid into Gaza and for a permanent ceasefire."

The White House, meanwhile, accused Hamas on Friday of making "entirely impractical" demands and stalling on a deal to release a US Israeli hostage in exchange for an extension of the Gaza ceasefire. "Hamas is making a very bad bet that time is on its side. It is not," a statement from the office of President Donald Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and the US National Security Council said.

"Hamas is well aware of the deadline, and should know that we will respond accordingly if that deadline passes," it said, adding that Trump had already vowed Hamas would "pay a severe price" for not freeing hostages. Witkoff presented a "bridge" proposal in Qatar on Wednesday to extend the first phase of the truce to mid-April if Hamas releases living hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners.

Pakistan, BD call for increasing bilateral ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Bangladesh have called for increasing cooperation in the areas of trade, economy, culture, health, education, and people-to-people linkages for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

This was discussed during a meeting between President Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan, Mr Md. Iqbal Hussain Khan, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr today.

During the meeting, it was emphasised to improve air linkages and shipping connections between Pakistan and Bangladesh to enhance bilateral trade as well as increase people-to-people linkages.

Welcoming the High Commissioner, President Gilani said that there was great potential to enhance education, health, agriculture and cultural cooperation between the two brotherly countries. He called for making efforts to further increase people-to-people and cultural exchanges to bring the two countries closer. He expressed satisfaction that an MoU on the supply of white rice from Pakistan to Bangladesh had been signed, which would help increase bilateral trade.

The President said that Pakistan greatly valued its relations with Bangladesh, which were based on common faith, shared history, and cultural similarities. He remarked that the Chief Adviser of the Government of Bangladesh, Professor Muhammad Yunus, was widely respected in Pakistan for his path-breaking work in the field of micro-finance and social development.

The High Commissioner highlighted the potential of increasing relations in the area of health tourism. He informed that

Bangladeshi students were also interested in getting higher education from Pakistani universities. The President assured the High Commissioner of his support and cooperation in further improving bilateral ties in all areas of mutual interest between the two brotherly countries.

Acting President calls for greater cooperation with Czech Republic: Acting President Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Saturday affirmed Pakistan's commitment to further boosting bilateral cooperation with the Czech Republic in the areas of mutual interest.

He said both countries needed to explore greater cooperation in the areas of trade, renewable energy, business and investment, health, parliamentary cooperation, education and people-to-people linkages. The acting President expressed these views while talking to the Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Pakistan, Mr Ladislav Steinhubel, who called on him, here at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Welcoming the Ambassador, the acting President said Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with the Czech Republic, and both countries enjoyed long-standing bilateral ties and held common views at various international fora. He said Czech businesses should visit Pakistan to explore investment opportunities, adding that bilateral trade between Pakistan and the Czech Republic needed to be increased to its fullest potential.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani emphasised the need to further deepen bilateral engagement in the areas of economy, culture, and people-to-people contacts. He also urged the need for easing the visa regime for Pakistani students wanting to study in Czech universities to enhance educational cooperation between the two countries.

Pakistan Navy launches Hangor-Class Submarine

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The launching ceremony of the second Hangor Class submarine, PNS/M SHUSHUK (Desig), was held at Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group Company Ltd, Shuangliu Base, Wuhan, China. Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Ovais Ahmed Bilgrami, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.

While addressing the ceremony, Vice Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted the importance of maritime security in prevailing geo-strategic environment of the region, as well as Pakistan Navy's commitment to safeguarding national interests and ensuring a safe and conducive maritime environment for all. He emphasized that Hangor Class submarines, equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, will play a pivotal role in maintaining the balance of power and maritime order in the region.



Acknowledging the tireless efforts of China Shipbuilding & Offshore International Company Ltd (CSOC), he expressed satisfaction with the project's progress and underscored that the Hangor Class Submarine Project will add a new dimension to time-tested Pakistan-China friendship.

The Government of Pakistan signed an agreement with CSOC to acquire eight Hangor Class submarines during the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Pakistan. Under this contract, four submarines will be built in China, while the remaining

four will be constructed in Pakistan at Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works Ltd (KS&EW) under the Transfer of Technology (ToT) program. These submarines will be fitted with cutting-edge weapons and sensors, enabling them to engage targets at standoff ranges.

The launching ceremony was attended by high-ranking officials from Pakistan and China, including representatives from Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group Company Ltd and China Shipbuilding & Offshore International Company Ltd.

PHC approached against PECA amends Act 2025

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A constitutional petition has been filed in the Peshawar High Court (PHC), challenging the Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act 2025. The petition argues that the recent amendments to the Act impose severe restrictions on fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, privacy, and the principles of due process, which are not only in violation of the Constitution of Pakistan but also international human rights standards.

The petition was filed by social media influencer/activist Anil Masih through Nauman Mohib Kakakhel advocate under Article 199, naming various government institutions as respondents, including the Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of Interior, P a k i s t a n Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Pakistan Electronic Media

Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The amended Act has been challenged for criminalizing dissent, granting regulatory bodies excessive powers, and stifling press freedom under the guise of preventing "false and misleading information." The petition specifically targets Section 26(A), which introduces ambiguous and vague provisions that can be used against journalists, activists, and ordinary citizens.

The amendments contravene constitutional Articles 4, 9, 10, 10-A, 19, 19-A, and 25, restricting freedom of expression, press freedom, and permitting arbitrary action against digital content creators, the writ stated.

The establishment of the Social Media Protection and Regulatory Authority (SMPRA), Social Media Protection Tribunals, and the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) reinforces government control without an

effective system of judicial oversight, the petition argued.

The petition argues that Islam upholds principles of justice, equality, and freedom of expression, which this amendment blatantly violates.

Furthermore, Pakistan's obligations under international treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), are also being breached. The law introduces vague definitions of "unlawful" and "objectionable" content, creating legal ambiguity and fostering an environment of fear, self-censorship, and intimidation among journalists and activists.

The petition argued to declare the Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act 2025 unconstitutional and strike down Section 26(A) and other stringent provisions to prevent arbitrary action against digital media workers.



ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan, Mr. Md. Iqbal Hussain Khan, called on Acting President Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Israeli airstrike kills nine in Gaza

CAIRO (Reuters): At least nine Palestinians were killed, including two local journalists, and others wounded on Saturday in an Israeli airstrike on Gaza's northern Beit Lahiya town. Gaza's health ministry said, as Hamas' leaders hold Gaza ceasefire talks with mediators in Cairo.

Several were critically injured as the strike hit a car, with casualties inside and outside the vehicle, health officials told Reuters. Witnesses and fellow journalists said the people in the car were on a mission for a charity called Al-Khair Foundation in Beit Lahiya, and they were accompanied by journalists and photographers when the strike hit them. At least three local journalists were among the dead, according to Palestinian media.

The Israeli military said in a statement that it had struck two individuals that it identified as "terrorists" operating a drone that it said posed a threat to forces in Beit Lahiya. The military later struck several other suspects who it said had collected the drone equipment and entered a vehicle.

The military did not say how it had determined that the individuals it had struck were "terrorists" or provide detail on the threat that the done had posed to its soldiers. The incident underscores the fragility of the January 19 ceasefire agreement that halted large-scale fighting in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian health officials say dozens of people have been killed by Israeli fire despite the truce. Commenting on the latest deaths, the Islamist Hamas group accused Israel in a statement of attempting to renege on the ceasefire agreement, putting the number of Palestinians killed since January 19 at 150.

It urged mediators to compel Israel to move ahead with the implementation of the phased ceasefire deal, blaming Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the current impasse. Responding to some of the incidents reported by Gaza medics, the Israeli military says its forces have intervened to thwart threats by "terrorists" approaching its forces or planting bombs on the ground near where forces operate.

US expels South African ambassador

WASHINGTON (AFP): The United States is expelling South Africa's ambassador to Washington, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said, accusing the envoy of hating the country and President Donald Trump.

"South Africa's Ambassador to the United States is no longer welcome in our great country," Rubio posted on X. Ebrahim Rasool is "a race-baiting politician who hates America and hates POTUS", he said, referring to Trump by his White House X account handle. "We have nothing to discuss with him and so he is considered persona non grata."

The expulsion of the ambassador — a very rare move by the United States — is the latest development in rising tensions between Washington and Pretoria. Trump in February froze US aid to South Africa, citing a law in the country that he alleges allows land to be seized from white farmers.

Last week, Trump further fuelled tensions, saying South Africa's farmers were welcome to settle in the United States after repeating his accusations that the government was "confiscating" land from white people.

PPP opposes new canals on Indus River

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has announced a massive public gathering on April 4 in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto to mark the 46th death anniversary of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

During the meeting, the party strongly rejected the federal government's proposed project of six new canals on the Indus River and warned that Sindh would not accept any new canal project under the Indus River System.

The PPP Sindh Council meeting, held at the CM House on Saturday. It was chaired by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The meeting was attended by PPP Sindh President Nisar Ahmad Khuhro, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, former CM Syed Qaim Ali Shah, General Secretary Waqar Mehdi, Manzoor Wassan, Sarfraz Rajar, Noman Sheikh, Saeed Ghani, Syed Nasir Shah, Sharjeel Inam Memon, Mukesh Kumar Chawla, Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjar, Agha Siraj Durrani, Lal Chand Ukrani, Shahida Rehmani, and several other provincial ministers and party officials.

Indus River Canals Project: Addressing the meeting, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari reiterated PPP's firm stance against any new canal project on the Indus River. He expressed support for resolutions passed by the Sindh Council opposing the federal government's proposed canals, emphasising that the party has always raised its voice against such projects that threaten Sindh's water rights.

Bilawal Bhutto stressed that PPP has always been at the forefront of advocating for Sindh's rights and will continue to represent the people on critical issues like water distribution. PPP Sindh President Nisar Khuhro termed the six canals project as a deliberate attempt to deprive Sindh of its fair share of water. He demanded that the federal government immediately withdraw the plan and convene a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to address Sindh's concerns.

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah echoed these concerns, stating that the province would never accept any new canal project under the Indus River System. He pointed out that there is already a severe water shortage in the system and questioned the source of water for these new canals. Mr Shah demanded that water distribution be carried out strictly under Paragraph 2 of the 1991 Water Accord. PPP General Secretary



Waqar Mehdi said that the party had opposed the canal project from the beginning, even before other political parties became aware of it. He reaffirmed PPP's commitment to safeguarding Sindh's water rights and vowed that the party would not allow any project that undermines the province's resources.

Resolutions: The PPP Sindh Council passed several resolutions during the meeting. They include paid homage to the former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto on his 46th death anniversary and reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring massive public participation in the April 4, gathering at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto.

Rejected new canals: The council categorically rejected the federal government's plan for six new canals and warned that Sindh would not accept any project that disrupts the Indus River System.

Implementation Water Accord: PPP Sindh Council demanded that water distribution be ensured as per Paragraph 2 of the 1991 Water Accord, ensuring Sindh receives its rightful share. The resolution also called for releasing at least 10 million acre-feet of water downstream Kotri Barrage.

Closure of Flood Canals - The council demanded that Chashma-Jhelum and Taunsa-Panjinad Link Canals, which are meant for flood use only, should remain closed except during flood conditions.

KP govt introduces autmated electronic procurement platform

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has introduced an Automated and Integrated Electronic Procurement Platform, the E-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System, to enhance transparency and security in public procurement.

Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur formally launched the system, which has been developed with the support of the Federal Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and the World Bank. Initially, the system has been piloted in eight provincial departments, with plans for a province-wide rollout in the next phase.

The Chief Minister has directed that from July 1, 2025, all provincial depart-

ments must conduct procurement exclusively through this new system. The eight departments in the pilot phase include Public Health Engineering, Irrigation, Communications & Works, Local Government, Health, Science & Technology, the KP IT Board, and KP EZMIC.

During a briefing, officials informed the Chief Minister that the E-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System would ensure transparent and secure public procurement by minimizing human intervention and reducing the risk of errors. They highlighted that the system would improve the efficiency of public fund utilization, enhance departmental performance, and establish a standardized procurement process across all gov-

ernment institutions.

Officials further stated that the new system will consolidate all procurement activities onto a single platform, streamlining the otherwise complex procurement process and reducing timelines. Monitoring and decision-making will be facilitated through dedicated dashboards in relevant offices.

Speaking at the launch event, Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur emphasized that the implementation of the E-Pak Acquisition and Disposal System is a crucial step towards ensuring transparency, saving both time and resources. He directed all departments to fully implement the new e-procurement system to ensure accountability and efficiency in government spending.

