

Illegal immigrants held F.P. Report

QUETTA: As the government has sped up its crackdown on illegal immigrants, especially Afghan nationals, residing in the country and is taking steps to send them back to their countries, Pakistan Coastguards, in their operations conducted along the Pak-Iran border in Balochistan between February 1 and March 18, have arrested 132 illegal immigrants.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 53

Regd. No. 241

RAMAZAN 20 1446 -- FRIDAY, MARCH 21 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



MADINA: Governor of Madina, Prince Salman bin Sultan al-Saud welcomes Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Saudi crown prince, PM discuss relations

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to further strengthen bilateral economic partnership

JEDDAH (APP): Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Thursday reaffirmed their commitment to take bilateral partnership to new heights and strengthening defense and security cooperation, recognizing the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing regional security challenges.

The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed in a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman here. The prime minister, who is on a four-day visit to the Kingdom, was accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz.

The meeting reaffirmed the strong and historic ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, with discussions focused on enhancing cooperation in economic, trade,

investment, energy and defense sectors. Both leaders expressed satisfaction with the growing economic collaboration between the two nations.

The prime minister appreciated the Kingdom's commitment to increasing investments in key sectors, which would contribute to Pakistan's economic growth and stability. The two leaders held in-depth discussions on the evolving regional situation as well as geopolitical landscape and agreed to work closely at all levels for promoting their shared vision for peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

The Saudi Crown Prince acknowledged the significant contributions of the Pakistani community in Saudi Arabia and agreed to enhance measures to facilitate their welfare. Both the leaders emphasized the need to further strengthen people-to-people ties, cultural exchanges, and educational collaboration.

The prime minister and the crown prince reaffirmed their commitment

to elevating Pakistan-Saudi Arabia partnership to new heights, guided by mutual respect, shared interests, and a common vision for progress and prosperity.

Meanwhile, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on Thursday agreed to further strengthen the bilateral economic partnership through structured engagements and swift execution of joint projects.

The bilateral economic cooperation was discussed as Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Saudi Investment Minister Khalid Al-Falih and Head of the Joint Task Force for Economic Engagement Mohammad Al-Tuwaijri, during his four-day official visit to Saudi Arabia. The discussions focused on strengthening economic cooperation, attracting Saudi investments, and expediting joint initiatives in key sectors.

After extending best wishes to the Kingdom's leadership, the prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to facilitating Saudi investors, highlighting the country's

strategic position and investment-friendly policies. He emphasized Pakistan's vast potential in energy, infrastructure, agriculture and technology, inviting Saudi businesses to explore opportunities under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

Saudi Minister Khalid Al-Falih and Head of Task Force Mohammad Al-Tuwaijri expressed Saudi Arabia's strong interest in deepening economic ties with Pakistan. They discussed enhancing institutional collaboration to accelerate investment projects and ensure their smooth implementation.

The meeting underscored the commitment of both nations to fostering a long-term, mutually beneficial economic relationship. The prime minister was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik and National Coordinator SIFC Lt. Gen. Sarfraz Ahmed.

We care about what'shappening on globe: Tammy

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON D.C: During a press briefing at the US State Department today, spokesperson Tammy Bruce declined to comment on the imprisonment of former Pakistani Prime Minister

Imran Khan, emphasizing that the US does not interfere in the internal affairs of other nations. Jalil Afridi, managing editor of The Frontier Post, raised concerns about the continued incarceration of Khan, describing him as Pakistan's

most popular leader, his party having the most seats in the Parliament and the nation's biggest charity fundraiser. Afridi highlighted the deteriorating state of democracy and human rights in Pakistan over the past two years especially of the women, asking

whether President Donald Trump had any plans to address the situation. In response, Bruce acknowledged the concerns but refrained from providing a direct answer. "I'm not going to comment on the internal frameworks of

another country," she stated. She also noted that President Trump, who has been in office for just eight weeks, has been focused on multiple global issues. When pressed further, Bruce redirected inquiries to the White House, while empha-

sizing that the administration remains engaged with global affairs. "President Trump has made it clear—as has Secretary Rubio—that we care about the planet. We care about our neighbors. We care about what's happening on the globe," she added.

The exchange underscores the ongoing international attention on Pakistan's political crisis and the growing expectations among Pakistani-Americans and global observers for a stronger response from the US administration.

رمضان کی برکت - متوسط طبقات کی کفالت
حکومت خیر پختونخوا کی فلاحی پالیسی کا عملی مظاہرہ

خیر پختونخوا رمضان پیکیج

10 لاکھ 16 ہزار 394 مستحق خاندان
اور 4000 شہداء کے خاندانوں میں تقریباً 11 ارب روپے
کے پیکیج کی شفاف طریقے سے تقسیم

وزیر اعلیٰ خیر پختونخوا کی ہدایت پر معاشرے کے مستحق طبقات کی کفالت کو اپنی اولین ترجیح بناتے ہوئے بیواؤں، یتیموں، معذور افراد، خواجہ سرا کمیونٹی اور شہداء کے خاندانوں کو مالی معاونت فراہم کی جا رہی ہے۔

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مستحقین کے لیے
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فلاحی ریاست کے قیام کی جانب ایک مضبوط قدم ... عوامی خدمت کی کامیاب حکمت عملی

حکومت خیر پختونخوا
محکمہ اطلاعات و تعلقات عامہ



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah chairing a high-level meeting on control of cheating in board exams.

Awareness seminar on ‘Misinformation and Fake News’ held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An awareness seminar on "Misinformation and Fake News" was held. The seminar was jointly organized by the Quality Enhancement Cell and the Directorate of Media and Publications to explore the ways misinformation and fake news spread across digital platforms, including social media, news outlets, and other online channels, and discuss methods to combat this growing issue.

Muhammad Ali Khan, Deputy Director Cyber Crime Cell, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Peshawar was the guest speaker. He said, digital technology is a double sword. While it provides immense benefits, it also poses significant risks, particularly the rise in cyber-crimes such as impostor accounts and the spread of fake news. He emphasized that the FIA is actively working to combat these issues

under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), specifically targeting crimes such as hate speech, anti-state propaganda, and the incitement of hatred against national institutions. He said, FIA dismantled a criminal network for making fake fingerprints for illegal SIM activations in Bannu and Karak. This operation, he said, led to the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) enhancing its verification procedures. He urged the audience to remain vigilant when sharing news, stressing the importance of verifying sources, avoiding clickbait, and being wary of misleading headlines. He also called on universities to play a pivotal role in raising awareness about cybercrimes and suggested integrating digital literacy into school curricula.

Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali, Vice Chancellor UET Peshawar condemned the systematic propaganda spread by Pakistan's enemies, aimed at

defaming national institutions under the cover of freedom of expression. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to freedom of speech while also stressing the responsibility to combat misinformation by following Islamic teachings and use of digital media technology. He also encouraged the students to learn more about digital media literacy and equip themselves with practical tools to verify online content and identify fake news, including the use of fact-checking websites.

Prof. Dr. Rizwan Gul, Senior Dean welcomed the guests while Prof. Dr. Waqar Shah Dean, Prof. Dr. Khizar Azam, Registrar UET Peshawar, Heads of Departments, faculty, and students from satellite campuses also attended the seminar online. The event underscored the critical need for digital media literacy and responsible online behavior to combat the growing threat of misinformation in the digital age.

Sustainable solutions instead of use of force in KP urged

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Archives, and Libraries, Meena Khan Afridi, has stated that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cannot afford any kind of armed operation and that the PTI government firmly believes in seeking sustainable solutions instead of resorting to force.

He expressed these views in a statement issued from his office. The provincial minister emphasized that the people, police, and government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are on the same page regarding maintaining law and order, and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has also adopted a public stance on armed operations.

He urged the federal government to immediately release the outstanding funds owed to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so that developmental projects can help curb unrest in the province. Meena Khan Afridi further stated that the ground realities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cannot be understood while sitting in Islamabad or Lahore.

He stressed that during Imran Khan's tenure, lawlessness never reared its head, and the province was on a stable path.

Meena Khan Afridi Responds to Maryam Aurangzeb's Statement

The Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi, has responded to Maryam Aurangzeb's recent statement, saying that the Nawaz family is entirely focused on PTI and is wasting its energy on baseless accusations.

He stated that despite challenging circumstances, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government leads the development index, and Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur is currently fighting for Pakistan's survival.

He advised Maryam Aurangzeb to address the questions raised in PTI's white paper rather than demanding the resignation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister. Meena Khan Afridi further remarked that the white paper has exposed the poor performance of the Punjab government, and time has proven who truly dominates the political arena.

Muhammad Sohail Afridi emphasized the need for efficient utilization of resources, timely completion of development initiatives, and adherence to quality standards.

He reiterated the provincial government's commitment to strengthening infrastructure and improving road networks to facilitate economic growth and public convenience.

on reviewing the ongoing and proposed development projects aimed at enhancing the province's infrastructure.

During the session, Secretary C&W and key officials from the department presented progress reports on various ongoing schemes and shared proposals for new projects under the upcoming ADP.

Special Assistant

Sohail presides over ADP 2025-26 meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Communication and Works, Mohammad Sohail Afridi, chaired an important meeting regarding the Annual Development Programme (ADP) 2025-26.

The meeting, held at the C&W Department, focused

Kundi expresses condolence over death of Hafiz Hussain

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Thursday expressed his condolences over the death of Hafiz Hussain Ahmad, senior politician, former Senator, former Member of the

National Assembly, and leader of Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUIF).

He prayed for the elevation of the deceased's soul and for patience and strength for the bereaved family.

The Governor extended his heartfelt sympathies and

condolences to the grieving family, saying that Hafiz Hussain Ahmad was a wise and good politician.

Faisal Karim Kundi further remarked that Hafiz Hussain Ahmad's political and religious services will always be remembered.

Closing ceremony of KMU Green Youth Movement Club held



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The closing ceremony of the 2023-24 session of the Green Youth Movement Club under the auspices of Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar, was held with great enthusiasm and splendor. A large number of students, faculty members, directors of various departments, and esteemed guests attended the event.

On this occasion, a detailed presentation was given on the club's outstanding achievements throughout the year, highlighting various environmental conservation initiatives, tree plantation drives, seminars, awareness walks, and other activities conducted by the Green Youth Movement Club. Captain Alishba Nawaz presented a comprehensive report on the

year's activities, shedding light on the impact of various environmental projects and future strategies.

Director Academics, Prof. Dr. Zille Huma, appreciated the efforts of former captains of the Green Youth Movement and lauded their remarkable contributions. She encouraged students to continue their efforts for environmental protection. She emphasized that the club not only focuses on tree plantations and environmental improvements but also plays a crucial role in raising environmental awareness among the younger generation.

A memorable moment of the event was the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected Captain Muhammad Asim and Vice-Captain Shamayla Sadiq. The newly elected leaders pledged to uphold the traditions of the club, further its mission, and imple-

ment more effective measures for environmental protection.

Furthermore, during the ceremony, the outgoing cabinet members were honored with appreciation certificates for their outstanding contributions to environmental conservation. These certificates served as a recognition of their hard work, dedication, and relentless efforts that enabled the club to successfully complete various environmental projects.

The ceremony marked the successful conclusion of a year filled with purposeful activities and reinforced the commitment to promoting a greener and cleaner environment. Attendees praised the event's organization and expressed hope that the Green Youth Movement Club would continue its environmental mission with even greater dedication in the future.

KP Chief Secretary orders steps to curb cheating in board exams

F.P. Report

PESHAWARSAR: In a bid to ensure transparency in the upcoming board examinations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah has directed authorities to implement strict measures to prevent cheating.

Chairing a high-level meeting, attended by the Secretary of Education, all Commissioners, Chairmen of educational boards, and District Education Officers via video link, the Chief Secretary stressed the need to uphold merit and fairness in matriculation exams.

He highlighted the significance of matriculation

exams in shaping students' futures and reiterated the government's commitment to comprehensive educational reforms. "Education is a vital sector, and we must take all necessary steps to eliminate cheating from our examination system," he stated.

To ensure transparency, the Chief Secretary ordered that exam duties be assigned on merit. He announced that the Education Monitoring Authority (EMA), District Administration, and Special Branch would oversee the examinations. Additionally, CCTV cameras will be installed where required, and a team of officers, not below Grade

18, will be deployed for monitoring.

In a significant move, he directed Deputy Commissioners to assign all Assistant Commissioners, instead of Tehsildars, to inspect exam halls and prevent external interference.

Officials with questionable records will not be allowed to perform examination duties. Daily reports will be compiled, and live monitoring will be conducted through EMA teams. The Chief Secretary issued a stern warning against those aiding cheating, stating that strict action would be taken against facilitators.

He also announced a ban

on examination halls in private institutions to prevent malpractice.

In another decisive step, student migrations to any institution after February 1st will be canceled to prevent last-minute transfers aimed at securing undue advantages.

Furthermore, authorities will conduct raids on stationery shops and photocopy centers near examination halls suspected of selling cheating materials.

"The cheating culture is damaging our education system. We are committed to ensuring a transparent and fair examination process to produce bright and capable students," the Chief Secretary asserted.

Thrilling HBK Ramadan Sports Gala continue at PPC Great to see journalists playing, says Arsalan Nazim

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Exciting contests continue at the HBK Ramadan Sports Gala. Last night's matches saw the participation of Awami National Party's Provincial Information Secretary Arsalan Nazim as the chief guest. He praised the Peshawar Press Club's administration for organizing a healthy activity and expressed his appreciation. He was accompanied by Peshawar Press Club President M. Riaz, Secretary Tayyab Usman Awan and Chairman Sports Committee Irfan Musa Zai along with a large number of journalists.

Addressing the event Arsalan Nazim commended the initiative stating that it was a pleasure to see journalists engaged in sports. He emphasized the importance of physical activities for everyone, particularly for journalists, who work under high-pressure and stressful conditions. He assured his full support for the Press Club's



sports gala and other activities.

As for the competition results in the snooker event Kamran Ali, Hasan Ali, Hasnain Ali, Adnan Shahid and Shehzad Rashid secured victories. In table tennis, Mehmood Jan Babar, Nader Khwaja, and Abdul Rehman won their respective matches and qualified for the second round.

In the badminton event, the teams of Asmat Shah & Faizan, Zahid Usman & Waqas, Irfan Khan & Yasir Ali, Aamir Siddiqui & Asad Ali Qamar, and Nazim Kazmi & Hamza Aftab emerged victorious.

Similarly, in the Ludo competition, Javed Khan, Ali Sohor, Mudassir Zaib, Wajid Shehzad, Ibad, Tahir Waseem, Hamza Aftab, Hasan, Mazhar Imran,

Shoaib Jameel, Zafar, Ijaz Afridi, Ali Rehman, Shakeel Siddiqui, Nader Khwaja, Imran Ayaz, Zahid Usman and Ifthikhar Hussain secured wins.

Meanwhile, in the carrom board competition, Riaz Shahid, Safer Ahmed, Haroon Rashid, Tariq Aziz, Asif Shehzad, Mehmood Rehman, Wahid Khan and Qadir Khan claimed victories.

Model farms service centers Minister directs availability of modern machinery

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture, Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwal, has directed officials to ensure farmers across the province maximize the use of modern agricultural machinery available at the Agriculture Extension Department's Model Farms Services Centers. He emphasized that District Directors of Agriculture Extension must prioritize cultivating crops such as wheat, maize, and rice, tailored to local soil characteristics, weather conditions, and climate. Provisional minister issued

these directives while chairing a meeting at the Directorate General of Agriculture Extension in Peshawar, attended by district heads of agriculture extension from across the province and senior department officials.

The meeting was also attended by Director General Agriculture Extension Murad Ali Khan, additional secretaries, chief planning officer, and other officials. Provincial minister urged department officers to take concrete steps over the coming years to address food shortages and achieve self-sufficiency in the province.

"Agriculture is the backbone of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's economy. Therefore, officers at the district level must resolve farmers' issues promptly and promote modern technology," he stated.

District officers were instructed to compile detailed reports on crop yields, cultivated areas, and quality metrics in their regions, publicly displaying this data on boards alongside comparative figures from the previous year. Immediate measures were ordered to ensure farmers' access to modern seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. Sajjad Brakwal also

stressed regular consultation with local National and Provincial Assembly members during the implementation of developmental projects. Additionally, each district must form a committee comprising representatives from all wings of the Agriculture Department.

Provisional minister for Agriculture warned that strict action would be taken against negligent officials. "Our goal is to make Khyber Pakhtunkhwa fully self-reliant in food production and boost farmers' incomes. To achieve this, we must embrace teamwork, integrity, and modern technology," he asserted.

NUML hosts conference on ‘Tajdeed-e-Ehad-e-Pakistan’

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In connection with Pakistan Day, the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) organized a thought-provoking conference titled "Tajdeed-e-Ehad-e-Pakistan", jointly hosted by the Department of Islamic Thought and Culture, Department of Arabic, and Department of Pakistan Studies. The event aimed to rekindle the spirit of national unity and commitment envisioned by the country's founding fathers.

Renowned scholars and intellectuals, including Professor Khurshid Nadeem (Chairman R e h m a t - a l - A l m e e n Authority), Dr. Khalid Rehman (Chairman Institute of Policy Studies), and Professor Dr. Muhammad Zia Ul Haq (Director General, Islamic Research Center, International Islamic University), graced the occasion as guest speakers. The conference was

presided over by Rector NUML, Major General (Retd) Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI (M).

Professor Khurshid Nadeem, in his address, reflected on the significance of Pakistan's independence in the blessed month of Ramadan, calling it a time for self-reflection and commitment.

He urged the youth to think and pray for the country's prosperity, just as their forefathers struggled for its creation. Stressing the importance of unity, he emphasized that while differences and challenges exist, Pakistan must remain a single, united entity. He also advocated for true democracy, where people are genuinely empowered, and called for an end to dynastic politics.

Dr Khalid Rehman in his address, highlighted the need to combat misinformation and digital extremism, urging people to focus on the country's strengths rather than dwelling on neg-

ativity. He encouraged promoting a positive national discourse to strengthen Pakistan's image globally.

Speaking on the occasion, Professor Dr Zia Ul Haq reflected on Pakistan's journey of progress and setbacks, urging introspection on why the country has faced challenges despite its rich resources and youthful population.

He noted that nations like Bangladesh, Malaysia, and India once learned from Pakistan's development model but have since surpassed it.

He called for reviving the national narrative and utilizing the country's 64% youth population for constructive

nation-building rather than allowing external forces to exploit them.

In his address, Rector NUML Major General (Retd) Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI (M) reiterated that March 23rd is a day of reaffirmation and national commitment.

He described Pakistan as a divine blessing, emphasizing that independence is a privilege that millions of Muslims in India do not have. He stressed the importance of highlighting Pakistan's strengths rather than focusing on its shortcomings, assuring that the nation will overcome its challenges through collective resilience.





In brief

Police inks deal for cops F.P. Report

BUNER: A memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Buner Police and the Buner Medical Complex to provide affordable and quality medical treatment to police officers and their families on concession at the rate of 10% on medicines, 15% on lab tests, 15% on OT, 20% on MRI, CT Scan, 20 and private room 25%. DPO Saud Khan and CA Buner Medical Complex, Jan, have signed the agreement. On this occasion, DPO Buner Saud Khan said that this initiative has been taken for the welfare of police force personnel and their families, under which they and their children will get quality and affordable treatment. According to him, this agreement will be a positive step for police officers and their families and will facilitate their health care.

State land sold fraudulently Allah Dad Chandio

LARKANA: The city of martyrs has been completely abandoned due to the revelations of the sale of plots of government offices, the corruption of the administration and the influence of the powerful occupiers. There is no questioner, the regional director of Sindh Small Industry Larkana has revealed that the office plot will be sold. According to the details, the illegal allotment of Sindh Small Industry Larkana business area of ??Larkana city could not be stopped with the connivance of the administration, a plot worth crores of rupees has been handed over to the occupiers, in which the total amount of the commercial plot of 65 yards is only 104000 rupees in the government exchequer. While the remaining crores of rupees have accumulated in the pocket of the joint director, according to the sources, the allotment of Sindh Small Industry Larkana Regional Office which has been sold with the connivance of the staff. The administration of Sindh Small Industry Corporation should investigate and reject the fraudulent allotment and take departmental action against the participating employees and register a case in the official complaint so that no state agency holders can sell the government property of Larkana without official NOC.

Former Nazim Ayub shot dead F.P. Report

MARDAN: Former Nazim Ayub Khan was shot dead in Rustam area of Mardan district, police informed on Thursday. Police said, Khan was targeted from a close range while sitting in his car. The incident occurred in Malandri area within the jurisdiction of Rustam Police Station, where unidentified assailants opened fire on him. Police confirmed that the attackers fled the scene after committing the crime. Law enforcement authorities have launched an investigation to identify and apprehend the culprits.

Woman tortured to death by in-laws
NAROWAL (INP): A newlywed woman has been allegedly poisoned to death after severely tortured by her in-laws in Narowal. According to police, the husband of the deceased and her in-laws used to torture.

Warning system established to prevent violent extremism



Anees Takar

MARDAN: An Early Warning System has been established to prevent Violent Extremism (PVE). A three-day multi-stakeholder program was held under the auspices of the non-governmental organization Individualland, in collaboration with the European Union, UNODC, NACTA, and Mardan City Council.

The purpose of the program was to establish an effective Early Warning System (EWS) to prevent growing political, social and religious extremism, which would help identify potential threats of violent extremism. This system aims to monitor the factors leading to extremist thinking, raise public awareness, and assist in the early prevention of any possible tragedies.

The implementation strategy for this early warning system will include WhatsApp channels and radio broadcasts, providing timely and effective infor-

mation. A 20-member committee was formed to assess the risks of extremism, while a separate team of 30 individuals will analyze misleading information circulating on social media and use WhatsApp channels to provide accurate information to the public.

During the program, Khoso Saifullah, Integrated Operations and Program Manager, highlighted the factors contributing to political, social and religious terrorism and discussed possible ways to address them.

Mashood Ali, Capacity Building Lead, presented the initial draft of the early warning system, which was discussed by the participants, including Mardan Mayor Hamayatullah Mayar. After incorporating suggestions, the final version of the early warning system and its implementation strategy was approved and handed over to the Mayor of Mardan.

Addressing the program, Mardan Mayor Hamayatullah Mayar stat-

ed, "In this modern age, where hatred, lies and extremism are taking new forms, we must also prepare ourselves on modern lines. We need to adopt effective means to provide timely and accurate information to the public and strengthen the community to identify extremist elements early and protect our nation from major disasters."

Experts and participants at the program termed this initiative an effective strategy, expressing hope that this system would enable the timely identification and prevention of extremist tendencies. Furthermore, radio broadcasts will play a significant role in raising awareness about media literacy and combating violent narratives.

This initiative will be an important step towards fostering cooperation between local government, civil society, and the media, and towards creating an integrated and sustainable system to protect citizens from extremism.

Education universal right of every child

F.P. Report

ZHOB: The United Nations recognizes education as a fundamental human right for every child. Moreover, Article 25-A of the Constitution also guarantees the right to free and compulsory education for children between the ages of five and sixteen.

Unfortunately, Balochistan - Pakistan's poverty-hit province, has a high percentage of out-of-school children due to insufficient educational budget, lack of facilities, poverty, and gender inequity.

In fact, education has always been a cornerstone of human development. Its significance has grown exponentially in this modern era of science and technology, but due to high inflation rates and a lack of facilities; children, particularly in rural areas, are still deprived of their basic right to education.

Luckily, an educational institution called 'Hope Schooling System' has recently been established in the Walma area on the outskirts of the Zhob district in the northern part of Balochistan. More than half of the children getting education here are orphans or those whose hand-10-mouth parents are unable to afford the educational expenses.

Abdullah Sherani, the principal of 'Hope Schooling System', says when orphans, destitute, and poor children are not provided free education, it results in the deprivation of their fundamental right, and an increase in the already alarming drop-out rate.

He says the 'Hope Schooling System' is a non-profit entity, but it is aimed at promoting free education in a far-off region of Balochistan. The school owner terms the institution a ray of hope for the poor and unfortunate children from the underprivileged

community, where lack of education often makes the children vulnerable to child labor.

"The number of private educational institutions in Balochistan is around 30,000, while the number in the Zhob valley is about 100. If each educational institute enrolls only 40 children free of charge, 120K children deprived of education will be able to get education across Balochistan," he suggests, adding "the high drop-out rate is in Balochistan with over 3 million out-of-school children," he laments.

It is worth mentioning that a school enrollment campaign is underway across Balochistan that aims at raising awareness among the parents to get their children enrolled and persuade the teachers to ensure their presence at government-run schools. The campaign is also expected to reduce the drop-out rate.

Govt commits to ensure clean and green cities

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah has said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is committed to build cleaner and greener cities. The green urban spaces project will improve provision of clean and healthy recreational facilities in Mardan. Providing clean and green environment to the citizens is our top priority. He directed the concerned to speed up the pace of work.

He expressed while chairing a high level meeting regarding Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project at WSSCM Office. Member Board of Directors

Haroon Rashid, CEO WSSCM Shahid Khan, General Manager Muhammad Khalil Akbar, Chief Engineer CIU Mardan Engineer Imran Zaman, Chief Financial Officer Naveed Akhtar, PTI Tehsil Mardan representative Ilyas toru and other were present in the meeting.

Chief Engineer Imran Zaman briefed the forum that a survey was conducted along Kalpani and other potential locations in urban Mardan, identifying alternative sites for the implementation of the Urban Green Space Project. Zahir Shah Toru stated that the provincial government is trying to improve the living stan-

dards of the citizens.

The construction of the sewage treatment plant will reduce the health and sanitation problems. He directed the concerned that suitable locations for green urban spaces be identified, to promote ecofriendly environment and urban beautification.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project is a flagship initiative aimed at modernizing urban infrastructure and improving living standards in major cities of KP. The government remains committed to fostering environmentally resilient urban infrastructure that contribute to economic and well-being. Toru added.

RPO orders to ensure community policing

F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi, Babar Sarfraz Alpa, while addressing the 'Kuli Katcheri' during his surprise visit to Attock has directed police to promote community policing and deliver timely justice to the aggrieved public. Police said, that RPO Rawalpindi, accompanied by DPO Attock Dr. Sardar Ghyas Gul Khan, conducted the open court to

address public grievances and ensure justice.

A large number of citizens, civil society members, and media representatives attended the session. RPO Rawalpindi listened to public complaints and issued immediate orders for their resolution on the spot. Speaking on the occasion, he stated that open courts are being held at police station levels to promote community policing and provide timely justice to

the public.

He further added that practical steps are being taken for better service delivery, and improved facilities have been provided at police offices and stations. Additionally, all human and technical resources are being utilized for crime control and investigation. At the end of the open court, RPO Rawalpindi also spoke to media representatives and answered their questions.

Commissioner inspects orphanage at Karak F.P. Report

KARAK: Commissioner Kohat paid a detailed visit to the District Karak and reviewed the ongoing welfare activities in the Social Welfare Sector. He also made a detailed inspection of the orphanage under the care of the Social Welfare Officer, reviewed the residential and educational facilities of the children and appreciated the performance of the District Officer, on Thursday.

He directed that better steps should be taken for the welfare of orphans and deserving children so that they can be provided with the best facilities. Later, the Commissioner Kohat also distributed Ramadan Ration Packages to the orphans. The aim of this initiative was to support these children and increase their happiness during this holy month. He also spoke to the children and issued special instructions regarding their needs.

On this occasion, Motasim Billah Shah expressed his determination to further expand the welfare activities and take more measures at the government level for the deserving people.

Earlier, Commissioner Kohat Division discussed various strategies and preparations for the upcoming admission drive at Government Higher Secondary School Karak with the principals of various schools of the district focusing on increasing student participation and tackling potential challenges.

Commissioner Kohat also emphasized the importance of cooperation among the school in-charges to improve enrollment numbers. Meanwhile, the principals presented suggestions and also informed about the problems faced by them, on which the Commissioner Kohat appreciated their efforts and assured full cooperation in solving their problems.

Performance of education dept reviewed F.P. Report

SHANGLA: District Education Officer, emphasized the importance of quality education in eliminating educational backwardness and producing useful citizens for the country. He stressed that his team will work tirelessly to improve the standard of education in schools, ensuring no laxity in this regard.

DEO expressed these views while addressing a monthly performance review meeting of sub-divisional education officers and school leaders at the office of Sub-Divisional Education Officer, Alpuri. He highlighted that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is focusing on improving educational standards and taking significant steps to achieve this goal.

He urged school leaders to visit schools in their clusters, provide model lessons, and review progress during subsequent visits. He also instructed circle officers to monitor and supervise this process. Additionally, he directed the development of strategies to make upcoming admission and tree-planting campaigns successful.

Haji Zamin passed away: Renowned Politician and Social Figure Haji Zamin Gul Passes Away. Haji Zamin Gul, a veteran politician and social figure from Shangla, has passed away, marking the end of an era in the region's politics. His political journey began with the Pakistan People's Party, and he served as a member of the joint district council of Shangla, Swat, and Buner.

Gul's contributions to the development of Shangla are immeasurable. He played a key role in the reconstruction of the Government Degree College in Alpuri and undertook numerous development and welfare projects in the region. His selfless service to the people of Ghorband and surrounding areas will always be remembered.

Meanwhile, a week-long standoff between lawyers and police in Shangla has come to an end after a successful jirga (council of elders) was held.

Repulsing terrorist attack Police personnel honoured in Tank

F.P. Report

TANK: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dera region Syed Ashfaq Anwar on Thursday visited Nasran police post of Gul Imam police station and awarded cash rewards and commendation certificates to police personnel who successfully repulsed a terrorist attack on the post.

During the visit, the police spokesman says, the RPO was briefed about details pertaining to the attack launched by terrorists in the darkness of night a few days ago. The RPO

was informed that Tank police personnel with high spirit of bravery and determination, fought back and foiled the terrorist attack.

The RPO also reviewed the security arrangements at the post and interacted with the police officers and listened to their issues. He issued immediate orders for resolution of their problems and remarked that the Tank Police had written an unparalleled tale of bravery and duty in the face of every challenge and the nation took pride in their sacrifices and services.

Addressing the occasion,

he said police jawans serving on the front lines in the fight against terrorism were the true assets of the department. He assured that those police jawans and officers who served as role models in performing their professional duties against terrorists would be recognized and encouraged at every platform. Syed Ashfaq Anwar urged police officers to perform their duties with professionalism, free from social biases and affiliations, ensuring the delivery of justice to all citizens and contributing to the maintenance of peace and order.

Differences within PTI emerged publicly

F.P. Report

KARAK: Member National Assembly Shahid Khattak has expressed serious reservations over not being included in the committee formed by the party. He said in a message on Twitter that he has registered a strong protest within the party against this decision. Shahid Khattak said in his statement, "I do not know whether Imran Khan has been taken into confidence on this matter or not, but I have serious reservations about the formation of the committee. My district Karak is also among these districts where the law and order situation is very bad.

It is unfair to deprive my area of representation in such difficult times." He added that he is tweeting this for the public record so that no questions are raised against him tomorrow. He also criticized party leader

Aamir Dogar, accusing him of making decisions based on personal likes and dislikes. It should be noted that Shahid Khattak is one of the active leaders of PTI and is considered an important representative of the party in the southern districts.

Meanwhile, khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Minister for Agriculture Sajjad Brakwal Chaired meeting on Road Improvement and Rehabilitation in Karak District. A meeting was held in Peshawar on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Provincial Minister for Agriculture Major (Retd) Sajjad Barkwal, to discuss the improvement and rehabilitation of roads in Karak district under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Accessibility Project, supported by the World Bank.

The meeting was attended by Resident Engineer

Husam Shahzad of the project, Deputy Team Leader Matiullah Jan, Deputy Director of Communications and Works (C&W) Irshad, and other relevant officials. Project authorities briefed the provincial Minister for agriculture Sajjad Brakwal on the ongoing road construction initiatives in Karak district under World Bank assistance. The project includes a total of four numbers of roads located at karak. Roads included are Rehabilitation of Madaki to Siraj baba road (9.97km), Rehabilitation of Pyala morh to shahidan Banda (6.94km), Rehabilitation of Indus highway to mirdal Banda via Musakan road (5.46km), Rehabilitation of main Gurgai road to issaki khunari (4.5km). The total estimated cost of the project is approximately Rs. 1,900 million, with completion expected within 15 months.

Anti-encroachment operation launched

F.P. Report

PABBI: Tehsil Municipal Administration launched operation against encroachments in Pabbi Bazaar. Tehsil Municipal Officer, Madam Shahana Sikandar, expressed these views during an interview with the President of Tehsil Press Club Pabbi, Muhammad Elias, during the anti-encroachment operation in Pabbi Bazaar.

She said that she would provide relief to the general public visiting Pabbi Bazaar from Pabbi city and surrounding villages through daily and surprise visits until the night of Eid ul Fitr. She emphasized that she would not compromise on encroachments.

provide the local people with a clean and healthy environment.

Tehsil Municipal Officer, Madam Shahana Sikandar, expressed these views during an interview with the President of Tehsil Press Club Pabbi, Muhammad Elias, during the anti-encroachment operation in Pabbi Bazaar. She said that she would provide relief to the general public visiting Pabbi Bazaar from Pabbi city and surrounding villages through daily and surprise visits until the night of Eid ul Fitr. She emphasized that she would not compromise on encroachments.

Following the clear instructions of the Deputy Commissioner Nowshera, she is conducting operations against encroachments in Pabbi Bazaar, Jaloza Bazaar, Taru Bazaar, Akbarpura Bazaar, and other markets of Tehsil Pabbi. The aim is to facilitate the local people, women, children, students, and people from different walks of life by providing them with a better environment.

The operation against encroachments is being carried out successfully with the full cooperation of the traffic police, TMA staff, and Pabbi police.

Women University Swabi holds seminar

F.P. Report

SWABI: The Department of Journalism at Women University Swabi has launched a series of seminars on "Identifying and Stopping Fake News", aimed at raising awareness about misinformation and its impact on society. The initiative, designed for students, faculty, and administration, seeks to equip participants with essential skills to detect and counter fake news. The first seminar in the series was conducted by Head of the Journalism

Department, Waseem Khattak, and Lecturer Mansoor Khan.

They discussed the rapid spread of misinformation, the reasons behind its prevalence, and the dangers it poses to individuals and institutions. The speakers emphasized that social media algorithms, emotional appeal, and lack of verification contribute to the widespread dissemination of fake news.

To enhance understanding, interactive activities were conducted, engaging students in practical fact-checking exercises.

Participants learned about verifying news sources, identifying sensationalist content, and using fact-checking tools like Snopes and FactCheck.org.

Waseem Khattak stressed the role of responsible journalism in combating misinformation, while Mansoor Khan highlighted the need for critical thinking and digital literacy to prevent the spread of false information. The seminar series will continue in the coming days, extending its outreach to faculty members and administrative staff.

Ramazan packages distributed in Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Sath Sab Ka Development Organization in Mardan has continued its tradition of distributing Iftar and ration packages during the blessed month of Ramadan. This effort spans from the first day of Ramadan to the thirtieth day, ensuring that deserving individuals receive necessary aid.

Chairman Taimor Khan spoke about the organization's Iftar and ration distribution initiative, stating that the main objective is to assist the underprivileged during Ramadan, allowing them to benefit from this holy month. He further shared that thou-

sands of Iftars and ration packages have been distributed this year.

Founder Dr. Aimal Khan Mohmand also spoke on this occasion, explaining that in addition to distributing rations during Ramadan, the organization also provides free medical treatment to the poor and middle-class people.

Meanwhile, Sameem Orphan Care Pakistan has initiated the distribution of food packages among the transgender community in Mardan during the holy month of Ramadan. The distribution event was held at the office of Sameem Orphan Care Pakistan, where Naina, the leader of

the transgender community, Ali Shah, and several community members participated.

During the event, Salman Shah Bukhari, Vice-Chairman of Sameem Orphan Care Pakistan, emphasized that transgender people are an essential part of our society, and it is our collective responsibility to care for them and treat them with respect. He further mentioned that Sameem Orphan Care Pakistan is actively distributing food packages in various areas of Mardan, which include essentials such as flour, rice, ghee, sugar, dates, pulses, and other food items.



GAZA CITY: A man carrying body of a Palestinian child killed in an Israeli strike on a residential building.

Trump-Putin phone call gave Kremlin leader a chance

WASHINGTON (AP): They talked about the fighting in Ukraine, of course. But the US and Russian presidents also chatted about improving relations between Washington and Moscow, peace in the Middle East, global security and even hockey games.

During the more than two-hour chat - the longest such call between the countries' leaders in years --- Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin covered a range of topics. And importantly for Putin, the conversation gave him a chance to pivot away from the war in Ukraine and engage more broadly on global issues, drawing a line under Washington's past efforts to cast him as an international pariah. Phone call appeared to reflect both leaders' interest in mending the US-Russian ties that have plummeted to their lowest point since the Cold War amid the 3-year-old conflict in Ukraine. The Kremlin and the state-controlled Russian media praised it as a long-sought launch of an equal dialogue between the two nuclear superpowers.

While both the White House and the Kremlin cast the discussion as a key step toward peace in Ukraine, Putin's uncompromising demands are making a truce elusive. Seeking to cultivate warm ties with Washington, Putin accepted a halt on strikes on energy infrastructure while avoiding an outright rejection of Trump's 30-day ceasefire. The Kremlin leader linked it to a halt in Western arms supplies and a freeze on Kyiv's mobilization effort -- conditions that

Ukraine and its allies firmly reject.

Unlike Kyiv, which accepted Trump's ceasefire offer amid a series of battlefield setbacks, Putin appears to have little interest in a quick cessation of hostilities, with Russian forces firmly holding the initiative on the battlefield. Ukraine is on the verge of completely losing its foothold in Russia's Kursk region, where its forces are clinging to a sliver of land along the border after their surprise incursion in August 2024. Russia's offensive shattered Kyiv's hopes of exchanging its gains in Kursk for some of the territory Moscow captured elsewhere in Ukraine.

Putin said Ukrainian forces that remain in Kursk are surrounded - a claim echoed by Trump - even though Kyiv denied its soldiers are encircled. Ukrainian officials fear that Russia could try to attack the nearby Sumy region that borders Kursk. At the same time, the Russian army is pressing offensives in several sectors of the Donetsk region in eastern Ukraine.

By making the ceasefire conditional on a freeze of arms supplies to Ukraine and its mobilization effort, Putin is trying to cement Russian gains and force Kyiv to cave in to Moscow's demands. He wants Ukraine to withdraw its forces from the four regions that Russia illegally annexed but never fully captured, renounce its bid to join NATO, and radically trim its military. Putin's acceptance of a halt on strikes on Ukraine's energy facilities has allowed Trump to claim at least par-

tial success for his peacemaking effort, but the move wasn't a major concession by Moscow, given the massive damage to Ukraine's power grid from years of attacks.

While seeking to expand his military gains in Ukraine to dictate peace terms, Putin also used the call to shift the discussion away from a ceasefire to other global issues. He appeared to win Trump's interest. The White House said in its readout of the call that the leaders "spoke broadly about the Middle East as a region of potential cooperation to prevent future conflicts," discussed the need to stop proliferation of strategic weapons and "agreed that a future with an improved bilateral relationship between the United States and Russia has huge upside."

"This includes enormous economic deals and geopolitical stability when peace has been achieved," it said. US special envoy Steve Witkoff, who flew to Moscow last week to meet with Putin, praised both leaders and offered optimism the Kremlin was moving toward a broader truce.

"I would commend President Putin for all he did today on that call to move his country close to a final peace deal," Witkoff told the Fox News Channel. "And I would give all the credit to President Trump. ... I can't overstate how compelling he was on this call." Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov underlined that Putin and Trump "understand each other well, trust each other and intend to move gradually toward normalization of Russian-US relations."

Australia raises concerns with China

SYDNEY (Reuters): Australia Foreign Minister Penny Wong said she had raised with China concerns over anonymous letters sent to Australians offering a reward for information on the whereabouts of an Australian-based Hong Kong dissident.

Some residents in Melbourne received the letters late last week offering HKD\$1 million (\$130,000) for information about Kevin Yam, an Australian citizen and Hong Kong pro-democracy activist wanted by Hong Kong authorities for his role in organising anti-government protests in 2019. "The Australian government does not accept other governments interfering with our citizens, making anybody feel unsafe," Wong told a news conference.

Local media reported that the letters were mailed from Hong Kong and contained contact details for the Hong Kong police. However, it was not clear who sent the letters, and there was no evidence that Beijing or Hong Kong were involved, said Wong, but added she had raised the issue with both. "I'll await whatever investigations come to light but I have made my view about Australians being targeted by the Hong Kong authorities very clear to both Hong Kong and to China," she said, when asked if she believed the governments of Hong Kong or China were involved in the letters.

Spokespeople for China's embassy in Canberra and the Hong Kong government did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Yam returned to Australia in 2022 after two decades in Hong Kong, after the territory cracked down on pro-democracy protests that brought the financial centre to a standstill in 2019 and 2020. He is one of eight foreign-based activists wanted by Hong Kong for their role in organising the protests against new laws that granted the Hong Kong government wide-ranging extrajudicial powers. "I will continue to live my everyday life," Yam said in a post on X in response to the letters. "I will not voluntarily return to Hong Kong before it is free."

Heavy rains hit Spain

MADRID (Reuters): Heavy rains hit Spain for a third week in a row, with at least two people missing and hundreds evacuated in the southern region of Andalusia, where several rivers had overflowed, or were at risk of doing so.

Spaniards are still on edge after torrential rains four months ago in the eastern Valencia region led to the country's deadliest natural disaster in decades. Many blamed local and national officials for being too late in sending emergency alerts. The regional leader of Andalusia, Juan Manuel Moreno, urged citizens to exercise extreme caution.

"Please be very careful, even if the rain eases. Crossing a stream is highly dangerous," Moreno said after two people went missing in the regional capital, Seville. Authorities believe the couple tried to cross a ravine and may have been swept away. Their empty car was found overturned nearby.

Andalusian authorities said a total of 368 families were evacuated as a preventive measure in the province of Malaga. In one of the towns, Cartama, around 20 people and their pets were rescued from their flooded homes. In Aguilas, a coastal Mediterranean town in Murcia, emergency services rescued nine people who were trapped inside their cars in a ravine. The occupants of several boats were also helped to safety in the same area. The unusual string of back-to-back storms has helped the country - whose generally sunny weather is a major draw for tourists - put an end to a long-term drought, with many dams now having water released to prevent them from overflowing.

After two weeks of rains, Spanish reservoirs are at 65.6% of their capacity, above the 10-year-average, with a 5% increase in the last week alone.

Trump admn reinstating almost 25,000 fired workers

WASHINGTON (Reuters): President Donald Trump's administration in court filings has for the first time acknowledged it fired nearly 25,000 recently hired workers, and said federal agencies were working to bring all of them back after a judge ruled their terminations were likely illegal.

The filings made in Baltimore, Maryland, federal court included statements from officials at 18 agencies, all of whom said the reinstated probationary workers were being placed on administrative leave at least temporarily.

The mass firings, part of Trump's broader purge of the federal workforce, were widely reported, but the court filings are the administration's first full accounting of the terminations. Most of the agencies said they had fired a few hundred workers. The Treasury Department terminated about 7,600 people, the Department of Agriculture about 5,700 and the Department of Health and Human Services more than 3,200, according to the filings.

On March 13, US District Judge James Bredar said the mass firings of probationary workers that began last month were illegal, and ordered the workers reinstated pending further litigation. The ruling did not block the agencies from firing workers, but took issue with the manner in which the mass firings were conducted. The court said agencies should have followed rules for conducting mass layoffs.

Probationary workers typically have less than one year of service in their current roles, though some are longtime federal employees. Bredar, in a brief order, said it appeared the agencies "have made

meaningful progress toward compliance" with his ruling. He ordered the agencies to update him on progress in reinstating workers, and said he expected "substantial compliance."

Bredar's ruling came in a lawsuit by 19 Democrat-led states and Washington, D.C., who said the mass firings would trigger a spike in unemployment claims and greater demand for social services provided by states. The office of Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown, which is spearheading the lawsuit, said it was reviewing the filings. The Trump administration has appealed Bredar's decision and asked a Richmond, Virginia-based appeals court to pause the ruling pending the outcome of the case.

Former probationary workers at the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services, the Internal Revenue Service, and the General Services Administration, told Reuters they had received emails saying they were being reinstated on full pay, but placed on administrative leave. One probationary worker who had been reinstated at the GSA, which oversees government real estate, said he still expects to be ultimately fired, but being back on pay and benefits is a short-term reprieve. "My family has health insurance and gives me a little bit of runway to find what's next," he said. Hours before Bredar issued his March 13 ruling, a federal judge in San Francisco had ordered that probationary workers be reinstated at six agencies, including five also covered by Bredar's order and the US Department of Defense. The administration has also appealed that

decision.

That judge, US District Judge William Alsup, in an order criticized the administration's decision to place probationary employees on administrative leave rather than send them back to work. He said that did not comply with his order to reinstate the workers because it would not restore the government services his order intended. The US Department of Justice, in a filing in response to Alsup, said placing workers on leave was the first in a series of steps toward fully reinstating them and "administrative leave is not being used to skirt the requirement of reinstatement." In the filings in Baltimore, agency officials said they had either reinstated all of the fired employees or were working to do so. They said bringing back large numbers of workers had caused confusion and turmoil.

The officials also noted that an appeals court ruling reversing Bredar's order would allow agencies to again fire the workers, subjecting them to multiple changes in their employment status in a matter of weeks. "The tremendous uncertainty associated with this confusion and these administrative burdens impede supervisors from appropriately managing their workforce," Mark Green, deputy assistant secretary at the US Department of the Interior, wrote in one of the filings. "Work schedules and assignments are effectively being tied to hearing and briefing schedules set by the courts." Bredar has scheduled a hearing for March 26 on whether to keep his ruling in place pending the outcome of the lawsuit, which could take months or longer to resolve.

EU wants to break its security dependency on US

BRUSSELS (AP): The European Union announced a new drive to break its security dependency on the United States, with a focus on buying more defense equipment in Europe. The EU's executive branch unveiled its "Readiness 2030" security strategy with the threat of Russian aggression at the forefront of concerns.

NATO intelligence estimates suggest that Russia could be capable of launching an attack in Europe again in three to five years. Last month, the Trump administration signaled that US security priorities lay elsewhere - on its own borders and in Asia - and that Europeans would have to fend for themselves and Ukraine in the future. That was as Europe's biggest land war in decades entered its fourth year.

Under the strategy, member countries will be urged to buy much of their military equipment in Europe, working mostly with European suppliers - in some cases with EU help to cut prices and speed up orders. They should only purchase equipment from abroad when costs, performance or supply delays make it preferable.

In recent years, the 27 EU nations have placed about two-thirds of their orders with US defense companies. To qualify for new loans, they would have to buy at least 65% of equipment from suppliers in the EU, Norway or Ukraine. "The security architecture that we relied on can no longer be taken for granted," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. "We must buy more European. Because that means strengthening the European defense, technological and industrial base. That means stimulating innovation. And that means creating an EU-wide market for defense equipment," she added.

The strategy resembles the RepowerEU scheme that the commission proposed in 2022 to wean the bloc off Russian natural gas after President Vladimir Putin ordered his forces into Ukraine and used energy as a weapon to try to undermine EU support for Kyiv. That strategy saw the EU's dependence on Russian gas imports fall from 45% in 2021 to 15% in 2023.

The new blueprint was unveiled on the eve of a summit of EU government leaders. At emergency talks on March 6, they signed off on proposals to ease budget restrictions and create a 150-billion-euro (\$164 billion) loan plan for defense

companies. To qualify for new loans, they would have to buy at least 65% of equipment from suppliers in the EU, Norway or Ukraine.

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projects. Defense firms in the US, U.K., and Turkey would be excluded from the loan plan unless those governments sign security agreements with the EU. France has pushed the "buy European" approach, but countries like Poland and the Netherlands want to buy US equipment.

EU nations are also encouraged to boost security ties with NATO allies that are not members of the EU, including Britain, Canada, Norway, Australia, Japan, South Korea and India. The strategy notes that while the United States remains a key Western ally, it has been clear "that it believes it is over-committed in Europe and needs to rebalance, reducing its historical role as a primary security guarantor."

Andrius Kubilius, the EU's recently appointed and first-ever defense commissioner, warned that "450 million European Union citizens should not have to depend on 340 million Americans to defend ourselves." Spending priorities for joint purchase would be air and missile defense systems, artillery, ammunition, drones, equipment for use in cyber and electronic warfare, and "strategic enablers" like air-to-air refueling and land border security installations.

Taiwan practices to mobilise troops fast

TAIPEI (Reuters): Taiwan is strengthening its ability to move troops swiftly in case China suddenly turns one of its frequent drills around the island into an attack, Defence Minister Wellington Koo said, amid a heightened military threat from Beijing.

A five-day "rapid response exercise" began to train the forces of democratically-governed Taiwan to quickly mobilise against any attack by China or grey-zone harassment designed to test and exhaust Taiwan's armed forces.

The start of the exercise coincided with China's dispatch of 59 military planes and other warships to areas

near Taiwan on the grounds that it was "punishment" for Taiwan President Lai Ching-te's continued promotion of "separatism". "For the People's Liberation Army, turning drills into an attack doesn't take as much time as we imagined in the past," Koo told parliament in answer to lawmakers' questions.

"(We) must be able to gather crucial signs of alerts and prepare for the worst from the enemy." The ministry's rapid-response exercise would be based on its intelligence and threat assessments, Koo added. "Without such vigilance, if something really happens, (we) will not be ready for combat."

In the drills, troops set up anti-landing barriers near a key port just outside Taiwan's capital of Taipei, and deployed surface-to-air missile systems at strategic sites, video from the defence ministry showed. Taiwan's security officials have said China was trying to normalise drills near Taiwan, carrying out what it calls "joint combat readiness patrols" using warplanes and navy vessels every seven to 10 days on average. China, which claims Taiwan as its own territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring the island under its control, has stepped up military and political pressure on Taiwan in recent years.

Pro-Kurdish party says Turkey vague on peace steps after PKK pledge

ANKARA (Reuters): Turkey's pro-Kurdish party said that President Tayyip Erdogan's ruling alliance had offered no clear steps during closed-door talks meant to advance a peace process after Kurdish militants pledged to disarm.

In an interview, Gulistan Kilic Kocogit, the DEM Party's deputy parliamentary group chair, said government officials outlined their stance in broad terms but remained vague on addressing the party's democratic demands. Her comments came after DEM, Turkey's third-largest party, met Erdogan's ruling AK Party (AKP) and separately its nationalist ally MHP.

The talks sought to advance steps toward ending a more than 40-year conflict between the state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which last month declared a ceasefire in response to jailed leader Abdullah Ocalan's call for

disarmament. Though the PKK pledge marks a big step toward ending an insurgency that has left more than 40,000 dead, mostly militants, the government has said the group must act first before any discussions of bolstering Kurdish rights. "They used phrases like 'a terror-free Turkey' and 'the country must swiftly rid itself of this issue,' they suggested that if weapons are silenced and the PKK dissolves, the democratic space in Turkey will expand," Kocogit said.

"But there was no specific roadmap or clear commitment on what steps they are willing to take," she told Reuters. The government, DEM and MHP support the peace call, which gives Erdogan a historic opportunity to bring security and development to southeast Turkey and has broad implications for neighbouring Syria and Iraq, where the PKK is

now based. But Erdogan has also warned that cross-border military operations against the PKK - which Turkey and its Western allies deem a terrorist group - would resume if promises were not kept.

Past peace efforts have faltered, most notably a 2013-2015 ceasefire that collapsed into renewed violence. The latest discussions come as, in Syria, Kurdish forces and the administration in Damascus are seeking to consolidate. The DEM Party played a key role facilitating the call from Ocalan, who is serving a life sentence on an island prison and has been barred from legal visits for years. Kocogit said DEM conveyed its priorities to authorities, including calls for reforms to anti-terror law, penal code, and judicial practices, as well as an end to the practice of appointing trustees to replace elected opposition

mayors. She added that confidence-building steps, such as halting military operations and improving Ocalan's prison conditions, were essential.

"The government does not see this as a matter of political momentum," she said, and suggested it will consider steps only after the PKK acts. She said talks in Ankara will continue despite the lack of timeline so far. Separately, in northern Iraq, the PKK is expected to hold a congress meeting in coming weeks or months to vote on disarmament. After attending the meetings with DEM in parliament, AKP

spokesman Omer Celik said the ruling party is "not engaging in a negotiation or a give-and-take," adding it has previously discussed raising Turkey's democratization standards. "Our priority in this matter is for the PKK to completely lay down its arms," he told reporters.

Woman who sought protection from deportation detained

DENVER (AP): A woman who gained prominence after she took refuge in churches in Colorado to avoid deportation during the first Trump administration has been detained, immigration advocates said. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security did not immediately respond to requests for comment on whether Jeanette Vizguerra had been taken into custody.

Vizguerra, a mother of four, was arrested at a Denver-area Target store where she worked, said Jordan Garcia of the American Friends Service Committee, who has been in contact with Vizguerra's lawyer and family. Vizguerra has been trying to gain a visa given to

crime victims that allows them to remain in the United States since she left sanctuary in churches in 2020, Garcia said.

Denver Mayor Mike Johnston blasted the Trump administration for the reported arrest of Vizguerra, an immigration and labor activist. Johnston, who defended Denver's sanctuary city policies in Congress earlier this month, called on people to demand that ICE release Vizguerra and give her due process rights. "This is not immigration enforcement intended to keep our country safe. This is Putin-style persecution of political dissidents," he said in a statement. News of Vizguerra's detention prompted a protest outside an ICE detention center in the Denver suburb of Aurora,

where her family said she is being held. Buses left the facility in the morning, raising fears that she would be deported, but her family said Vizguerra was still there later in the day.

"We hope ICE will work with her attorney to release her immediately," the family said in a statement included in an update from the American Friends Service Committee. Vizguerra's lawyers said ICE is attempting to remove her based on an order that was never valid. Petitions challenging her detention have been filed in both Denver's federal court and the 10th US Circuit Court of Appeals. "If ICE proceeds with trying to remove her without legal authority, it sends a chilling message about the agency's disregard for due process

and the rule of law," one of the attorneys, Laura Lichter, said in a statement.

Vizguerra, who came to Colorado in 1997 from Mexico City, has been fighting deportation since 2009 after she was pulled over in suburban Denver and found to have a fraudulent Social Security card with her own name and birth date but someone else's actual number, according to a 2019 lawsuit she brought against ICE. Vizguerra did not know the number belonged to someone else at the time, it said. The lawsuit, which she later dropped, alleged that ICE did not have a valid order to deport her after she pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor count in that case because it says she voided it by agreeing to self-deport to Mexico.

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

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Erdogan's rival Imamoglu held on charges of corruption

ISTANBUL Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu has been detained on charges of corruption, and it has unleashed protests in the city. He is seen as the chief rival of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Their rivalry has been brewing for decades now.

Imamoglu supporters say that the charges are politically motivated. In an interesting parallel, Imamoglu's political career is resembling that of Erdogan, who gained national prominence as mayor of Istanbul before becoming the president.

Like Erdogan, Imamoglu also comes from the Black Sea region of Turkey. Imamoglu represents the secularist Republican People's Party (CHP), which is opposed to the religion-based politics of Erdogan and his Welfare and Justice Party (AKP), and he is set to challenge Erdogan in the presidential election in 2028.

But Imamoglu faces many cases, including one saying that his business administration degree from Istanbul University is forged. The case is pending and if it is upheld, then Imamoglu would be disqualified from the presidential contest.

Erdogan has now been in power for more than two decades and the opposition parties have not been able to put up a candidate who can challenge him at the national level. This is the first time in many years that Imamoglu has emerged as a leader who could rival Erdogan's popularity.

Imamoglu's first electoral victory as mayor of Istanbul was declared invalid in 2019, but he won the re-election with a greater margin than in the first round. He was re-elected mayor of Istanbul again in 2024. And his base is seen to be lying beyond the secular base and in the hinterland as well, which is also the base of Erdogan.

Imamoglu's challenge is very clearly stated. He is countering the dominance of Erdogan in Turkish politics. The alternative that Imamoglu is offering is, in his own words, "It is consigning a mentality to history. If it is consigned to history, democracy will revive, and law and justice will recover."

This is a general challenge couched in language of political ideas and rhetoric. Whether he will make the dent in Erdogan's base is to be seen, but he emerges as a clear challenger to whom the general public can relate.

Erdogan has been in an unchallenged position in Turkish politics for more than 20 years, and it is not surprising that there is a certain falling off in his popularity after these many years which was reflected in a narrow margin of his victory in the presidential election the last time round.

Imamoglu appears to be the man who is in a position to pick up the baton of leadership in Turkey. Of course, it is too early to say whether Imamoglu can pull off the challenge. But the fact that there has emerged a challenger to Erdogan on the political horizon seems to be a significant development, and a natural one as well.

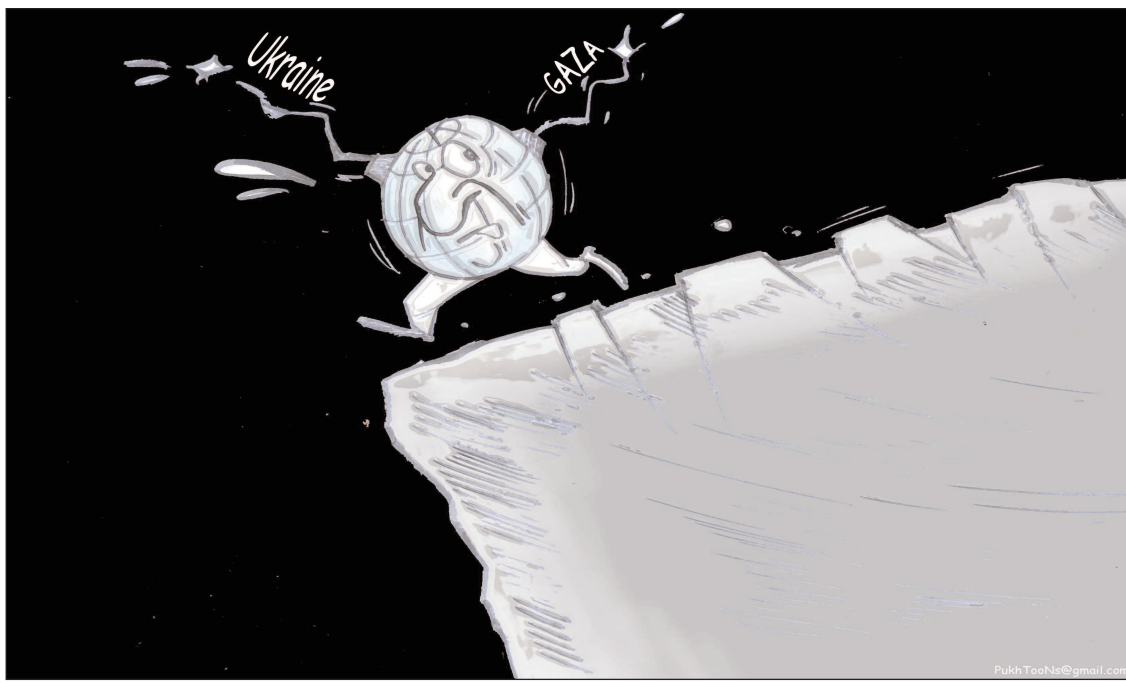
For more than 20 years before the emergence of Erdogan on the Turkish political stage, the secular parties backed by the military upheld the secular ideology of Atatürk. But it got overturned by Erdogan and his party, the AKP.

Perhaps, now the time has come to challenge the ideology of Erdogan and his party of pushing religion in politics which does not benefit people in any way – economically, socially or culturally.

In the new century, people are looking to new horizons. So the challenge of Imamoglu to Erdogan is a sign of the times. Even if Imamoglu fails, the challenge to Erdogan remains. And that is how nations and democracies go forward. They do not get stuck with parties, ideologies or personalities. So, Turkey is on the cusp of political change.

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Finding Light in Darkness

Laylat al-Qadr and the Muslim World

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

AS the blessed month of Ramadan nears its culmination, we enter its most sacred phase-the last ten nights. Within these nights lies one of the greatest gifts ever bestowed upon humanity, Laylat al-Qadr, the Night of Decree. This single night is better than a thousand months, a night in which destinies are rewritten, sins are forgiven, and divine mercy descends upon those who seek it with sincerity. The Quran itself was revealed in this sacred moment, illuminating the hearts of believers with divine wisdom and guidance. Allah, in His infinite mercy, concealed the exact night to encourage ceaseless devotion, so that we may immerse ourselves in supplication, seeking His forgiveness and pleasure.

The virtues of Laylat al-Qadr are immense. The Holy Quran declares: "Indeed, We sent the Quran down during the Night of Decree. And what can make you know what is the Night of Decree? The Night of Decree is better than a thousand months. The angels and the Spirit descend therein by permission of their Lord for every matter. Peace it is until the emergence of dawn" (Surah Al-Qadr 97:1-5). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized its significance, urging his followers to seek it in the

odd nights of the last ten days. He assured that whoever stands in prayer on this night with faith and expectation of reward, all past sins would be forgiven.

For Muslims, the significance of this night extends beyond personal devotion-it serves as a moment of collective introspection. It was on the 27th night of Ramadan in 1947 that the foundations of Pakistan were laid, a nation envisioned as a beacon of Islamic justice and sovereignty. Today, as we reflect on that historic moment, we must confront the realities that surround us. The Ummah, including Pakistan, is gripped by trials that test our resilience. From economic instability to political strife, from external aggression to internal discord, the suffering of Muslims worldwide has reached an alarming threshold. In Gaza, Kashmir, and various parts of the world, oppression has become an unending narrative. The very ideals for which Pakistan was established-justice, unity, and faith-seem to be fading amidst the turbulence of modern challenges.

The last ten nights of Ramadan present a golden opportunity for us to turn back to our Creator, acknowledging our shortcomings and beseeching His mercy. As individuals and as a nation, we must

ask ourselves: have we upheld the principles that make us worthy of divine blessings? Have we stood firm in our faith, or have we allowed materialism, corruption, and division to erode our unity? The Quran reminds us: "Indeed, Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves" (Surah Ar-Ra'd 13:11). This verse is a wake-up call. Change begins within-through sincere repentance, through rekindling our spiritual bond with Allah, and through a commitment to justice and righteousness.

To truly seek Laylat al-Qadr, we must immerse ourselves in prayer, not just for our personal salvation but for the redemption of the Muslim Ummah. It is a night of transformation, where the sincerity of our supplications can alter the course of our destiny. This is the time to raise our hands in du'a, pleading for the alleviation of the trials that afflict us. It is a time to ask Allah for a leadership that upholds the values of justice and integrity, for the strength to resist oppression, and for the wisdom to navigate the challenges ahead with faith and patience.

Yet, seeking this night is not merely about prayers and supplications. It is about embodying the spirit of Ramadan-self-purifica-

tion, generosity, and social responsibility. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was at his most charitable during Ramadan, and we too must extend our hands to those in need. In a world where suffering has become normalized, where wealth disparity widens, and where oppression persists, our faith demands action. It demands that we stand against injustice, that we care for the underprivileged, and that we uphold the rights of the oppressed. Seeking Laylat al-Qadr should inspire us to be catalysts for change, to strive for a society that mirrors the ideals of Islam.

The night of power is not simply a night-it is a philosophy, a movement, a revolution of the soul. It is a divine reminder that no matter how dark the times, light will emerge for those who seek it. As Pakistan and the Muslim world navigate uncertainty, this night serves as a beacon of hope, a moment to reset our moral compass, and to reaffirm our faith in Allah's promise. Let us not let this blessed opportunity slip away. Let us seek Laylat al-Qadr with the sincerity of our hearts, praying not only for ourselves but for the revival of the entire Ummah. May Allah grant us the wisdom to find this night, the strength to transform our lives, and the mercy to relieve the suffering of Muslims worldwide. Ameen.

How forests help feed the world

Qu Dongyu

OUR forests play a vital role in feeding the world. From wild foods to fresh water and from shelter to energy, forests sustain billions of people, as well as great biodiversity.

Yet we continue to lose them at an alarming rate through deforestation and land degradation. Between 2015 and 2020, more than 10 million hectares of forest were lost each year — an area roughly the size of the Republic of Korea. Meanwhile, intensifying wildfires and pest outbreaks are further threatening these valuable ecosystems.

Studies have shown that a major underlying driver of deforestation is the need to meet the demands of a growing global population. As we mark International Day of Forests on Friday with the theme "Forests and Foods," we must urgently address the question of how we can ensure food security for all, while protecting the forests that are so fundamental to our agrifood systems.

The answer lies in embracing solutions that combine both agriculture and forests.

We can make landscapes more productive through sustainable intensification, integrated production systems and circular economies. By building on both innovation and traditional knowledge, we can limit the expansion of arable land, while producing the food we need.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN's "Action Against Desertification" program has been working in Africa's Sahel region to ensure that the traditional knowledge and interests of rural communities are at the heart of efforts to restore degraded lands. This has encouraged the selection and planting of

many wild food species rich in micronutrients. As a result, not only have regreening and growth rates of plants improved, but food insecurity has also declined.

In Colombia, where indigenous peoples and local communities manage 53 percent of land and forests, a new community forest management model is being deployed to help halt deforestation and improve coordination between agriculture and forestry. By establishing nurseries, agroforestry systems and restoration actions, while also promoting financial incentives and the use of timber and non-timber forest products, the new model has revitalized community forest enterprises and increased market access, improving the quality of life for many people in rural areas.

In Vanuatu, an innovative project is improving harvests in traditional water gardens by incorporating new technologies, practices and plant varieties for sustainable water and forest management in an area where the deterioration of forests had reduced water capacity. This has helped curb water waste and increase overall water availability, contributing to recharging water sources for taro, an important staple crop for local diets and food security for the country.

In Tunisia, a project jointly implemented by the FAO and partners has focused on reseeded degraded land with a native legume that livestock can graze on, while regenerating local shrubs and trees such as saltbush, carob, medic tree and cactus pear, which support livelihoods while providing shade for crops and additional fodder. As a result, the cost of feeding livestock on the restored site

has halved.

These examples show how the integration of forests, bushes and grasslands with new crops can enhance food production.

Forests provide habitat for pollinators and are home to most of the world's terrestrial biodiversity, necessary both to increasing food production and improving sustainability.

Forests nourish soil, regulate temperature and offer sustenance and shade for livestock. They can act as natural barriers against wind for crops and deliver fresh water to more than 85 percent of the world's major cities.

Forests are nature's grocery stores, providing a direct source of vegetables, fruits, seeds, roots, tubers, mushrooms, honey, natural herbs and protein-rich wild meat for rural communities and functional foods in urban areas. This is even more important during times of crisis, when forests serve as an emergency food security net.

Agroforestry — incorporating trees into farming — can boost ecosystems, increase crop resilience, restore degraded land and enhance food production and food diversity, as well as increasing farmer incomes.

Silvopastoral systems, which combine tree cultivation and restoration with livestock grazing and fodder cropping, are also important. At the same time, more efforts must be made to restore more than 2 billion hectares of land estimated to be degraded worldwide. The good news is that some 1.5 billion hectares of degraded land are suitable for mosaic restoration, which combines forests and trees with agriculture.

A further 1 billion

hectares of croplands on previous forestlands would benefit from strategic additions of trees and bushes to enrich both agricultural productivity and ecosystem services.

The path forward requires policy changes that reflect the interdependence of agriculture and forests. While many countries have begun integrating agroforestry into their national land-use plans, we need a broader commitment to policies that view forests as essential to food security and food diversity.

This extends to private sector commitments to zero deforestation in agricultural value chains and ensuring that those commitments translate to measurable actions.

Finally, educating consumers on healthier diets and healthy life from sustainable agrifood systems and reducing food loss and waste are also key.

Forests are key to making global agrifood systems more efficient, more inclusive, more resilient and more sustainable.

When forests themselves, as a big part of agrifood systems, are deemed indispensable to human well-being, then incentives to care for them will grow. We need to stress forests as a big bridge to integrate implementation under the guidance of the "Four Betters" — better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life — leaving no one behind.

Conserving and sustainably managing and using forests is not just an environmental imperative, it is a crucial strategy for food security and food diversity. Without this, meeting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals — ending hunger and poverty and restoring ecosystems — becomes more elusive.

The crossroads of our time A call for integral ecology, social justice and sustainable transformation

Baseer Ali Rahman Khan

WE happen to be at a critical juncture in human history, one marked by intricate challenges that demand our immediate and undivided attention. The ongoing crisis occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic has lime-lighted an even more pressing and far-reaching quandary: the confluence of social and environmental upheavals. This moment mandates us all to make a decisive choice-a choice between sustained neglect and genuine transformation. It is a pick between perpetuating systemic injustices and environmental deterioration or actively engaging in a collaborative effort to reshape our shared trajectory for the amelioration of all and sundry around.

Scientific evidence continues to highlight, with increasing precision, the urgent need for decisive action if we are to ward off the most severe and catastrophic consequences of climate change. This is not a matter of speculation or exaggeration, but an undeniable reality backed by rigorous research. If we are to keep even a glimmer of hope in mitigating these approaching catastrophes, we must act with tenacious immediacy. Our conscience commands that we cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of the most vulnerable, nor can we ignore the ever-looming economic disparities and amplifying social injustices that pervade our world. Moreover, the very fabric of economic systems must be revisited; it will not suffice to define economies merely in terms of production and distribution. Rather, economies must have in its fold considerations of environmental sustainability and human worth, ensuring that economic mechanisms serve as tools of creativity, inclusion, and ethical progress. This necessary transformation is not an intangible notion but a journey-one that requires both individual and collective commitment. This is not merely a matter of discourse; it is a call to action that demands tangible and urgent measures. No one emerges unscathed from a crisis; history has demonstrated time and again that crises are triggers for transformation. This particular crisis will demand time, persistent effort and unwavering perseverance. It is incumbent upon us to take cumulative steps, persuading skeptics, innovating solutions, and strictly implementing them. The overarching objective is unequivocal: within the coming decade, we must establish a sustainable framework that meets the needs of the present while safeguarding the rights and opportunities of future generations.

In this spirit, I extend a genuine invitation to all individuals, irrespective of faith, ideology, or social standing, to embark upon this journey. Whether as individuals, families, faith communities, associations, businesses or institutions, each entity has the potential to make a meaningful and substantive contribution. Pope Francis in his encyclical Laudato Si' (an encyclical on environmental issues, climate change, and social justice), articulated the concept of integral ecology, advocating for a holistic response to the dual outrages of our time: the cries of the Earth and the cries of the poor. Integral ecology necessitates a broader perspective on life itself, rooted in the fundamental recognition that all aspects of our world are interwoven. The COVID-19 pandemic has bolstered this reality, underscoring our deep interdependence with one another and with our planet. From this realization emerges the imperative to redefine progress, moving beyond purely economic and technological considerations to incorporate ethical, social, and educational dimensions.

To make this transformation happen, three concrete courses of action are proposed that must serve as guiding principles in our collective pursuit of integral ecology:

1. Education for Environmental Responsibility: First and foremost, there is an urgent need to foster education at all levels that emphasizes environmental oversight and a deep understanding of the inherent connection between environmental crises and human well-being. Education must cater for both scientific data and an ethical framework to cultivate

a sense of collective responsibility toward our mutual habitat. It is encouraging to observe that many young individuals are already demonstrating an awakened ecological and social consciousness, often leading the fight for environmental justice. This growing movement must be nurtured, expanded, and institutionalized.

2. Prioritization of Water and Food Security: Secondly, we must acknowledge that access to clean and drinkable water constitutes a universal human right which is not merely a matter of convenience rather a prerequisite for human survival and the foundation for the exercise of all other rights and responsibilities. In the same strain, ensuring adequate nutrition for all and sundry should be the primary goal of food production and distribution systems. Agricultural practices must uphold sustainability, ensuring that methods of cultivation preclude irreversible harm upon our planet.

3. A Just and Swift Energy Transition: Lastly, the global community must set out on an transition from fossil fuels to sustainable energy sources as an alternative to brace for the future challenges. Scientific projections delineate that we have fewer than 30 years to affect a drastic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to avoid the worst outcomes of climate change. This transition must be both expeditious and equitable, considering the welfare of marginalized populations, local communities, and those employed in the energy sector. This transformation could only be possible through responsible investment. Enterprises must commit to the principles of integral ecology, ensuring that investments align with environmental sustainability and social justice. Businesses that fail to meet these fundamental ethical and ecological standards must not be extended any financial support, while those demonstrating a genuine commitment on their part to sustainability should be supported and incentivized. Legislative frameworks should be revisited and restructured to embed sustainability, equity, and the common good as the pivotal pillars of economic and corporate activity.

Many organizations, both religious and secular, have already assumed the mantle of responsibility in these efforts. However, we must realise that the call to action extends beyond the select groups and institutions-it is a universal mandate that must be embraced by all with responsibility. Our Earth is not an inexhaustible resource to be exploited without restraint; it is a living entity that must be nurtured, cultivated and protected. To persist in draining its resources with irresponsible abandon is to jeopardize our collective future. The preservation of our planet is not merely an environmental necessity but a fundamental human right.

These three proposals are but components of a broader, integrated strategy that must be pursued with conviction to establish durable solutions to our current crises. The prevailing economic paradigm is ostensibly unsustainable, necessitating a fundamental reassessment of production and consumption patterns, the culture of disposability, the prevalence of short-term economic gains, the exploitation of marginalized communities, and the profound inequities entrenched within our global systems. Integral ecology demands that we revisit our relationship with nature, fostering an economy that prioritizes human well-being and the protection of our planet over heedless exploitation.

Moreover, the transformation we seek is inherently political in nature. Politics, when exercised as an expression of true charity, serves as an instrument for the common good. Love, if pursued with altruism, transcends personal relationships; it extends into the public sphere, encompassing all the people and the natural world alike.

Thus, every individual should embark upon this shared journey of renewal. The urgency of this moment cannot be overstated. Our collective response must be immediate, for the future is not constructed in isolation but forged in solidarity and harmony. Today, not tomorrow, is the time to act.

The writer is a PMS BS-19 officer from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Nowruz a time of unity and hope, resilience and renewal

NOWRUZ, which means “new day” in Persian, is one of the oldest and most widely celebrated festivals in the world. Marking the arrival of spring and the beginning of the Persian New Year, this ancient tradition is observed by more than 300 million people across countries including Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkiye and Uzbekistan.

For Iranians, Nowruz is more than just a holiday, it is a deeply embedded cultural and social event that represents renewal, hope and the triumph of light over darkness. Despite economic hardships and political tensions, Nowruz remains a time for reflection, family gatherings and the preservation of centuries-old customs. However, this year, as inflation soars and geopolitical conflicts intensify, many Iranians are finding it increasingly difficult to celebrate in the way they once did.

Nowruz dates back more than 3,000 years, with its origins linked to Zoroastrianism, one of the world’s oldest known religions. In Zoroastrian belief, the transition from winter to spring is seen as a divine moment of balance and renewal; a time when nature comes back to life and the forces of light overcome darkness. Over the centuries, Nowruz transcended religious boundaries and became a secular celebration embraced by various cultures, evolving into a major festival that continues to be cherished today.

The festival takes place on the vernal equinox, the precise moment when day and night are of equal length, symbolizing harmony and new beginnings. This alignment of celestial forces was historically seen as a sign of cosmic order, reinforcing the belief that Nowruz

represents not only the rebirth of nature but also a fresh start for individuals, families and societies.

In addition, Nowruz is a time of profound social significance, as it fosters connections among families, friends and communities. It is a period when people set aside their daily struggles and come together to celebrate unity

••••• One of the most cherished customs is “khane takani,” which literally means “shaking the house.” This tradition involves deep-cleaning homes, washing carpets, replacing old items and organizing belongings. Beyond its practical purpose, this custom symbolizes a fresh start, the removal of past negativity and the welcoming of a prosperous year ahead. The days leading up to Nowruz are also filled with social visits, with people reconnecting with relatives, neighbors and friends. It is customary for younger members of the family to visit their elders, offering respect and receiving blessings for the new year. Gift-giving, particularly “eidi” — money given to children as a symbol of prosperity — is another integral part of the celebration. So, Nowruz serves as a powerful social equalizer, as people from all walks of life participate in the festivities regardless of economic status, religion or ethnicity. Whether rich or poor, young or old, everyone embraces the spirit of renewal and hope. Nowruz is not confined to Iran. It is celebrated across a vast geographical region, each country adding its own unique customs while preserving the core essence of the festival. In Afghanistan, for example, the beginning of Nowruz is marked by the “Guli Surkh” (red flower) festival, involving outdoor celebrations and poetry readings. In Central Asia, horse racing and traditional games accompany the holiday, while in parts of the Caucasus, large public feasts are held. Music, dance and poetry play an essential role in Nowruz festivities. In Iran, “ta’zieh” (passion plays) and “naqqali” (traditional storytelling) bring centuries-old narratives to life, reflecting themes of heroism, love and moral lessons. The recitation of Persian poetry, particularly from the works of Hafez and Rumi, is also a cherished part of Nowruz gatherings. Despite regional differences, the underlying themes of Nowruz — renewal, gratitude and unity — remain universal. It is one of the few celebrations that transcends political and religious divisions, uniting millions across different backgrounds in a shared expression of hope.

and renewal. The preparations for Nowruz begin weeks in advance, with an emphasis on cleansing one’s home and spirit.

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Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

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Andrew Mitrovica

as a stinging financial and diplomatic defence of the besieged confederation’s autonomy.

Axworthy told a television interviewer recently that it would “be a mistake to continue” with the acquisition of F-35 jets.

Instead, he argued, Canada should “push back” against a belligerent president who has “kicked us in the teeth”.

“I think this is an opportunity for us to say,”

••••• Canada has already paid for 16 warplanes, which are due to be delivered by early next year. Conservative pundits writing for conservative newspapers have joined former Liberal foreign minister, Lloyd Axworthy, and peace and disarmament groups in urging the prime minister to “stand up to” America’s mercurial commander-in-chief, Donald Trump. To wit, they are demanding Carney follow Portugal’s lead and axe the planned purchase of the extra technically troubled jets as a tangible expression of Canada’s rejection of Trump’s imperial designs, as well as a stinging financial and diplomatic defence of the besieged confederation’s autonomy. Axworthy told a television interviewer recently that it would “be a mistake to continue” with the acquisition of F-35 jets.

••••• Axworthy suggested. “Do we ... want our military so entangled with the American military that our discretion and independence of movement are limited?”

It is odd that, in 2025, Axworthy would challenge Canada to embrace the “opportunity” to distance itself from the US militarily when a succession of Liberal and Conservative prime ministers has, from 1945 on, fused the continental “junior partner’s” armed forces to the Pentagon’s sprawling defence infrastructure like conjoined twins. In any event, a suddenly liberated Axworthy also pointed out that the “digital box” housing the operating software for the warplanes is controlled by the giant US arms manufacturer, Lockheed Martin.

The fear is that a vindictive Trump could order the aerospace and “defence” contractor to deny Canada access to any software upgrades that would enable the jets’ lethal capabilities in flight. These appeals,

anchored as they are in guarding the Maple Leaf and all the emotions Canada’s distinctive red and white national flag conjures up, have struck a nationalistic chord with many Canadians who have been seized by a “buy home-made” movement that is gathering enthusiasm and momentum.

Carney, the former central banker turned politician, has been obliged, of course, to respond to the prevailing patriotic winds in the hopes that they propel him and the Liberal Party to victory.

So, it was hardly surprising when Defence Minister Bill Blair announced late last week that Ottawa would “re-examine” its contract with Lockheed Martin and look for European alternatives to the F-35 jets.

The “review” of the existing deal has allowed Carney to claim the “Canada first” ground and has afforded him time to consider the possible implications and consequences of cancelling it outright.

At the risk of offending loyal readers and startling my easily agitated detractors, I think Carney’s predictable, carve-out-some-convenient-time gambit is, in light of the uncertain geopolitical circumstances, the prudent thing to do. Let me share two other observations that are meant to provide some useful context for the prescriptions I am

about to offer Carney on how he should address this delicate and potentially combustible cross-border dispute.

First, if I had my druthers, I would forgo acquiring warplanes that, in a generation or so, will become obsolete, and spend the mountain of money improving young Canadians’ fast-fading prospects of buying a home on the not-so-distant horizon and burnishing the paltry pension that

seniors receive every month. But I know that any future Liberal or Conservative government will be dedicated – as institutional gospel – to replacing Canada’s ageing roster of CF-18 fighter jets.

The question now, in light of Trump’s oafish and disrespectful threats, is whose name will be on the big cheque to supply those warplanes?

chunting, “My sickness to you, your warmth and health to me.”

The centerpiece of Nowruz celebrations is the Haft Seen table, an arrangement of seven symbolic food items that each start with the Persian letter “S.” The festivities conclude on the 13th day with “Sizdah Bedar,” when families leave their homes to spend time in nature.

While Nowruz is meant to be a joyous occasion, this year’s celebrations in Iran are clouded by economic struggles. Iranians are facing severe inflation, with rates consistently nearing 50 percent, making it increasingly difficult for families to afford traditional Nowruz essentials.

The Iranian rial has also devalued significantly, further reducing purchasing power. Many families that formerly celebrated Nowruz lavishly are now forced to cut back, forgoing traditional feasts and new clothing for their children. In many households, the Haft Seen table will be more modest than in previous years, reflecting the financial hardships that continue to weigh on the population.

Adding to these economic struggles are escalating tensions between the Trump administration and Israel on one side and Iran on the other.

Despite these challenges, Nowruz remains a symbol of resilience and renewal. It is a time to reflect on the past year, embrace the hope of new beginnings and hold onto traditions that have endured for thousands of years. Even in difficult times, the spirit of Nowruz reminds people that brighter days lie ahead.

Happy Nowruz to all those who celebrate. May this new year bring prosperity, happiness and fulfillment. May hardships ease and may the light of renewal shine upon all.

Trump may enjoy a strong hand, but, despite his bluster and bravado, he is a bad poker player – prone to making short-sighted and impulsive bets that do more damage than good to US interests.

Carney must be patient and exploit the long game to his advantage by using the pending F-35 procurement as leverage during rancorous tariff negotiations that could well prevail throughout Trump’s chaotic, four-year term as president.

As a necessary corollary, Carney needs to rebuff myopic writers and historians demanding that he nix, forthwith, the F-35s in favour of the Swedish-built Saab Gripen to mollify his chirping critics inside and outside Parliament and editorial boards more interested in “decisive” acts than calm rejoinders.

Given Trump’s coercive modus operandi and impetuous nature, there are no guarantees that this more cautious approach will be persuasive or dampen the president’s retributive instincts.

It is worth a try. And, to bolster the chances of success, it should be coupled with a deliberate and sustained effort to tamp down the chest-thumping rhetoric that only serves, apparently, to trigger a petulant president.

Then there are the impracticality and prohibitive costs associated with opting for a mixed fleet of jets in Canada’s airborne arsenal.

Reportedly, Canadian defence planners have insisted for decades that this cockeyed strategy would prove too expensive. Two warplanes would require two training regimes, two supply chains, and separate hangars. Keep your

Cheshire-like cool and hold on to your shiny, expensive bargaining chips, Prime Minister Carney, until you, not temperamental Trump, can win the lucrative pot.

The crypto industry is advancing

Allison Morrow

AFTER a dramatic start to the year, the crypto industry is settling into a new reality — one in which the White House is laying out the red carpet and promising an unprecedented level of support.

Crypto, a roughly 15-year-old industry that’s largely operated on the fringes of finance, is at a crossroads. For years, it has blamed a hostile regulatory environment for not allowing it to unleash its supposedly revolutionary technology on Americans. Now, though, their favorite bogeyman, Gary Gensler, the Securities and Exchange Commission chief under President Joe Biden, is gone. Crypto cheerleaders have been installed throughout the government.

The SEC has dropped several enforcement cases against crypto companies and, starting Friday, is hosting a series of public roundtables “to discuss key areas of interest in the regulation of crypto assets.”

Under President Donald Trump, there’s virtually nothing stopping crypto companies from creating and selling their products.

At the same time, the same White House’s chaotic trade policy is undermining financial markets’ appetite for risk, leaving bitcoin in limbo, more than 20% off from its record high in January. And while the industry is

••••• Given the enormous potential for the \$3 trillion industry in this moment, I checked in with Eswar Prasad, a Cornell University professor of international trade and the author of the 2021 book “The Future of Money,” about the forces disrupting financial technologies. Fundamentally, Prasad brings a pragmatist’s view of crypto that is as refreshing as it is rare in a subject area that tends to attract zealots and loudmouths. We spoke over the phone shortly after the first-of-its-kind White House crypto summit earlier this month. The following interview has been edited for length and clarity. Nightcap: We just saw a pretty wild thing happen with the crypto summit — hard to imagine a scenario like that taking place under any previous administration. What were your takeaways? Eswar Prasad: The crypto industry is kissing the ring, and I think it’s getting exactly what it wants from the Trump administration, which is the legitimacy provided by government oversight, coupled with what is almost certain to be quite light touch and non-inclusive regulation. And I think we saw many of the major players in the crypto industry essentially using the opportunity to not just thank Trump, but try to make the point, which seemed to resonate with Trump, that this industry can power, in some sense, a resurgence of a certain part of the US economy. Nightcap: I’m curious what you think of that industry claim about its long-term usefulness. Based on what I’ve read, you seem like a crypto skeptic but not a cynic. Prasad: I am dazzled, as are others, by the creativeness of the technology. Blockchain is certainly a remarkable technology.

grateful for all the attention, the White House’s embrace of some of crypto’s less savory aspects, like meme coins, has given serious investors pause.

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And I think we saw many of the major players in the crypto industry essentially using the opportunity to not just thank Trump, but try to make the point, which seemed to resonate with Trump, that this industry can power, in some sense, a resurgence of a certain part of the US economy.

Nightcap: I’m curious what you think of that industry claim about its long-term usefulness. Based on what I’ve read, you seem like a crypto skeptic but not a cynic.

Prasad: I am dazzled, as are others, by the creativeness of the technology. Blockchain is certainly a remarkable technology. (Note: Blockchain is the infrastructure crypto is built on — a kind digi-

tal ledger system that records all transactions, which are verified by a vast network of computers.)

Now, there are two questions that are relevant, though. One is whether blockchain is the best answer for certain things that the promoters of blockchain claim it is good for. And second, whether it will fundamentally alter financial markets.

The biggest legacy of crypto, in my view, is that it is shining a very harsh light from the inefficiencies in the traditional financial system. So if you think about domestic payments, or especially about cross-border payments in this day and age, the fact that it takes so long to have those payments processed at very high fees and without the ability to track them in real time, that should not have lasted this long.

Plus, there is the concern that many people — low income, low net worth individuals, even in rich economies like the US — don’t have easy access to basic financial products for managing savings, credit and risk. So the notion that we can use technology to solve these problems is very important.

But then when we come to the first question, is the current state of crypto and blockchain technology the solution to all of this — that is far

less clear. Bitcoin is not working very well at what it was intended to be, which is a trustless medium of exchange that does not involve any third-party intermediaries or central bank money. Instead, it has become a purely speculative financial asset.

Certainly blockchain has many advantages in terms of easy accessibility, transparency, security and so on. But it’s not entirely obvious you really need blockchain technology for all of this — there are other ways of accomplishing the same thing. Nightcap: Right, I think the most compelling case I hear consistently around crypto is the blockchain, which from a business perspective is just extremely boring. A fine product but not a sexy one. And it just makes me think, if that’s the real value of crypto, it would seem that the industry is just wildly overvalued.

Prasad: That’s exactly right. One indicator of that was last year, when I was at Davos, I met a couple of blockchain company CEOs... And what I heard from them was there was still interest but that many firms could not immediately see the commercial value of switching their operations onto blockchain, whether one talks about supply chain management or accounting records or procurement issues — it was not entirely obvious that they were going to be big savings or efficiencies.

Having said that, decentralized finance on blockchains is getting some traction. The stablecoin industry was, of course, out in force at the summit, and the stablecoin funds seem to be doing very well. (Note: Stablecoins are a type of digital token whose value is pegged to another asset, like the US dollar, and they have become widely used in crypto transactions.)

They are benefiting in particular from two things: one is the fact that there are still enormous frictions in financial systems that stablecoins can help get around. And sec-

ond, it is going to be a much easier regulatory environment for them.

Nightcap: As a reporter, it’s been interesting to watch the pendulum swing on crypto. The industry is so broad — there are people and companies that I think of as the adults in the room, who really do just want regulatory clarity and a fair shot at competing. But the Trump administration has kind of embraced all of crypto, and not just the adults who want regulation but also the more fringe elements like memecoins.

Prasad: Yeah, that is interesting. On one hand, they are legitimizing and providing a direct government endorsement of crypto. But at the same time, some of Trump’s actions, like the issuance of the memecoin, are focusing attention on the senior and less savory sides of crypto, thereby calling into question that very legitimacy.

I think I’ve come to a point where nothing is surprising, but it is certainly, you know, it is still astonishing to see the ostensible leader of the free world essentially using his position to profit personally off his ability to direct the government machinery in a particular direction.

Nightcap: Crypto markets were disappointed because the administration said it wouldn’t use taxpayer money to buy bitcoin under the strategic reserve plan. What’s

••••• your take on the reserve? Prasad: They’re not planning to use taxpayer money yet, but I think once the reserve is set up, I imagine that will come. Because it is, at one level, a very easy way of propping up cryptocurrency prices, which would certainly be very good for many members of this administration. The idea of a strategic reserve of cryptocurrencies, to me, is neither strategic nor sensible. If you think about a commodity like oil — that is needed by the real economy, and you can use reserves of oil to smooth prices and disturbances to supply. Gold has been a longstanding store of value, and one could argue that even in an era when we don’t have the gold standard to support the dollar, gold has some intrinsic value. But with something like bitcoin, there is no intrinsic value. So it’s speculative asset whose value is determined by just the fact that it is scarce.

Now, the question is whether this reserve has a strategic purpose in terms of being able to use it for anything. We heard, at various points on the campaign trail, the notion of using the crypto reserve, if the prices of cryptos were to soar, to pay down some portion of the government debt or finance government expenditures. That, to me, is a non-starter.

If you have a big player like the government starting to sell even a modest portion of its holdings, the price of the cryptos will almost certainly tank. I don’t see any prospect of it ever being able to sell. So what is the strategic reserve good for? It’s going to be very good for current holders of crypto, crypto promoters, crypto exchanges. Is it going to be of real value to us taxpayers in any way? At best, no. At worst, if the government starts acquiring crypto and then the price falls, that’s going to be a hit on the valuations of the crypto. So I don’t see this ending well in any way, but it is going to happen.



Pak-Denmark boosts economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan, Jakob Linulf, met with the Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, to discuss avenues for enhancing bilateral trade and investment.

During the meeting, Minister Khan emphasized that Pakistan is moving in the right direction regarding economic cooperation and highlighted upcoming engagements that will further strengthen ties between the two nations, said a press release issued here on Thursday.

The minister noted that his forthcoming visit to Denmark would be a significant step in deepening relations and fostering collaboration across various sectors.

The visit will include discussions with APM Terminals, a subsidiary of Maersk, on the development of a green deep-water container terminal in Karachi under the Pakistan-Denmark Government-to-Government (G2G) Framework. In addition to strengthening maritime cooperation, the minister pointed out the importance of the upcoming EU Business Forum, scheduled to be held in Islamabad on June 14-15.

He remarked that the forum would generate significant business opportunities and enhance economic collaboration between Pakistan and European Union countries, including Denmark.

Minister Khan also

extended an invitation to Danish businesses to explore Pakistan's green initiatives and investment opportunities in the agricultural sector.

He highlighted that Denmark's advanced technology could play a crucial role in modernizing Pakistan's agriculture, where Pakistan currently lags in innovation and mechanization.

Pakistan and Denmark have witnessed a remarkable increase in bilateral trade, with a 31% surge recorded in the first eight months of FY 2024-25, bringing the total trade volume to \$285.99 million.

Pakistan's exports to Denmark grew by 27% to \$207.40 million, while imports from Denmark rose

by 42% to \$78.59 million, showcasing a balanced and expanding trade relationship.

Furthermore, Denmark remains a key supporter of Pakistan's GSP+ status within the EU, facilitating Pakistan's preferential access to European markets. Denmark's participation in Pakistan's premier Food and Agriculture Exhibition in 2024 marked a milestone in expanding its engagement in Pakistan's agri-business sector.

The meeting reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to strengthening trade ties through strategic engagements, sustainable investments, and mutual cooperation, paving the way for long-term economic prosperity.



ISLAMABAD: Danish Ambassador Jakob Linulf presenting a commemorative painting to Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan.

Export of footwear increases 15.48%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The export of footwear from the country witnessed an increase of 15.48 percent during the first eight months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding months of last year.

The country exported footwear worth US\$ 126.413 million during July-February 2024-25 as opposed to the export of US\$ 109.465 million during July-February 2023-24, showing growth of 15.48 percent, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Among the footwear products, the exports of leather footwear witnessed an increase of 14.94 percent, from US\$ 85.368 million to US\$ 98.121 million during the months under review.

Canvas footwear exports also surged by 15.20 percent by going up from US\$ 1.723 million last year to US\$ 1.985 million, the PBS data revealed.

The exports of all other footwear rose by 17.58 percent to US\$ 26.307 million from US\$ 22.374 million in the same months last year.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the footwear exports appreciated by 11.57 percent during the month of February 2025 as compared to the same month of last year.

The footwear exports during February 2025 were recorded at \$16.981 million against the export of \$15.220 million in February 2024.

During the period under review, the export of leather and canvas footwear witnessed an increase of 6.16 17.56 percent respectively. In addition, the export of all other footwear also increased by 29.26 percent, it added.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports of footwear commodities witnessed a decreased of 9.20 percent during February 2025 as compared to the exports of \$18.701 million in January 2025, the PBS data revealed.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports of canvas and all other footwear went up by 22.02 and 1.09 percent respectively.

Uzbek ambassador meets SAPM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Uzbekistan Alisher Tkhakayev on Thursday met with Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan to discuss enhancing industrial cooperation and bilateral trade between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

During the meeting, Haroon Akhtar emphasized that the relationship between both countries is deeply rooted in shared religion, history, and culture. He mentioned that for centuries, the people of both countries have contributed to each other's intellectual and cultural development, said a news release.

"Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize Uzbekistan's independence," remarked Haroon Akhtar, highlighting the historical bond between the two nations.

The discussion also covered various areas of potential collaboration, with both

sides agreeing to explore joint ventures in diverse sectors, including automobiles, industry, surgical equipment, mining, and public-level relations.

He noted that Pakistan and Uzbekistan are committed to advancing trade, investment cooperation, and fostering stronger ties between their citizens.

"We are keen to explore new avenues of cooperation in the automobile industry, mining, surgery, and public relations," Haroon Akhtar said.

He further added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has tasked them with finding pathways to boost collaboration in sectors such as processing operations, mining, and railways. The Special Assistant reiterated Pakistan's dedication to enhancing bilateral ties with Uzbekistan.

Ambassador Tukhtaev expressed admiration for the rapid growth of Pakistan's IT sector and

commended the progress made in technology. He also proposed fostering cultural exchanges through joint productions in drama and film, which would further strengthen the cultural relationship between the two nations.

Haroon Akhtar Khan emphasized that both countries are focused on increasing bilateral trade, with a target to raise trade volume to \$2 billion, as outlined by the Prime Minister. "We are committed to strengthening public-level relations and brotherly ties with Uzbekistan," he concluded.

The Ambassador also extended an invitation to Haroon Akhtar Khan for an Iftar gathering, showcasing the growing warmth and camaraderie between the two nations.

This meeting marked another significant step in the ongoing efforts to bolster Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations across multiple sectors.

SCCI chief welcomes opening of Torkham border for trade

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fazal Moqeem Khan welcomed the reopening of Torkham border for trade which was remained closed for more than 26 days, after successful negotiations between Pakistani and Afghan officials, expressing hope for an increase in bilateral trade.

The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief highlighted that the Torkham crossing point's reopening would not only boost mutual trade but also alleviate numerous difficulties faced by traders and exporters during the prolonged border closure.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, Fazal Moqeem said Pak-Afghan bilateral trade adversely

affected owing to closure of the border for 26 days and inflicted loss of billions of dollars to the traders community.

He asserted both neighbouring countries should take joint initiatives to enhance mutual trade. Also, he stressed all issues should be addressed by holding talks and mutual consensus.

Moqeem said promotion of regional trade has become essential while keeping in view of the prevailing scenario.

The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry went on to say that trade and business of KP people are associated with Afghanistan and regional trade.

He, therefore, urged the federal government to facilitate mutual trade and export with Afghanistan

and Central Asian countries.

Besides, he said business and trade not only hurt with closure of the border but it has also gravely impacted on the economy of both neighbouring countries.

Hence, it is critical to consistently adopt a policy of addressing all matters and issues on the negotiation table, to carry out a smooth trade as well as a flourishing economy, Moqeem remarked.

The Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief said the business community has already faced several difficulties owing to being far away from seaport and prevailing lawlessness whereas imposition of cess on export from KP has also compounded miseries of the business community.

Moqeem called for provision of special incentives and facilities to boost trade and economic activities.

He was of the view that only enforcement of business-friendly policies can bring sustainable economic growth and stability and also generate employment opportunities.

The chamber president praised efforts of both governments, relevant officials and members of the Jirga/committee for resolution of Pak-Afghan border issue with mutual consensus.

Moqeem said Pakistan and Afghanistan being neighbouring countries, so they should adopt a way of talks to settle all disputes.

He asked to retain tradition for holding talks for prompt resolution of all issues in future as well.

Meezan Bank, NED University partner to launch CIFTT

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic bank and NED University

Public Notice

Public at large is informed That Sardar Khan S/o Bahadar Khan is the owner of House/Plot No.137. K 1, Phase-3 Hayatabad Peshawar. He Has lost original documents of the said house /plot. If someone found he shall informed the undersigned. Moreover, if any person, attorney holder or any financial institution has any objection on it, he should contact the undersigned on the given Phone Number after publication of this advertisement within 15 days. Otherwise, duplicate papers shall be issued & later on no claim shall be entertained. Housing Officer (HQ) Phone 091-9217037 Hayatabad Phase-5, PDA Peshawar.

Court Notice

In the Court of Javeria Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II /Azafi Zila Qazi Buner,Appeal. No.92/13 Institution. 4/9/2024.Date of hearing. 27/3/2025. Mst Saifuray etc VS Akbar Khan etc. Notice to No.12/1.Iqbal Khan.12/3. Suhrah Khan.12/4.Ahmed Ali sons of Abdul Hanan. 19/1.Abdul Waki s/o Suhbat Khan. 20.Amir Akbar Khan. 21. Umerzeb. 22.Tajwali Khan.23. Ahmedzeb sons of Akbareen. 24.Sher Nazar s/o Chatak. 25.Sher Ghani s/o Fazal Ghani. 27. Siraj s/o Shah Nazar. 28.Karim Bakht s/o Biladar.29. Azizur Rehman s/o Purdil. 30. Bakhtimand.31.Muhammad Ali.32.Muhammad Jamil sons of Muhammad Aslam.33. Salih Zada s/o Saidu.34. Rahim Khan s/o Saidu via heirs. 34/1.Mst Sheren Baha widow. 34/2. Ehsanullah.34/3.Hamza sons. 34/4.Mst Tajbena. 34/5.Mst Shahan. 34/6.Mst Zenat. 34/7. Mst Kynat daughters of Rahim Khan.35.Aziz Ahmed s/o Charhi .37.Nisar Ahmed s/o Mst Saifuray resident of Daggar tehsel Daggar district Buner.Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will /shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 27/3/2025 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court,



of Engineering and Technology have signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the Centre for Islamic Finance and FinTech (CIFTT) at NED University. The MoU was signed by Syed Amir Ali, Deputy CEO - Meezan Bank and Dr. Sarosh Hashmat Lodi, Vice Chancellor - NED University.

To commemorate this partnership, a plaque unveiling ceremony was held, highlighting the shared commitment of both institutions to advancing Islamic finance and fintech. This strategic partnership aims to offer higher education and professional development programs at the graduate, postgraduate, and PhD levels in the field of Islamic finance and fintech. The

Centre will also contribute to industry growth through research, case studies, human capital development, and other agreed-upon support initiatives.

As part of the agreement, Meezan Bank will provide comprehensive support, including technical assistance, content development, and research expertise. The Bank will also conduct seminars and speaker sessions to raise awareness about Islamic finance and fintech among future engineers and STEM graduates in Pakistan. Additionally, Meezan Bank will collaborate on developing academic programs, professional training, and research initiatives, as well as case study development.

Syed Amir Ali, while expressing his gratitude to

NED University, said: "The collaboration between NED's technological expertise and Meezan Bank's leadership in Islamic banking establishes a strong foundation for innovation in the growing Islamic fintech sector. This partnership will harness the potential of Pakistan's youth as a driving force in shaping the future of the industry. We are hopeful that the launch of CIFTT will accelerate the development of research-driven solutions, bridging the gap between Islamic finance and technology."

This partnership represents a significant step in strengthening the relationship between academia and industry, supporting the growth of Pakistan's Islamic finance sector.

Stock markets retreat on revised US economic outlook

LONDON (AFP/APP): Major European and Asian stock markets retreated Thursday following a weaker-than-forecast US economic outlook and despite the Federal Reserve trying to calm fears over President Donald Trump's tariffs.

Fed boss Jerome Powell on Wednesday suggested that any increase to consumer prices caused by tariffs would likely be short-lived, even as the central bank slashed its growth outlook and hiked inflation expectations.

It followed the Fed's decision to keep US interest

rates on hold, which supported the dollar.

The Bank of Japan also held rates Wednesday, while on Thursday the Swiss central bank cut and Sweden's Riksbank held its steady. The Bank of England is expected to hold borrowing costs later in the day.

Lingering tariff fears and geopolitical developments helped safe-haven gold to another record above \$3,057.49 an ounce.

The price of copper reached a five-month high above \$10,000 a tonne as US companies stock up on

the metal targeted by Trump's tariffs.

Oil prices dipped as weak demand offsets a fresh upsurge in Gaza hostilities.

Traders kept tabs also on eastern Europe after Trump told Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky that the United States could own and run his country's nuclear power plants as part of his bid to secure a ceasefire with Russia.

The main markets focus was on the United States, the world's biggest economy.

"Great uncertainty

remains over the direction of travel for the US economy, with business activity likely to remain subdued until we see greater clarity over the trade relationships and potential pricing for US imports and exports," noted Joshua Mahony, analyst at Scope Markets.

Trump's painful duties on imports into the United States and threats of further tariffs have stoked recession fears.

Some observers have warned also that the president's pledges to slash tax, regulation and immigration will reignite inflation could

force the Fed to hike rates rather than cutting further.

After a closely-watched meeting Wednesday, the US central bank stood pat on borrowing costs for the second time in a row and said "uncertainty around the economic outlook has increased."

It predicted that the US economy would expand 1.7 percent this year, compared with 2.1 percent estimated in December.

It tipped core inflation to hit 2.8 percent as opposed to the 2.5 percent previously seen.

However, its dot plot

estimate for rate cuts still showed officials saw two this year.

"We do understand that sentiment has fallen off pretty sharply, but economic activity has not yet and so we are watching carefully," Powell said.

"I would tell people the economy seems to be healthy."

He added that inflation had "started to move up" and officials think that is "partly in response to tariffs. And there may be a delay in further progress over the course of this year".

Any increase would be "transitory", Powell said, but warned it would be hard to determine how much of a factor the levies -- as opposed to other factors -- would play in lifting prices.

The remarks were taken as market-supportive and 10-year US Treasury yields, a proxy of monetary policy, dropped.

Wall Street rallied Wednesday, while Trump called on decision-makers to immediately cut rates, urging on his Truth Social platform to "do the right thing".



High-flying NZ look to close out series against deflated Pakistan

AUCKLAND (Espnricinfo): Even against a depleted New Zealand squad, Pakistan's revamped T20I side managed to hit a new low of getting bundled for 91 in the series opener. Even against a New Zealand side without the flying Glenn Phillips, Pakistan have been handing out catches incessantly through the two games so far - for all ten dismissals in the first game and eight out of nine in the second.

If this new-look Pakistan side wants to keep the five-match T20I series alive in Auckland on Friday, they need to step up on all fronts and prove to the world - and even perhaps to themselves - that it's not all doom and gloom with less than a year to go for the next T20 World Cup.

Pakistan themselves are a depleted side, in the early days of learning to live without Mohammad Rizwan and Babar Azam in this format, and without the injured Saim Ayub. It's still early days to judge the new opening pair of Hasan Nawaz and Mohammad Haris, but their inability to cope with the pace and bounce in Christchurch before poor shot selections in Dunedin doesn't bode well.

Salman Agha's blitzy 46 off 28 and cameos from the experienced Shadab Khan and Shaheen Shah Afridi down the order in the second game helped them to 135 for 9 in a rain-reduced

15-overs-a-side game. However, the ineffectiveness of their bowling attack - which holds a lot more promise than their batting - to contain the New Zealand batting places a big question mark over who can really help them keep the series alive.

New Zealand's openers Tim Seifert and Finn Allen were devastating in both games, exemplified by Seifert carting Afridi around for 26 runs in an over in the second game. Given the sunny forecast in Auckland, Pakistan will first hope they win the toss, which they haven't so far this series, and then try to remove the openers early to test their middle order.

New Zealand have not had much to worry about so far; their bowlers have worked like a well-oiled machine in favourable conditions and even though they put down three catches in the first match, they have held on to 18.

Pakistan will also be desperate to lift their hopes after a forgettable home Champions Trophy campaign and put an end to their five-match losing streak in T20Is, which started in Zimbabwe in December last year.

After last playing T20Is in the 2024 T20 World Cup, James Neesham returned to the side in the absence of the stars that are in India for the IPL. He got to play only in the second game, picking two wickets towards the end and scoring just 5 in the

chase before holing out. Once a game-changer in New Zealand's white-ball squads, Neesham has fallen out of favour in ODIs but he has committed himself for next year's T20 World Cup.

The onus remains on him to prove that form is something he can turn around quickly, especially in home conditions, as he has not scored over 40 in the format since December 2023.

Hasan Nawaz has had as poor a start to his international career as anyone could: two ducks in two games. It's the nature of dismissals in both games that might disappoint him and the team management as he dished out wild swings to miscue the ball on both occasions. The 22-year-old came into this series with runs for Lions in Pakistan's Champions T20 Cup, finishing second on the run-scorers' list and with the second-most sixes, too. The challenge now will be to keep his place in the Pakistan XI for the remaining games and try to earn his runs in more hostile conditions.

Team news

Since it's a five-match series and there was a quick turnaround between the first two games, New Zealand rested Kyle Jamieson and Tim Robinson to bring in Ben Sears and Jimmy Neesham for the second match. They could bring Jamieson back and rest Jacob Duffy for the

third game.

New Zealand (probable): 1 Tim Seifert, 2 Finn Allen, 3 Mark Chapman, 4 Daryl Mitchell, 5 James Neesham, 6 Mitchell Hay (wk), 7 Michael Bracewell (capt), 8 Zakary Foulkes, 9 Ish Sodhi, 10 Kyle Jamieson, 11 Jacob Duffy/Ben Sears

Pakistan changed the mix of their bowling attack to pick fast bowler Haris Rauf for legspinner Abrar Ahmed for the second match. Mohammad Ali has been expensive in both games, leaking nearly 12 runs in both games put together. Abbas Afridi is the one option in their squad if they wish to replace Ali.

Pakistan (probable): 1 Mohammad Haris (wk), 2 Hasan Nawaz, 3 Salman Agha (capt), 4 Irfan Khan, 5 Shadab Khan, 6 Khushdil Shah, 7 Abdul Samad, 8 Jahandad Khan, 9 Shaheen Afridi, 10 Abrar Ahmed, 11 Mohammad Ali

Pitch and conditions

Even though New Zealand bowled in the first two games and won both, the last four matches (barring a tie between New Zealand and Sri Lanka in 2023) in Auckland were won by teams batting first. Eden Park in general is known as a high-scoring ground and with no rain predicted for Friday, and temperatures expected to dip below 20 degrees at night, the crowd should be entertained for a full 40 overs.



MIAMI GARDENS: Aryna Sabalenka returns a shot against Viktoriya Tomova of Bulgaria during their match on Day 3 at Hard Rock Stadium.

PVF set to host major National, Int'l tournaments this year

ISLAMABAD (APP): Volleyball in Pakistan has experienced unprecedented growth over the past three to four years, firmly establishing itself as a leading sport in the country.

Under the leadership of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF), the nation has successfully hosted three major international tournaments in the past year, showcasing its ability to organize world-class volleyball events.

The rapid progress of Pakistani volleyball is evident in the Pakistan U-19 Volleyball Team's qualification for the 2025 World Championship, scheduled to be held from 21st July to 3rd August in Uzbekistan.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Senior Team continues to

make history, securing an impressive Runner-Up position in the AVC Challenge Cup 2024 in Bahrain, a testament to the team's growing strength on the Asian volleyball stage.

In 2024, PVF successfully hosted the Central Asian Volleyball League, a major international tournament featuring six teams.

The event, held in Islamabad, attracted an impressive 8,000 to 10,000 spectators, demonstrating the sport's growing popularity in Pakistan.

In a spectacular performance, Pakistan's national team won the Gold Medal, reaffirming the country's dominance in the region.

Additionally, the PVF hosted the Pakistan vs.

Australia Volleyball Series, where Pakistan achieved a resounding 3-0 victory. This landmark series further elevated Pakistan's international volleyball stature and highlighted the team's exceptional talent and determination.

Building on this success, Pakistan Volleyball Federation is set to organize a series of prestigious National and International tournaments in 2025, further solidifying Pakistan's reputation as a key player in global volleyball.

The upcoming tournaments include 54th National Senior Men's Volleyball Championship FROM April 4 to 10 at Pakistan Ordnance Factories, Wah Cantt; Central Asian Volleyball

League from May 28 to June 4 here at Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex.

The event will featuring eight international teams, including India, this prestigious event will further strengthen Pakistan's standing in Asian volleyball.

The Pakistan vs Russia Volleyball Series will be held from June 23 to 30 here at the Liaquat Gymnasium.

With Pakistan's continuous rise in international volleyball and a dynamic lineup of events scheduled for 2025, Pakistan Volleyball Federation remains dedicated to nurturing talent and expanding the sport's influence across the nation.

Japan first nation to qualify for 2026 World Cup

TOKYO (BBC): Japan have become the first nation to book their place in the 2026 World Cup through qualifiers by beating Bahrain 2-0 in Saitama.

Crystal Palace's Daichi Kamada and Real Sociedad's Takefusa Kubo scored in the second half as the Japanese progressed with three games to spare in the third round of the qualification campaign in Asia. Canada, Mexico and the United States were already guaranteed a place

in next year's expanded World Cup as the hosts but the Samurai Blue are the first to do so via the qualifiers.

The Asian Football Confederation is guaranteed eight spots in the 48-team tournament with an additional place available through inter-continental play-offs.

Qualifying sees 18 teams split into three groups in the third round with the top two from each group qualifying for the

World Cup.

The sides that finish third and fourth in each group advance to the fourth round to battle for the remaining spots available for the continent. Japan, managed by Hajime Moriyasu, had reached the last 16 of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, only to lose to Croatia on penalties.

They posted six wins from six matches in the second round of the 2026 qualifiers and are also unbeaten in the third round

with six wins and a draw.

Liverpool midfielder Wataru Endo, Brighton's Kaoru Mitoma and Takumi Minamino, who won the Premier League with the Reds in 2020, were among the starters for Japan, who reached their eighth consecutive World Cup. Second-placed Australia, who beat Bahrain 5-1, are nine points adrift of Japan.

European qualification begins this week, with England and Wales among the teams in action.

Will we see Venus Williams on a tennis court again?

NEW YORK (BBC): At the end of March, Venus Williams will lose her world ranking and her page on the WTA Tour website will turn from purple to grey.

The seven-time Grand Slam singles champion will be considered an inactive player, having gone a whole year without competing.

But that status may not last long. The feeling persists that the American icon is not yet ready for retirement.

A wildcard for Indian Wells was announced but then swiftly declined. A "miscommunication" was the reason given.

Sources say Williams was then offered a wildcard for the Miami Open, which began on Tuesday and was the venue of her last match.

The 44-year-old thought about it for a couple of days - although it was no great

surprise when she turned it down.

However, the Florida resident did take to the practice court there on Wednesday for a session with Tunisia's Ons Jabeur.

Indian Wells and Miami were the only two tournaments Williams played last year.

Her last Grand Slam appearance was at the 2023 US Open and her last victory at any level came against Veronika Kudermetova in Cincinnati two weeks before that. The last time Williams played a full schedule was 2019.

It was some achievement to do so in the year she turned 39, having been diagnosed with Sjogren's syndrome, external - an autoimmune condition which can cause fatigue and joint pain - a few years earlier.

But turning 45 - which

she will do just two weeks before Wimbledon on 17 June - is historically not a barrier to competing on tour.

After all, Martina Navratilova won a singles match at the All England Club aged 47.

Should Williams request a wildcard for either Wimbledon, where she is a five-time singles champion, or for the US Open, where she won the singles title twice, it seems unlikely it would be rejected.

Fashion is a big part of Williams' life and she was at Paris Fashion Week two weeks ago - one of the reasons she did not play in Indian Wells.

She owns the interior design company V Starr but, even though more than 30 years have passed since her professional debut, many feel she will attempt a final foray into professional tennis.

is.

It is possible Williams, who is ranked number 1,151, will never retire.

Former US Open and French Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova has not played since Wimbledon 2021, but is yet formally to call it a day.

Venus' sister Serena, meanwhile, did not like the word retirement, preferring instead to "evolve away from the sport" in September 2022.

Serena's name does, however, appear on the International Tennis Integrity Agency's retired players list.

Joining that list is a strong commitment to retiring, as any player who later changes their mind must make themselves available for drug testing for six months before returning to play.

Ryder races towards its first NASCAR sponsorship in Truck Series

NEW YORK (AP): Ryder enters the racing world with sponsorship of the No. 33 Ryder Ford F-150 for Reaume Brothers Racing and driver Frankie Muniz in the 2025 NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series.

The No. 33 and Ford truck carry special significance for Ryder, paying homage to the company's founding in 1933 in Miami when Jim Ryder launched the business with a single Ford Model-A pickup truck. Now, more than 90 years later, Ryder launches its brand into motorsports-this time on a high-performance

Ford F-150, driven by Muniz, in one of the world's most-watched racing series.

"As one of the largest fleet owners of commercial trucks in North America, we see tremendous business value in aligning with a NASCAR truck driver," says Stephanie Wicky, vice president of marketing for Ryder. "Frankie brings an incredible work ethic, determination, and passion for excellence-qualities that resonate with our brand and our customers in transportation-especially in the commercial fleet rental and leasing industries."

While Muniz will be the face of the sponsorship, Ryder recognizes the skilled team of professionals behind every race-just like the 5,000 expertly trained truck technicians across North America who keep Ryder's and its customers' trucks on the road every day. The sponsorship also connects to Ryder's commitment to technician excellence, celebrating the best in fleet maintenance.

Additionally, NASCAR's dedication to vehicle innovation aligns with Ryder's focus on advancing fleet technology,

maintenance solutions, and sustainable transportation-ensuring the trucks of tomorrow are safer, more efficient, and more reliable than ever.

"Like Ryder, NASCAR prioritizes safety, innovation, and the expertise of the drivers and technicians who keep these vehicles performing at their best," says Tom Havens, president of Fleet Management Solutions for Ryder. "There's a natural alignment between our brand and NASCAR-not only in the vehicles but in the values we share."

England need hunger to win not fear to lose: Tuchel

LONDON (BBC): England manager Thomas Tuchel says he wants the team to play with a "hunger to win" and not "a fear to lose" as he prepares for his first match in charge of the Three Lions on Friday.

England begin their 2026 World Cup qualifying campaign against Albania at Wembley before facing Latvia on Monday. Under former boss Gareth Southgate, England reached back-to-back European Championship finals but Tuchel was critical of their style of play at Euro 2024.

"I've heard a lot that it's a heavy shirt. It is in fact not. But I know what the players mean," he said in a news conference on Thursday.

"Watching the Euros I felt tension and pressure on the shoulders of the players and they were playing not to lose."

"I want us to play with excitement and the hunger and desire to win...and the acceptance of failure is part of it, especially in football."

Southgate led England to the final at Euro 2020 and 2024 - where they lost to Italy and Spain, respectively - and guided them to the semi-finals at the 2018 World Cup and quarter-finals in 2022.

But the 54-year-old was criticised by some for a perceived safety-first style at Euro 2024, where England scraped past Serbia in the group stage before drawing against Denmark and Slovakia.

Wins against Slovakia, Switzerland and the Netherlands followed in the knockout stage but Southgate came under fire for being unable to get the best out of a star-studded squad. Former Bayern Munich boss Tuchel, 51, led Chelsea to the Champions League title in 2021 having twice won Ligue 1 during his two-year spell in charge of Paris St-Germain and lifted the Bundesliga with Bayern.

He has never managed in international football but, on being appointed by the Football Association to replace Southgate in October, was tasked with trying to deliver a first piece of silverware since the 1966 World Cup at next year's World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico. "We want to implement the together-

ness and the joy and for everyone to feel safe to express themselves and give their very best," said Tuchel.

"We want to play with a hunger and a joy to win and not with the fear to lose. Anything can happen in football - we know this - but the focus is on winning [and having] a higher number of touches in the opponent's box, higher amount of attacks, higher amount of high ball recoveries."

Tuchel's more attacking and front-footed style may be a welcome change for those England fans critical of Southgate's style while his first squad selection appeared indicative of a focus on the next 18 months and winning the World Cup rather than longer-term squad development. In an interview with ITV Sport, Tuchel said England were missing "the identity, the clarity, the rhythm, the repetition of patterns, the freedom of players, the expression of players, the hunger" to win Euro 2024.

On Thursday he said: "I think we need to turn this around. We have so many experienced players, so many players who have won with clubs and I think

we have every right to be self-confident."

England captain Harry Kane, who played under Tuchel at Bayern last year, said the players have adapted quickly to their new manager and his methods in his first training camp.

"I had the pleasure of working with him last year and I knew what he could bring to the type of squad we have," said Kane.

"We've only been together a few days and it hasn't disappointed. Camp after camp, as he settles in and we get to know him more, I think we will improve as we go. Ultimately, it's about building up until next year." Tuchel left Bayern at the end of the 2023-24 season, Kane's first with the German club, after they failed to win the Bundesliga for the first season in 11 years.

"He's very straight talking," said Kane. "He knows what he wants and knows what he wants from his team. It doesn't matter who you are or how many games you played, he'll tell you the same as he will tell one of the young players what he wants. That's a good standard to set."



DENAIN, FRANCE: Ward Vanhoof of Belgium and Team Flanders - Baloise crosses the finish line during the 66th Grand Prix de Denain - Porte du Hainaut 2025 a 197.4km one day race from Denain to Denain on March 20, 2025 in Denain, France.



In brief

Police nab 16 criminals

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police have launched a crackdown against illegal arms and drug dealers, arresting 16 suspects in the last 48 hours and registering cases against them. A public relations officer told APP on Thursday that the crackdown was conducted under the directives of senior officials to curb crime in the capital. He said that during the operations, law enforcement officers recovered six pistols of different calibers, one rifle along with ammunition, from the arrested suspects. He further stated that the police also confiscated 3,480 grams of heroin, 560 grams of hashish, and 1,448 grams of crystal meth (Ice) from drug peddlers. He said cases have been registered against the arrested individuals, and further investigations are underway to dismantle networks involved in illegal arms trade and drug trafficking.

54,168 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 54,168 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 57,251 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1402.0 feet and was at its dead level of 1402 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 17,100 cusecs and 16,900 cusecs, respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1058 feet, which was 8 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 18,400 cusecs and 15,600 cusecs, respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 19,800, 26,400, 16,200 and 6,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 10,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 6557 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

IESCO issues programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): IESCO on Thursday issued 3-day power suspension programme for Friday, Saturday and Sunday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. The power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended on (Friday) 21st March 2025, from 07:00 AM to 05:00 PM, Attock Circle, Khanda, Gagan Feeders, On (Saturday) 22nd March 2025, from 07:00 AM to 11:00 PM, Rawalpindi City Circle, Chakra, Saham, Range Road, Modern Flour Mill, Mallatbad, KTM, Peshawar Road, Quaid-e-Azam Hospital Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Kallar City, Dobaran Feeders, From 07:00 AM to 05:00 PM, Attock Circle, Dil Jabi, Microwave, Maritime, Gul Muhammad, Khanda, Gagan Feeders. On (Sunday) 23rd March 2025, 07:00 AM to 11:00 PM, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, RCCI-I, III & IV Feeders and surrounding areas will remain closed.

Poet Eshrat remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): On Thursday marks the 33rd death anniversary of Eshrat Rahmani, a celebrated Urdu poet known for his eloquent poetry and deep reflections on human emotions and social issues. Eshrat Rahmani was born on April 16, 1910, in Rampur, Uttar Pradesh, British India, his real name was Imtiaz Ali Khan.

PHAF committed to improve life quality

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Housing Authority Foundation (PHAF), Ministry of Housing and Works has emerged as a beacon of hope for residents of Pakistan which was committed to enhance the quality of life, promoting economic prosperity, and improving mobility for the residents.

As a recognized public works leader and in collaborations with Federal & Provincial public entities, PHAF was striving to continuously improve operations to provide a safe and sustainable environment and was consistently striving to eliminate shelterlessness and to reduce the housing shortfall in Pakistan.

According to an official document, in 2000, PMHA was renamed as Pakistan Housing Authority Foundation (PHAF) and placed under the Ministry of Housing and Works. In 2012, PHAF was registered as an NPO under the Companies Ordinance. From 1989-2007, the FGE Housing Authority allotted 22,785 units to its members. Membership Drives I and II began in 2009 and 2015, registering over 186,000 employees. Members were accommodated in four housing schemes.

PHAF major accom-

plishments included multiple successful projects in major cities, handing over 24 projects, including 6,362 apartments/houses. Over the past year, FGEHA made significant progress in project development and resolving related issues. Pak PWD contributed to infrastructure by completing office buildings and road rehabilitation, investing over 3 billion rupees. They also modernized operations with the Electronic Project Approval and Documentation System (EPADS).

Moreover, several initiatives were implemented, including Creation of a web-based application and central database for improved coordination, Regular data updates and record management, Issuance of 2,136 allotments to federal government servants, Rent recovery of 730.37 million rupees, Transfer of maintenance operations to Estate Office, Launch of an upgraded One Window Cell for employee allotments.

Having its own self revenue mechanism PHAF does not receive any grant from the government. Moreover, PHA-F was registered with Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan under section 42 of the Companies Act 2017

by taking over all rights, privileges and other interests of the existing authority i.e. Pakistan Housing Authority and working as a subordinate office of the Ministry of Housing & Works to carry out the purposes/affairs of the Federation.

Total budget allocated for the PHA Foundation was Rs 10,298,094,885 out of which operational budget for fiscal year was Rs 805,096,336 whereas its development Budget stood at Rs 9,492,998,549.

The PHA Foundation had developed nearly 7,000 housing units in provincial capitals, with two ongoing projects totaling 4,550 units in Islamabad and Quetta. A 15,000-unit project in Peshawar, including an initial phase of 800 units, was in the tendering stage.

These projects were being pursued on a self-finance basis. The current housing shortage in Pakistan was 10 million units annually, highlighting the need for state support and collaboration between public and private sectors.

PHA Foundation was also finalizing policy and legislative developments including joint ventures, maintenance and management, and direct land purchase to improve performance.

High-level delegation visits COMSTECH

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP), Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan, led a high-level delegation to the COMSTECH Secretariat to explore collaborative opportunities in youth development, science, and technology.

The delegation included Ms. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Chairperson of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC); Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC); Prof. Dr. Zia ul Qayyum, Executive Director HEC; Mr. Muhammad Aamir Jan, Executive Director NAVTTTC, and senior officials from River Kabul, a total of 10,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 6557 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General of COMSTECH, welcomed the delegation

and presented an overview of COMSTECH's initiatives aimed at empowering young scientists and professionals, particularly in Pakistan and the broader OIC region.

During the meeting, Prof. Choudhary highlighted COMSTECH's ongoing efforts in science, technology, and capacity-building programs designed to equip youth with modern skills and knowledge. He emphasized the organization's commitment to fostering innovation, research, and scientific excellence.

Chairman PMYP Rana Mashood Ahmad Khan lauded COMSTECH's achievements and underscored the importance of strengthening partnerships for the advancement of youth-centric programs.

"It is time to establish robust linkages and launch youth-centric programs that

will create new opportunities for skill development, technology advancement, and entrepreneurship.

COMSTECH provides a powerful platform to strengthen Pakistan's presence in the OIC region and the world," he stated.

Both sides agreed to collaborate on initiatives focused on skill development, science and technology, and professional training. Rana Mashood reaffirmed the government's commitment to youth empowerment, while Prof. Choudhary assured COMSTECH's dedication to fostering scientific progress and global partnerships.

This collaboration marks a significant step in enhancing Pakistan's scientific and technological landscape while creating new opportunities for young professionals in emerging fields.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq in a group photo with members delegates from Harvard University United States of America at Parliament House.

40 arrested and 3 shops sealed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration had introduced 24/7 helpline for the resolution of public grievances which yielded results in arresting 40 sellers and sealing shops across markets of the Federal Capital.

The Islamabad district administration has launched a series of raids targeting sellers accused of overcharging customers, with 40 individuals arrested and three shops sealed so far. The operation follows a spike in complaints reported through the city's round-the-clock helpline, said the spokesman of ICT administration here.

In Faissal Market's F-7 sector, Assistant Commissioner teams detained five sellers and closed three shops for violating government-approved price lists. Simultaneously, inspections in Ghouri Town led to 15 arrests for similar offenses. Authorities also took action at Dam Road, detaining five shopkeepers for ignoring official pricing guidelines.

The vegetable market saw 15 arrests after sellers were found charging excessive rates and occupying public spaces illegally.

In this regard, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, has directed magistrates to ensure strict enforcement of pricing rules and quality standards. "No tolerance for exploitation," Memon stated, urging teams to tighten checks citywide.

The DC emphasized that magistrates must monitor both pricing and product quality, particularly for essential items. He instructed officials to accelerate responses to public complaints, citing the helpline's role in identifying violations. Memon warned sellers against hoarding, unauthorized price hikes, or encroachments, stressing that legal action will follow non-compliance. Residents have welcomed the measures, calling for sustained efforts to stabilize market rates.

"Exploitation of citizens will not be tolerated. Teams are on high alert," DC Memon reiterated, urging residents to report violations promptly.

While Pakistan's current export mix might shield it from immediate impacts, Dr. Suleri warned that exporters failing to pay carbon taxes locally would be subjected to levies in their destination markets.

Dr. Sajid Amin Javed, SDPI's Deputy Executive Director, opened the discussion by framing climate change as a macroeconomic risk that must be integrated into Pakistan's broader policy framework. He underscored the inefficiency of short-term tax policies, citing past failures in areas like tobacco taxation. With carbon levies emerging as a likely

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah offered a legal perspective, stressing that Pakistan, as a low-emission but climate-vulnerable nation, must prioritize adaptation over mitigation. He pointed out that while global financial flows are still skewed towards carbon reduction, adaptation remains critical for Pakistan's economic and social stability.

He added that Pakistan must design a differentiated carbon tax regime that aligns with its economic realities, ensures climate justice, and supports industries in making a sustainable transition.

In his keynote, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI's Executive Director, noted Denmark's long-standing support in helping Pakistan navigate the complexities of carbon taxation and carbon markets. He highlighted the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)—a tax on carbon-intensive exports to the European Union (EU)—

DGSE hosts 'Special Abilities & Spring Plantation Drive'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE), Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training hosted mega event "Special Abilities & Spring Plantation Drive" in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority (CDA) at National Special Education Centre for Hearing Impaired Children H-9 here on Thursday.

Addressing the Special Abilities & Spring Plantation Drive event as the chief guest, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui commended the special children for their talents and reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment for ensuring quality education, training, and rehabilitation for children with special needs.

The minister said that students were assets of the country and the ministry was utilizing all available resources for the promotion of education in Pakistan. The government was taking all possible measures for elevation of education in the country, he added.

He said that the ministry would uplift the potential and productivity of special education in the federal capital. He highlighted the services and facilities of special education centers under DGSE and elaborated on news initiatives being taken by the ministry.

Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajihah Qamar as the guest of honor, expressed her delight being among special children. She said that we as a team were working effectively for the promotion and elevation of education among the students especially children.

She said that special students were imparting quality education at DGSE and after getting education, they would contribute their services for the development and prosperity of the country. The event was marked by flamboyant performances by special children with a particularity heartwarming rendition of the national anthem in sign language. Worthy Ministers, Chairman of Higher Education Commission (HEC), and dignitaries

engaged with the children, taking photographs and sharing joyous moments. Following the performances, the guests visited stalls showcasing crafts made by special students viewed display of the assistive technology and rehab devices. A dedicated exhibition featuring paintings by DEAF/HI students highlighted their hidden artistic talents and was widely admired by the attendees. The stalls of various FDE institutes in the event displayed inclusivity and support to the children with disabilities.

Concluding the event, the federal minister, Minister of State, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahemad and DG Special Education Capt (R) Asif Iqbal Asif planted the saplings along special children, marking the launch of the Spring Plantation Drive, symbolizing growth, renewal, and a greener future. The event successfully highlighted the resilience, talent, and potential of special children, reinforcing the commitment of the government and stakeholders towards inclusive excellence.

IFA shuts down restaurant, warns over 40 food outlets

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has closed a prominent restaurant and imposed heavy fines during Ramadan inspections, uncovering expired ingredients, contaminated oil, and unsanitary conditions while over 40 food outlets received warnings as part of a citywide crackdown on health violations.

Talking to APP, Deputy Director Operations of IFA, Dr. Tahira Siddique said, during routine checks, the IFA food safety teams (FSTs) seized expired items and substandard cooking oil, which were immediately destroyed. A well-known restaurant in the Federal Capital was shut down after inspectors found rusted

utensils, pest infestations, and meat stored in unsafe conditions.

Food inspectors reported open sewage, dirty preparation areas, and foul odors at multiple locations. The restaurant in question had previously been warned to improve cleanliness but failed to comply. "Using expired or low-quality ingredients directly threatens public health," stated Dr. Siddique.

The IFA issued corrective notices to 40 food vendors, mandating urgent upgrades to storage, waste management, and kitchen hygiene.

Director of the IFA emphasized that facilities ignoring guidelines face closures or fines.

Authorities are conducting surprise inspections during sehri and iftar hours to ensure compliance. "No violations will be tolerated during Ramadan," Dr. Siddique added, urging residents to report unsafe practices via the IFA helpline.

The IFA reaffirmed its commitment to food safety, particularly during Ramadan, when meal preparation surges. Continuous monitoring will persist beyond the holy month to enforce standards.

Meanwhile, authorities have warned that consuming food prepared in unhygienic conditions poses serious health risks. IFA has vowed to continue strict monitoring to ensure safe food for the public.

Denmark backs Pakistan's green transition

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the Embassy of Denmark hosted a high-stakes pre-budget dialogue on carbon taxation, emphasizing the urgent need for a well-rounded policy approach.

Speaking at the forum Danish Ambassador Jacob Linulf emphasized the urgent need for climate action in Pakistan, citing climate change as a fundamental threat that requires immediate attention. He highlighted the critical role of organizations like the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in guiding the government and private sector toward sustainable solutions, said a press release.

Ambassador Linulf reaffirmed Denmark's commitment to supporting Pakistan's transition to renewable energy. He noted that despite Denmark's limited natural resources, it successfully shifted from fossil fuels to clean energy, proving that economic

growth and sustainability can go hand in hand. He stressed that Pakistan, with its vast renewable energy potential, can adopt a similar approach by diversifying its energy sources for efficiency and resilience.

The envoy underscored the role of energy efficiency in maintaining industrial competitiveness. He advocated for smart carbon taxation and modern technology adoption to phase out outdated fossil fuel-based systems. He further emphasized that firm and long-term government policies are essential for fostering innovation, attracting investment, and positioning Pakistan as a global supplier of green technologies.

Ambassador Linulf highlighted the importance of individual and corporate responsibility in the green transition. He urged businesses to embrace energy efficiency by insulating buildings and optimizing production processes. Given that Pakistan exports a significant volume of textiles to Europe and North

America, he stressed that adopting green value chains would enhance demand for Pakistani products in eco-conscious markets.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Senior Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan during the pre-budget seminar on carbon taxation underlined that Carbon taxation should be a tool for resilience that enable climate adaptation and resilience in the vulnerable nations.

Justice Shah among the other experts at the session highlighted the complexities of carbon taxation, stressing that it should serve as more than just a revenue-generating tool—rather, it must align with environmental sustainability and economic resilience.

He argued, citing South Africa's model, which directs 10% of carbon tax revenues to climate resilience projects. He called on global financial institutions to recognize adaptation credits and restructure carbon markets to support vulnerable

nations.

While Pakistan's current export mix might shield it from immediate impacts, Dr. Suleri warned that exporters failing to pay carbon taxes locally would be subjected to levies in their destination markets.

Dr. Sajid Amin Javed, SDPI's Deputy Executive Director, opened the discussion by framing climate change as a macroeconomic risk that must be integrated into Pakistan's broader policy framework. He underscored the inefficiency of short-term tax policies, citing past failures in areas like tobacco taxation. With carbon levies emerging as a likely

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In his keynote, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, SDPI's Executive Director, noted Denmark's long-standing support in helping Pakistan navigate the complexities of carbon taxation and carbon markets. He highlighted the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)—a tax on carbon-intensive exports to the European Union (EU)—

which will become fully operational by January 1, 2026.

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carbon taxation has emerged as a potential fiscal tool. The experts floated ideas such as levying carbon-based vehicle registration fees or introducing a carbon levy on fuel, while economist Afia Malik cautioned that such measures could disproportionately burden low-income groups, leading to inflationary pressures.

Atif Tanveer from Mari Petroleum warned that imposing a carbon tax on the heavily regulated oil and gas sector could stifle economic activity. Meanwhile, Saad Ahmed flagged the energy sector's circular debt crisis, urging the government to prioritize sustainable transport solutions over blanket taxation.

Sobiah Becker, an advisor to the Pak-German Climate Energy Partnership (PGCEP), advocated for a hybrid carbon pricing model. She proposed a phased approach, starting with a Rs1,500 per ton carbon levy on high-emitting industries like cement, steel, and textiles, escalating

to Rs2,500 per ton in later stages. By 2030, a mix of carbon taxes and emissions trading systems (ETS) could be in place, aligning Pakistan with global carbon market trends.

Ali Kemal, Chief SDGs, Planning Ministry said Carbon taxation is essential—whether for reducing emissions or increasing government revenue—it must be implemented strategically.

He noted that a carbon-neutral product market was emerging, and Pakistan should adapt to stay competitive.

Kemal recommended that revenue from carbon taxation should be recycled into cash transfers and social protection programs, ensuring equitable distribution with proper compliance monitoring to ensure policy effectiveness as resistance to carbon taxation was expected, and implementation should be gradual and well-structured to manage challenges effectively.

Police arrest murderer

TALOQAN (Pajhwok): A man has been arrested on the charge of killing his mother in Takhar, an official said on Thursday. In a statement, police spokesman Qari Zabihullah Hakimi said the man stabbed his mother to death after a verbal argument in Chahaab district last night. He said the suspect was arrested after a comprehensive investigation by security forces. According to Hakimi, the case has been handed over to relevant organs for initial investigation.

1 killed, 7 hurt in collision

CHARIKAR (Pajhwok): One individual has been killed and seven others wounded in a traffic accident in the Salang district of central Parwan province. In a statement, the police headquarters said the accident occurred when two cars collided in the Royab area of the Ghorband Dara highway late on Wednesday. The police confirmed that a man lost his life and seven others were injured, with the wounded transferred to the provincial hospital.

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

Solar year 1403: Another year in isolation for Afghanistan

KABUL (Ariana News): Solar year 1403 (March 21, 2024 to March 20, 2025) has been yet another year of political isolation and non-recognition for the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) government.

It was also another year that the United Nations refused to hand over Afghanistan's seat at the UN.

No country has yet officially recognized the IEA government and added to this, the International Criminal Court's prosecutor submitted a request for the arrest of the Islamic Emirate's supreme leader.

Despite this however, the Islamic Emirate views 1403 as a year with many achievements.

Officials have said the government has made good progress in many sectors. They feel they have strengthened ties and expanded interaction with many countries in the region and around the world.

The IEA has in fact said that relations which many countries have with Afghanistan are tantamount to them recognizing the Islamic Emirate.

Establishing an inclusive government, respecting human rights, especially the rights of women and minorities, and combating terrorist groups and drugs have always been considered important preconditions for the international community to recognize the Islamic Emirate.

In addition to the Islamic Emirate's failure to achieve global legitimacy, the pressures and sanctions of the international community against the Islamic Emirate continued.

During this year, for the first time, Karim Khan, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, submitted a request to the court to arrest the leader of the Islamic Emirate and the head of Afghanistan's Supreme Court.

The request, which the Islamic Emirate considered to be without a fair legal basis, resulted from political moves, they said. This led the IEA to cancel Afghanistan's ICC membership.

During 1403, however, high-level delegations from a number of countries continued to visit Afghanistan, and delegations from the Islamic Emirate also traveled to neighboring countries and the region.

Late this year, Iran's Foreign Minister led a high-level delegation to Kabul and met with the Prime Minister and a number of other senior officials. This was a visit that both sides declared the start of a new chapter in relations between Kabul and Tehran.

On the other hand, former government officials, lawyers and some politicians who fled Afghanistan when the former government collapsed, continued to return home.

But, the IEA's cabinet remained in a caretaker capacity in 1403.

The Supreme Leader of the IEA Hibatullah Akhundzada meanwhile visited the northern provinces of the country for the first time since August 2021 and encouraged local officials to serve the people honestly.

Many meetings held in Kabul and in provinces about the need for officials and people to support the system.

The Deputy Prime Minister for Economics said at a recent meeting of the Shiite community in Kabul that the Islamic Emirate respects ethnic diversity and considers it a symbol of unity in the country.

Nevertheless, the Islamic Emirate considers the year 1403 to be a year of achievements in the political sphere and emphasizes that good progress has been made during the year in the field of expanding diplomatic relations with countries in the region and the world.

The Islamic Emirate meanwhile continues to call on the international community and countries to abandon the politics of force and pressure and instead establish interactive relations with the Islamic Emirate.

The IEA continues to emphasize that it has fulfilled all the conditions of a legitimate state, but the United Nations is making excuses in the matter of handing over Afghanistan's seat at the UN.

Recovered drug addicts reunited with families



GHAZNI (BNA): The Ghazni Police Command has successfully reunited 31 individuals with their families after they completed a three-month rehabilitation program for drug addiction.

Khalid Sarhadi, spokesperson for the Ghazni Police, informed the Bakhtar News Agency that these individuals were collected from various regions within the province and treated at a 500-bed rehabilitation camp specifically designed for drug addicts.

This recent handover follows the earlier release of 33 other recovered individuals, who were also reintegrated into their families after completing their treatment.

The Ghazni Police Command continues to emphasize the importance of community support in the recovery process, aiming to reduce stigma and promote healing among affected families.

Authorities encourage ongoing public awareness and support initiatives to address the challenges of drug addiction in the province.

Honey production drops to 350 tonnes in Paktia

GARDEZ (Pajhwok): About 350 tonnes of honey have been produced in southeastern Paktia province this year, showing a 27 tonnes decrease, with farmers calling for a ban on imported honey, an official said.

Head of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Department Abdul Basir Kochai told Pajhwok Afghan News this year the department registered 276 farms in the province, which produced 350 tonnes of honey, showing a 27 tonnes decrease compared to last year.

He said the reason behind the declined honey yield was a shortage of flowers for bees and beekeepers were not allowed to transport their hives to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in cold weather, due to which the bees died.

He said his department was trying to ban the import of low-quality honey from neighboring countries.

"We have shared a plan with the ministry to stop importing low-quality honey from other neighbor-

ing countries. Honey production here in Paktia is good. We want natural honey from our own farms to be popular in the country", Kochai added.

Khan Zaman, head of Paktia Bee Farms Association and a farmer, explained the beekeeping business in the province has been affected due to the government's inattention.

About 10,000 boxes of bees died while being shifted to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to delay in issuing permits in the port and shortage of food in 1403 solar year.

Khan Zaman asked officials and charity foundations to pay attention in this regard.

"Approximately 10,000 boxes of bees have been destroyed due to delay in allowing bee trucks to enter the port and shortage of food supplies based on statistics in Paktia. We demand establishment of training centers for people so beekeeping and honey production are up to standard this year".

Zabihullah, a beekeeper in Gardez city, said the gov-

ernment should ban honey imported from Pakistan and Iran.

On the one hand, the quality of imported honey is not good and on the other, it has harmed domestic honey market, Zabihullah added.

Currently, one kilogram of pure honey is being sold for 330afis in the province.

IEA trying to connect with neighbors via railway

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Islamic Emirate is trying to connect Afghanistan with regional countries, especially Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Pakistan, through railways, participants of the Peace and Trust international conference in Turkmenistan was told.

Mohammad Ashraf Haqshanas, spokesman for the Ministry of Public Works, wrote on his X-Page on Thursday that Herat Public Works Director Mullah Mohammad Idrees participated in the international conference in Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, on behalf of the ministry.

He told the mega event that railway played an important role in regional and international economic development, trade and international relations.

"The IEA leadership and the Ministry of Public Works have been trying to expand railway network in Afghanistan to connect it with regional countries, especially Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Pakistan," he said.

Haqshanas wrote that the purpose of the conference was to hold comprehensive discussions on regional economic development, expansion of railway network, electricity, gas transmission and economic stability.

Representatives from 100 countries participated in the conference, including representatives from the Afghan Electricity Company, the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, and the Ministry of Public Works.

15 sorcerers
detained in
Ghazni

GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): Fifteen sorcerers have been arrested in southern Ghazni province in the past three months, the Propagation of Virtue, Prevention of Vice and Bearing Complaints Department said.

PVPE Director Maulvi Mohammad Alim Nasih told Pajhwok Afghan News the department arrested 15 wizards in the province during the past three months.

He said the arrested individuals had been handed over to judicial organs and punished.

According to Nasih, some other people who had been arrested were released for lack of evidence against them after taking a pledge.

The department is committed to preventing corruption, fraud, deception, and other actions that harm society and cause problems among people, he said, adding efforts are also being made to arrest all those who call themselves sorcerers, magicians and give talismans.

Nasih asked the people not to approach such people and refrain from actions that are against the religion of Islam.

Some Ghazni residents welcome this move by the virtue department and said these individuals not only robbed people of their money, but also created problems between families.

Abdul Wali told Pajhwok people in many areas are illiterate, which is why they believe in false beliefs and superstitions and turn to soothsayers and fortune tellers to solve their problems.

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GHOR (BNA): The Ghor Mines and Petroleum Department has announced the discovery and registration of 25 new mines since the beginning of this year. Mawlawi Abdul Hakim Akhundzada, the head of Ghor's department, revealed this significant development to a reporter from Bakhtar News Agency.

According to Akhundzada, these mines were identified by the department's technical team in collaboration with provincial leadership across Ghor's districts.

He noted that six of the newly discovered mines have already been block-assigned, with contracts expected to be finalized soon.

In addition to the new discoveries, the Ghor Mining Department has signed contracts with domestic companies for the extraction of various minerals this year.

These include lead and zinc from the first block in Tulak district and the third block in Shahrak district, as well as travertine stone from Zalincha in Tulak district and gypsum from Dolina and Oyan in the same district.

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Afghan prisoners in Iran sent home

KABUL (Ariana News): The process of transferring Afghan prisoners in Iran began on Thursday, in the presence of Fazal Mohammad Haqqani, the acting head of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's embassy in Tehran, and officials from the Ministry of Justice of the host country.

On the first day, 149 Afghan prisoners were transferred to Afghanistan after their identities were verified.

These prisoners are scheduled to serve the remaining term of their sentences in Afghan prisons in accordance with the laws of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

A second group of prisoners was sent to Afghanistan on Wednesday.



The Convict Transfer Committee of the Ministry of Justice of the host country is also scheduled to continue this process after the Eid al-Fitr holidays.

Citizens demand better healthcare facilities in provinces

BALKH (TOLOnews): The Balkh Directorate of Public Health has reported that nearly 2,500 patients from Balkh and other provinces visit Abu Ali Sina Regional Hospital daily for medical treatment.

According to officials, in addition to treating patients, up to 50 surgeries are performed at this hospital each day.

Kamal Khan Zadrani, the spokesperson for the Balkh Directorate of Public Health, stated: "Approximately 2,500 patients visit the regional hospital daily, and up to 50 minor and major surgeries are performed there."

Mohammad Yousuf Hotak, a doctor at Abu Ali Sina Regional Hospital, said: "Patients from the provinces of Faryab, Jawzjan, Sar-e Pol, Samangan, and various districts travel here for treatment."

Many citizens who have brought their patients to this hospital are urging the authorities to equip hospitals in other provinces and districts to reduce the burden on Balkh's healthcare system.

Mohammad Khavari, a resident of Badghis, traveled 12 hours on difficult roads to bring his patient to Balkh.

He stated that his patient first contracted measles and later developed pneumonia,

requiring hospitalization at Abu Ali Sina Regional Hospital for the past five days.

Mohammad Khavari said: "When I arrived at this hospital, I saw a large number of patients admitted. My patient, who has measles, was also admitted, and the staff assisted us as much as they could."

Besides Balkh, most of the patients at this hospital come from Faryab, Sar-e Pol, Badghis, Jawzjan, Badakhshan, and Baghlan provinces.

Asadullah Mohammadi, a patient's guardian from Faryab, said: "The services provided at this hospital are excellent, and it has separated

rate departments for various treatments."

Najibullah, a patient's guardian from Balkh, said: "The healthcare services here are good, but our main problem is the lack of medicine."

According to information from the Balkh Directorate of Public Health, in addition to the Abu Ali Sina Regional Hospital, healthcare services in the districts of Balkh province have also improved.

Every day, a large number of patients from Faryab, Sar-e Pol, Badghis, Jawzjan, Balkh, Badakhshan, and Baghlan travel to Abu Ali Sina Regional Hospital for treatment.

Vocational training opportunities for 500 recovering addicts

HERAT (TOLOnews): The Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs in Herat has announced that it has provided vocational training opportunities for 500 recovering addicts in the province.

These individuals are receiving specialized training in five fields to help them secure stable jobs after overcoming addiction and reintegrate into normal life.

Parwiz Mohammadi, a representative of the Herat Directorate of Labor and Social Affairs, stated: "These individuals are being trained in five professions: home appliance repair, bag-making, tailor-

ing, shoemaking, and building electrical work. A total of 10 training classes have been established, with each profession having two classes. Each class consists of 50 rehabilitated individuals."

Some of the trainees have urged the caretaker government to provide them with job opportunities after they complete their training.

Mohammad, one of the trainees, told TOLOnews: "We are learning skills here, and we hope to return home with the ability to earn a living."

Arsalan, another trainee, said: "Once we leave here, we will have a skill, and we

will no longer seek drugs."

Faridun, who is participating in the tailoring course, remarked: "The tailoring skills I am learning here not only keep me away from drugs but also help me rebuild my home and life."

Toryali, who is undergoing electrical appliance repair training, has turned his back on drugs after 12 years of addiction.

At 34 years old, he stated: "The skills I am learning here will help me build my future once I leave. I urge the authorities to fulfill their promises so that we can find work."

Vocational training has given these young men hope for a better life and a

path away from addiction. Their ultimate goal is to return to the lives they had before their struggles with substance abuse.

Abdul Rahim Saedi, an instructor, said: "These individuals have been marginalized by society, but they are eager to learn new skills and strive to regain their dignity and former status."

Currently, nearly 4,000 individuals are undergoing treatment at a specialized addiction rehabilitation hospital in Herat. Unemployment and economic hardships have been cited as the primary factors driving many of these individuals toward drug use.

Caught in penury, Nargis nurses ailing mom

KABUL (Pajhwok): Nargis, a young woman working at a private school, complains of poverty, saying she can barely make ends meet with her meager monthly salary of 4,000 afghanis.

At 27, Nargis remains unmarried, shouldering the responsibility for looking after her sick mother and supporting two younger sisters.

The combined weight of poverty, hardship and her mother's illness has taken a toll on the woman's physical and mental health — she feels as if she is 50 years old.

Nargis works as a cleaner at a private school in the Taimani neighbourhood of Kabul, earning a monthly salary of 4,000 afghanis.

She works Saturday through Thursday, from morning until 5 pm, cleaning classrooms, offices, hallways, bathrooms and the yard. She says: "I've cleaned so much and locked so many doors that even my nails are aching... What can I do? It's out of necessity."

Nargis lives in a two-room house in Chahar Qala-i-Wazirabad area, paying 2,000 afghanis in rent while carefully spend-



ing the rest to meet family expenses.

She adds: "If it weren't for help from some neighbours and colleagues, we would often go without food for three meals a day."

Unable to hold back her tears, she says: "My younger sister told me yesterday she trembles from hunger, and we have no choice but to endure it."

She says if they find the opportunity, her sisters are willing to work. But they are not ready to work in people's homes.

Nargis has three brothers, all married and living separately from their mother and sisters.

She rails against her oldest brother, who is well-off but cares two hoots for his sick mother. Her two other brothers are also living in poverty and hardship.

Nargis' mother is suffering from a heart condition, and she is forced to buy her medication. "I ask my sisters and brothers for help so that we can treat our mother..."

"I just want them to help

our mother, because the three of us are stuck here, and we have no hope except Almighty Allah."

She also pleads with wealthy individuals to assist her and her family during this blessed month of Ramadan.

Nargis is not the only person suffering from economic woes and seeking help. For over four decades of conflict in the country, many families have been enduring poverty, unemployment and hardships.



KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in a group photo with party leaders Nawab Khan Chandio and Nawabzada Burhan Khan Chandio.

PHC grants protective bail to NA Opp leader

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) granted protective bail case of Opposition Leader Umar Ayub till 15th April, on Thursday.

The court asked to provide details of the cases registered against Ayub, inquiring which authority was being asked to provide the report. The court sought a report from the federal government and relevant institutions.

PTI leader Umar Ayub Khan claimed that he is nominated in allegations of biscuit theft and condemned the government's attempts to silence him. He claimed that the government had registered over 100 cases against him across the country, including a bizarre charge of stealing biscuits from a truck. He maintained that these allegations were baseless and aimed at intimidating him.

He also blaming the government's policies for the rising costs of living. He accused the government of being incompetent and demanded a comprehensive security conference involving all parliamentarians. Furthermore, Umar Ayub announced

plans to launch a protest movement after Ramzan and vowed to take forward the "Constitutional Protection of Pakistan" movement.

Court directs to submit monthly compliance report in contempt of court petitions: A divisional bench comprising of Acting Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice SM Atique Shah and Justice Syed Arshad Ali annoyed public servant attitude and expressed concern over the lack of compliance with court orders, on Thursday.

The court was informed that hundreds of new contempt cases have been filed against government departments, majority against the health and education departments. The court directed the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to submit a monthly report on the progress made in implementing court orders.

The court also expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of cooperation from government officials and directed them to send senior officers who are aware of the court's decisions and proceedings.

The PHC has informed

that a committee has been constituted to review the cases and ensure compliance with court orders. The committee includes officials from the Advocate General's office and will submit a monthly report to the Chief Secretary and the Registrar of the PHC.

The court adjourned the hearing, directing the government officials to take immediate action to comply with court orders and avoid further contempt cases.

Meanwhile, PHC heard a contempt of court petition filed by PTI leader Azam Swati, seeking removal of his name from the Provisional National Identification List. The court, comprising Acting Chief Justice SM Atique Shah and Justice Syed Arshad Ali, directed the federal government to respond within 14 days.

The counsel, Ali Azim Afridi, argued that despite the court's order to remove Swati's name from the list, it had not been done yet. The court had previously ordered Swati's name to be removed from the list, but it still remains. The court adjourned the hearing, seeking a response from the federal government within two weeks.

Mashal's plea again excluded from IHC cause list

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A new twist has emerged in the cases related to meetings with former prime minister Imran Khan, as Mashal Yousafzai's contempt of court petition in Islamabad High Court (IHC) was once again not included in the cause list despite a court order.

The IHC had expressed strong displeasure on Wednesday over the cancellation of the cause list. Justice Sardar Ijaz Ishaq Khan had summoned a written response from the Deputy Registrar and the Advocate General regarding the matter. The court had also remarked that even if the case was not listed today, the hearing would still take place.

Meanwhile, a larger bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) is set to hear over 20 consolidated cases related to jail meetings on Thursday. The three-member bench, led by the acting chief justice, included Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Justice Azam Khan.

It is noteworthy that the jail superintendent had requested the consolidation of all petitions into a single larger bench for streamlined proceedings.

JIT summons Aleema over social media propaganda

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Joint Investigation Team (JIT) has summoned Aleema Khan and 16 others again over allegations of negative propaganda on social media. They are required to appear on March 21 for further questioning.

Notable names on the list include Syed Firdous Shamim Naqvi, Mian Aslam Iqbal, Hammad Azhar, Aun Abbas, Azhar Mishwani, and Zulfi Bukhari. Aleema Khan, sister of PTI founder, had already appeared before the JIT on March 19.

The Joint Investigation Team (JIT), formed under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016, is digging deep into the case, leaving no stone unturned. The federal government has tasked Islamabad Police's Inspector General with heading the probe. Authorities are determined to take stern action against the individuals involved in misleading the online campaign.

KP CM directs improvement in waste management operations

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur has desired the concerned quarters to improve the waste management operations across the province to the desired level in order to ensure a cleaner and healthier environment for all citizens.

In this regard, the Chief Minister has also approved a suggestive initiative "Smart Waste Management Framework," aimed at modernizing waste collection, monitoring, and accountability through digital tracking for all Water and Sanitation Services Companies (WSSCs) and Tehsil Municipal Administrations (TMAs) across the province. This initiative aims to enhance operational efficiency and optimize resource utilization by integrating technology into waste management.

A key component is the mobile application (PakSaf), enabling real-time tracking, workforce accountability, optimized vehicle management, and data-driven decision-making. To improve waste management in the province, urban areas will have designated collection points which will be progressively increased with strengthened tracking mechanisms, while rural areas will see village-level waste collection systems, mobile waste units, and enhanced community engagement to promote responsible disposal.

The implementation of this initiative will be carried out in a phased manner by the Local Government Department. The first phase, Assessment & Planning, will focus on evaluating waste generation and mapping existing infrastructure. The second phase, System Development & Testing, will involve the development of the PakSaaf App and the execution of pilot projects in selected



areas. In the final and the third phase, full Implementation & Monitoring, will include the province-wide rollout of the tracking system, establishment of a complaint Redressal mechanism, and continuous performance monitoring. In this regard, the Chief Minister's Secretariat has sent a formal letter to the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the request to direct all the concerned departments to examine the given outline of the initiative and submit a time-lined plan for the effective and timely implementation of the initiative.

Meanwhile, an important meeting regarding the lease policy was held under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur. The meeting was attended by relevant cabinet members, the Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary, administrative secretaries, and other senior officials.

The meeting conducted a detailed review of various matters related to the lease policy for government-owned lands, and a significant decision was made concerning the unused lands, worth billions of rupees, allocated to industries. It was decided that all lands allotted for industrial purposes, where industries have not yet been established, will be repossessed by the government.

The Chief Minister directed the

Department of Industries and the Board of Revenue to identify such lands across the province and initiate necessary steps to reclaim them. He emphasized that these lands will not be allowed to be used for any purpose other than what they were originally allocated for.

During the briefing, it was highlighted that land had been allotted in different districts to promote industrialization and create employment opportunities in the province. However, a significant portion of these lands remains unutilized, and no industries have been set up on them yet. Officials informed the meeting that the current market value of these lands runs into billions of rupees, and the failure to establish industries has undermined the original objective behind their allocation. It was noted that the effective utilization of these lands could significantly boost provincial revenues.

The meeting also deliberated on matters related to leasing government lands for long-term business purposes. It was decided that the recommendations of the committee formed to propose necessary amendments to existing laws will be presented for approval in the next cabinet meeting. The Chief Minister directed the committee to thoroughly review all relevant laws and submit its final recommendations at the upcoming cabinet session.

Russia, Ukraine ramp up drone attacks despite talks

MOSCOW, KYIV: Russian bombardments in eastern Ukraine ramped up overnight, killing two people, as Ukraine hit Russia's Engels military airfield in the country's southwest region of Saratov with drones.

Both Russia and Ukraine stepped up aerial attacks in the early hours of Thursday as United States President Donald Trump pushes both sides to agree to a ceasefire after more than three years of fighting. Ukrainian officials in the northeastern Sumy and Kharkiv regions said two people were killed and several others injured after Russia dropped more than three dozen glide bombs on the towns in the border regions.

Russian drone attacks on the town of Kropyvnytskyi, hundreds of kilometres from the front line, wounded 14 people and damaged rail infrastructure. "Kropyvnytskyi underwent the most massive enemy attack. Peaceful residential

buildings were destroyed," regional governor Andriy Raikoivych said.

The Ukrainian Air Force said that the Russian barrage, including on Kropyvnytskyi, consisted of 171 drones, of which 75 were shot down. Another 63 were downed by electronic jamming systems or were lost. Elsewhere, Ukraine struck Russia's Engels airbase in the Saratov region with attack drones overnight, causing a fire and explosions in the area, the Ukrainian military said on Thursday.

The airbase hosts Russian strategic bombers that are used to attack Ukraine and also has a warehouse holding cruise missiles and glide bombs, an official at the Security Service of Ukraine said. "It is significant because ... the city is home to Russia's strategic bomber fleet," said Al Jazeera's Dorsa Jabbari, reporting from Moscow. "This is not the first time this area has been targeted, but this is the

biggest attack seen so far [since the start of the war in February 2022]. A state of emergency has been declared."

Regional authorities said 10 people were injured in the attack. Jabbari also noted that 30 civilian homes and the city's main hospital sustained damage. "According to Russia's defence ministry, this is another sign that Ukraine is not serious about a peace settlement," she said. This latest wave of tit-for-tat attacks follows Russian President Vladimir Putin's commitment to a 30-day halt of strikes on Ukrainian energy infrastructure. He did not, however, agree to a full ceasefire.

"It's only a partial ceasefire, concerning the energy infrastructure of each country. And it hasn't yet been implemented. The details will be fleshed out when negotiations take place in Saudi Arabia [in the coming days]," said Al Jazeera's Assed Baig, reporting from Kyiv. — Al Jazeera



QUETTA: People offering funeral prayer senior JUI-F leader and veteran politician, Hafiz Hussain Ahmed.

Bangladesh passes new women, child protection law

DHAKA: Bangladesh passed a new law on Thursday, expediting the investigation and trial process in rape cases. The move follows nationwide outrage after an eight-year-old girl was raped and subsequently died from her injuries.

The girl, from Magura in southwestern Bangladesh, was staying at the house of her elder sister-in-law when the incident took place in early March. She was admitted to the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka in a critical condition and died six days later. The news of her death sparked protests across the country. As her body was taken for burial in Magura, thousands of people gathered in the city to participate in her funeral prayers.

An absentee funeral was also held for her at Dhaka University, followed by a protest march. The incident resulted in mounting pressure on the government to reform laws related to rape and the safety of women and children. The first law to be amended was the Women and Children Repression Prevention Ordinance, which was passed by Bangladesh's Advisory Council — the highest institution of its interim government led by Chief Adviser Prof. Muhammad Yunus.

"To ensure speedy trial and punishment of rape suspects, this reform was necessary. It will also help in ensuring proper investigation," Azad Majumder, the chief adviser's deputy press secretary, told Arab News. The new law reduces the investigation period of rape cases from 30 days to 15 days and the time for completing the trial from 180 days to 90 days. — Arab News

In Yemen's Sanaa, fear and defiance after US bombs

SANAA: Mukhtar Ahmed was riding his bike in northern Sanaa's al-Jiraf area when the ground trembled beneath him. Thunderous explosions echoed through the air, followed by the sound of terrified screams. It was Saturday just after sunset, a time when people were home for iftar during the holy month of Ramadan.

"I got off the bike and darted towards an alley. I thought it would be impossible to survive," the 26-year-old restaurant delivery courier told Al Jazeera. "The sheer terror of those explosions could kill." Mukhtar had no idea what had caused the deafening roar heard across Yemen's densely populated capital. But he later came to realise, the United States was bombing Yemen. A wave of American air strikes had killed more than 50 people.

The bombs pounded the vicinity of the political office of the Houthi rebel group (officially known as Ansar Allah), the de facto rulers of Yemen's populous northwest. It marked the beginning of an ongoing US bombing campaign that may usher in a new phase of war and instability for Yemen.

On March 7, a week

before the US strikes began, the Houthis gave Israel a four-day deadline to lift its blockade on the entry of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. If it did not, the Yemeni group promised to resume attacking Israel-linked ships in the Red Sea in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza. Those attacks had stopped when the now-broken Gaza ceasefire began in January but for the 15 months before that, the Houthis had paralysed shipping in one of the world's most important waterways and fired projectiles towards Israel.

The United Kingdom and the US launched hundreds of air strikes on what were reportedly Houthi targets, including weapons depots, missile launch pads and airports. Israel has also attacked Yemen. The ostensible purpose of these attacks was to "degrade" the military capabilities of the Iran-allied Houthis.

But the renewed US air strikes have hit residential areas where senior Houthi members are believed to reside, showing little regard for civilian lives. Second, the Houthis had not carried out any attacks despite their threat. With this shift under

US President Donald Trump, fears of war, shortages, and displacement haunt Yemeni civilians, who have endured years of hardship since the beginning of the country's civil war in 2014 between the Houthis and Yemen's Saudi-backed, United Nations-recognised government.

The conflict on the ground in Yemen has been largely frozen since 2022 with the Houthis and Saudi Arabia involved in negotiations. But those talks have done little to end the humanitarian crisis in the country, where millions of people are hungry. Many Yemenis now believe things are going to get worse, a fear strengthened by Trump's rhetoric.

"Hell will rain down upon you like nothing you have ever seen before," the US president said in a threat to the Houthis. And for Mukhtar, he fears Gaza has set a precedent for how bombing campaigns are conducted in the region. "The US is like Israel, and Hamas is like the Houthis," Mukhtar said, "so if the US-Houthi war continues, the US will do to Sanaa like what Israel has done to Gaza. Who will stop them?" — Al Jazeera

Strategy essential to counter violent extremism: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister on Information, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Dr. Saif, highlighted the growing threat of violent extremism, emphasizing that it is not merely an ideological issue but rather a consequence of various social, historical, economic, and psychological factors.

He stressed that countering extremism requires more than just security measures; instead, a long-term and comprehensive strategy is needed, developed with the coordination of all relevant institutions and stakeholders. He expressed these views while addressing a consultative workshop organized by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism (KPCVE) in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The workshop aimed to promote effective, integrated, and sustainable policymaking for preventing violent extremism. It brought together policymakers, academics, civil society representatives,

subject matter experts, and other stakeholders to assess the issue from multiple perspectives and devise a collective strategy.

In his speech, Barrister Dr. Saif underscored the importance of understanding violent extremism through a sociological and anthropological lens. He explained that extremism does not simply emerge based on ideological beliefs but is rather a product of social complexities, historical contexts, and differing value systems. Providing a historical perspective, he stated that extremism has existed in different forms across various eras and regions, evolving with changing times and circumstances. While religious extremism is currently the most visible form, environmental, linguistic, and political extremism are also rapidly growing in different parts of the world and require equal attention.

Barrister Dr. Saif highlighted the root causes of violent extremism, stating that social injustice, political instability, economic deprivation, and ideological exploitation are key factors contributing to its rise. He pointed out that while religion is often



used as a tool to propagate extremism, at its core, extremism is a human behavior that can manifest under any ideological framework.

He identified institutional weaknesses as a major challenge, explaining that weak state and social institutions play a significant role in fostering extremist ideologies. When state institutions fail to deliver their responsibilities effectively, it leads to injustice, instability, and public distrust, providing fertile ground for extremist narratives to thrive. In this context, he stressed that strong institutions are crucial in preventing the spread of such ideologies and steering individuals away from radicalization.

Refuting the notion that extremism is an issue exclusive to the East or the Islamic world, Barrister Dr. Saif pointed out that Western societies also experience extremism in various forms. He noted that historically, Western powers have also resorted to violence based on ideological justifications. Citing examples such as the Crusades, colonialism, and modern military campaigns, he argued that ideological violence has been a global phenomenon. He asserted that if we genuinely wish to eradicate violent extremism, we must approach the issue with an unbiased and objective perspective, free from preconceived notions.

Discussing an effective strategy to

counter violent extremism, Barrister Dr. Saif emphasized the need to focus on long-term policies rather than immediate, superficial responses. He suggested integrating critical thinking and tolerance into the education system to safeguard young minds from extremist influences. He further stressed the importance of creating economic opportunities, as financial hardships often push individuals toward extremist groups. Additionally, he advocated for political and social reforms to ensure that people are granted their fundamental rights, reducing feelings of despair and deprivation.

Concluding his address, Barrister Dr. Saif reaffirmed that violent extremism cannot be eradicated through force alone. Instead, a balanced and effective approach is required at ideological, social, economic, and educational levels. He called upon the government, civil society, educational institutions, and the media to work collectively toward building a peaceful, balanced, and progressive society.

The workshop also featured

addresses from Secretary Higher Education Kamran Ahmed Afridi, KPCVE Chief Coordination Officer Dr. Ayaz Khan, KPCVE Director General Dr. Muhammad Qasim, UNODC Senior Advisor Syed Hussain Haider, and other distinguished speakers. The speakers emphasized the importance of developing a comprehensive and integrated strategy to combat violent extremism and strengthening collaboration between governmental and non-governmental organizations. They particularly highlighted the role of educational institutions in fostering intellectual development and instilling positive ideologies in young minds as a key approach to counter extremism.

This workshop served not only as a crucial step toward policy alignment but also as an opportunity to strengthen partnerships between the government, civil society, and international organizations. All participants expressed their commitment to continuing collective efforts to combat violent extremism and contribute to the creation of a secure and prosperous society.