

First lunar eclipse on 14th
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The first lunar eclipse of the year will take place on March 14, starting at 8:57am. However, as this eclipse will occur during daylight hours, it will not be visible in Pakistan. According to astronomy experts, Pakistan will experience two lunar eclipses during 2025. The second lunar eclipse will be visible in Pakistan between the night of 7th and 8th September.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXII

No. 37

Regd. No. 241

RAMAZAN 04 1446 -- WEDNESDAY, MARCH 05 2025

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

PM highlights govt's efforts towards economic stability

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday lauded the performance of his cabinet members during the last one year and urged them to continue contributing towards economic stability with their untiring efforts as all the economic indicators were showing positive trajectory.

Addressing a special meeting of the cabinet members at the Jinnah Convention Center to review the one-year performance of the government, the prime minister said that during the last one year, it was a matter of satisfaction, that neither a single case of corruption had surfaced nor a false single allegation in this regard was leveled by the opposition.

The prime minister said that they should have to work hard to provide succour to hapless and financially weaker segments of society with all kind of assistance and compassion especially in the holy month of Ramadan, adding that the government had rolled out Rs20 billion Ramadan package to benefit four million deserving families through digital wallets system.

Each family would get Rs5,000 each, thus the new system would shut doors on all kind of allegations of financial mismanagement which had badly marred the functioning of entities like Utility Stores Corporation, he said, terming the relief initiative as 'quantum jump which will succeed'. He said that they took the challenge of saving the country from running into default. With hard work, the government succeeded in achieving the economic turnaround and steering the country out of the financial straits.

For the first time in country's history, meeting of the federal cabinet was



witnessed by people from different section of society and mediapersons present in the Convention Center besides, it was telecast live by the national TV channels. The prime minister said all the macroeconomic indicators were on the high scale and asked the members to work hard with dedication and commitment as these were prerequisite for making Pakistan one trillion economy till the year 2035.

He also thanked leadership of all the coalition partners in the government including PPP, MQM, BAP, IPP etc, for their support in the most difficult times. "We are the bearers of May 28 achievement and not of May 9," he said, questioning that a political party who was running a provincial government had written letters to IMF pressing against any agreement with the government.

The prime minister highlighting government's efforts towards economic stability, expressed the confidence that Rs400 billion tax cases pending

for adjudication in various courts would be decided expeditiously as the one by Sindh High Court which provided relief to the government with Rs23 billion. He underlined the need of plugging 850 billion rupees losses incurred by the loss-making state owned enterprises terming them as 'bottomless pits' which needed to be plugged, besides the need to end circular debt in the power sector.

He expressed the optimism that with collective efforts, Pakistan would emerge stronger and stressed upon development of a culture of forgiveness, affection and tolerance in the society. In collaboration with China, Pakistan would launch its first joint astronaut mission soon, he added.

He said the journey was dotted with challenges and difficulties but they would traverse the path towards progress and prosperity. The prime minister reiterated Pakistan's strong condemnation of Israel for closure of Gaza corridor for humanitarian assis-

tance in the month of Ramadan and said that more than 50,000 Palestinians had been martyred in the Israeli aggression.

While the Kashmiri people in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) were also facing worst kind of brutalities, he added. The prime minister called upon the international community to raise their full voice for the people of Palestine, Gaza and IIOJK.

On the occasion, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal and Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar also presented a book to the prime minister about the government's one year performance. Expressing his views, Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar said when they looked back, during the tenure of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's economy was ranked 24th.

When they took reigns of the government, it was a big challenge due to prevailing economic conditions of the country but through a solid direction and economic policy implementation, Pakistan achieved the economic stability, he added. The diplomatic isolation was over, Pakistan now became a member of the UNSC for the year 2025-26, he said, adding after a gap of 27 years, multilateral international conferences like SCO and girls education were held in Pakistan. The DPM/FM regretted that the terrorism reversal policy by the government of an opposition party in the past had seen return of the hardcore terrorists and expressed the confidence that through Azm-e-Istehkam, they would eliminate terrorism from the country. Dar further said that over \$20 billion investment by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Azerbaijan and other countries in Pakistan would strengthen the

Shehbaz forms committee for early realisation of accords with Azerbaijan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday formed a committee to ensure the early realisation of the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements signed with Azerbaijan during his recent visit to the country. The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the implementation of accords, directed the authorities concerned to present an action plan to take the Pakistan-Azerbaijan current trade volume to \$2 billion. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar will head the newly-formed committee that will prepare agreements in the energy and infrastructure sectors, according to a PM Office press release.

The prime minister also directed to complete all preparations on a priority basis ahead of the expected visit of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev to Pakistan next month. He also instructed the appointment of trade officers in Azerbaijan and other countries with a significant potential for trade with Pakistan. Prime Minister Shehbaz highlighting the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, said that the government was taking priority measures to fully capitalize on the vast trade and investment potential between Pakistan and Central Asian states. The participants of the meeting were told that during the joint business forum held in Baku during the prime minister's visit was participated by 83 Pakistani and 101 Azerbaijani companies. During the visit, 13 MoUs and agreements were signed between Pakistan and Azerbaijan to promote bilateral cooperation. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Jam Kamal Khan, Abdul Aleem Khan, Dr. Musadik Malik, Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi, and relevant senior officials.

country's economy. He also highlighted the risks posed by climate change to Pakistan. Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb, presenting an overview of the economy, said that Pakistan Stock Exchange had witnessed an increase of 71 percent return while the current account surplus was the highest in the last 20 years.

He apprised that the plans for right-sizing of 43 ministries and their 400 attached departments were afoot, whereas pension reforms and agriculture tax were introduced for the first time. FBR revenue had surged by 26 percent. The other major steps were

the introduction of faceless assessment system which saw revenues up by 60 percent in shortest time, he added.

Aurangzeb said all the international monetary institutions had lauded economic achievements of the incumbent government in Pakistan. Minister for Power Awaiz Ahmed Leghari briefed the meeting about the comprehensive reforms, saying that these efforts had resulted in reduction of Rs151 billion industrial cross subsidy. Till February 25, price of per unit had been reduced to Rs4.96 benefiting the consumers and industry alike.

KP govt form jirga to initiate talks with Kabul, CM told British HC

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, made a call meeting with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur at his office on Tuesday and discussed with him matters of mutual interest, particularly the role of British donor agencies in public welfare initiatives, regional security, and other relevant issues. The meeting was also attended by Additional Chief Secretary for Planning, Ikram Ullah, and other senior officials.

Talking on this occasion, the Chief Minister highlighted the deteriorating law and order situation in the province, especially in the newly merged districts, attributing it directly to the security situation in neighboring Afghanistan, and stressed the need for serious and result-oriented efforts to find a sustainable solution to this longstanding issue, warning that if the security challenges in the merged districts are not addressed promptly, they could escalate and affect the entire country.

He further informed the British envoy that the provincial government has formed a jirga to initiate dialogue with Afghan counterparts, and all necessary preparations for sending

the delegation are complete. However, since the matter falls under the jurisdiction of the federal government, the KP administration is awaiting approval of the terms of reference (TORs) for the negotiations.

Gandapur emphasized that lasting peace in the region is not just in Pakistan's interest but also in the interest of the entire region and the global community. He called on the world community to work collectively towards a permanent resolution through dialogue.

Touching upon the financial challenges faced by the province, the Chief Minister criticized the federal government for not releasing KP's due share under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, particularly for the newly merged districts. He stated that over PKR 2000 billion in net hydel profit payments remain unpaid by the federal government. Additionally, under the 18th Constitutional Amendment, the province is entitled to PKR 220 billion annually from tobacco cess, but these funds have not been released for the past ten months, disrupting development projects and causing unrest among the local population.

Gandapur called for a revision of the existing NFC formula, arguing that KP absorbs 45% of the country's

carbon emissions but receives no compensation. He proposed allocating a specific NFC share for forest cover, warning that if the province's constitutional rights are not addressed by next month, the KP government will approach the Supreme Court and raise its concerns on every available platform, without compromising on its rights.

The Chief Minister highlighted immense opportunities in tourism and mineral resources in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and said the government is actively working on developing these sectors to generate employment. A provincial mining company has been established to fully utilize KP's vast mineral resources, while work is underway to develop Integrated Tourism Zones for promoting new tourist destinations.

He invited foreign investors to explore these opportunities, assuring them of full support and facilitation. Gandapur stated that the KP government would implement whatever decision the federal government makes regarding the repatriation of Afghan refugees, however, he stressed that if a repatriation plan is finalized, it must ensure a dignified and well-structured return process for Afghan refugees.

Six terrorists killed in attack on Bannu Cantt

F.P. Report

BANNU: Security forces foiled a major terrorist attack on Bannu Cantonment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and killed at least six attackers, security forces said on Tuesday. Sources added that suicide bombers belonging to the militant group Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) drove two explosive-laden cars into the compound's perimeter, triggering massive explosions.

Facing stiff resistance from security forces, two explosive-laden vehicles were rammed into the cantt's perimeter wall in an attempt to gain entry, added security sources.

Meanwhile, security personnel at various entry points neutralised six terrorists and apprehended others. Sources reported that the explosion caused damage to a nearby mosque and led to the collapse of a house's roof. There are also reports of civilian casualties as a result of the blast, they added.

ECP failed to discharge its duties: Gohar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said on Tuesday that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had failed to perform its functions.

Speaking to media men in Islamabad, he said that under the Election Act, a certificate had to be issued within seven days of the submission of documents by a party. "But a year has passed. And the ECP is yet to issue a certificate to the PTI," he said, and added, "What could be more unfortunate than the fact that the parties, which held their elections after the PTI, were issued the certificates."

The PTI chairman lamented, the election commission had adjourned the case hearing until April 8. Barrister Gohar said that the Supreme Court (SC) had given a verdict in reserved seats case in favour of the PTI.

Speaking to the media, Akbar S. Babar, the petitioner in the PTI's intra-party case, said that despite the fact that the PTI claimed to be working for the promotion of democracy in the country, still it was involved in illegal activities. "We had demanded that the bank accounts of the party be frozen."

Punishment should be ensured regardless of trial court: SC

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: During the Supreme Court's hearing on the intra-court appeal against the trial of civilians in military courts, Justice Jamal Mandokhail questioned the significance of the trial court, remarking, "Does it make a difference where civilians are tried?"

A seven-member constitutional bench, headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, is hearing the case. Other members include Justices Jamal Mandokhail, Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Musarrat Hilali, Naem Akhtar Afghan, and Shahid Bilal Hassan. During the

proceedings, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar inquired about the number of individuals released from military courts.

Advocate Faisal Chaudhry informed the court that out of 105 accused, 20 had been released. The Additional Attorney General added that an additional 19 were later released, leaving 66 currently imprisoned. Advocate Siddiqui argued that in the US, both parties are given the right to propose a judgment after final arguments. He suggested that if court-martial is deemed necessary, there are alternative legal options available.

Justice Mandokhail

emphasized that punishment should be ensured for any crime, regardless of the trial court. Advocate Faisal Siddiqui countered, stating that there is a big difference between a military trial and a civilian trial, as the latter is conducted independently. The court observed that all legal forums are available and respected. Advocate Siddiqui referenced Article 8(3)(A), arguing that F.B. Ali had previously stated that laws could not be challenged. Following these discussions, Advocate Faisal Siddiqui concluded his arguments, while petitioner Bushra Qamar's lawyer, Abid Zuberi, began presenting his case.

Pakistan, IMF open talks on 1st review of \$7b plan

ISLAMABAD (Reuters): Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday confirmed that discussions between the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Pakistan for the first biannual review of the \$7 billion programme had begun, adding that the country was "well-positioned" for the talks.

Pakis-tan and the IMF had reached a three-year, \$7bn aid package deal in July, with the new programme set to allow the country to "cement macro-economic stability and create conditions for stronger, more inclusive and resilient growth". A nine-member mission from the IMF has begun its first biannual review of Pakistan's \$7bn Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

"They are here. We will have two rounds of talks, first technical and then policy level," Aurangzeb confirmed. "I think we are well-positioned [for the review]," he added.

The IMF delegation, led by Nathan Porter, will hold discussions with Pakistani authorities for 10 days from March 3 to 14, assessing the country's compliance with quantitative performance criteria, structural benchmarks and indicative targets under the 37-month programme. A senior government official involved in preparations for the IMF review said there were some technical slip-pages for certain given deadlines, but they had been overcome with some delays — within weeks or a month.

The most critical weakness observed so far had been the revenue shortfall against programme targets, the official said. But he hastened to add that this had been more than compensated through a higher-than-targeted primary budget surplus and greater-than-estimated revenue-to-GDP ratio owing to better receipts from non-tax revenues like central bank profit, petroleum levy, telecom profits, etc.

The ongoing 37-month EFF programme consists of six reviews over the life of the bailout, and the release of the next tranche of approximately \$1bn will be contingent on the success of the performance review. Just before the IMF mission's visit, the lender reiterated last week that its programme aimed to raise Pakistan's notably low tax-to-GDP ratio by 3pc of GDP while improving the fairness and efficiency of the tax system by broadening the tax base and improving tax compliance.

Three key areas of focus include: expanding direct taxes by bringing retailers, property owners and agricultural income into the tax net; rationalising personal and corporate income taxes by reducing exemptions and streamlining rates in the general sales tax system; and enhancing Federal Excise Duty coverage and eliminating tariff exemptions to increase customs revenue.

Nawaz approves Punjab cabinet expansion

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The expansion of the Punjab cabinet is in progress, with 12 members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs) shortlisted for inclusion. According to sources, PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif has approved the names for the cabinet's expansion, which will include a mix of senior and junior lawmakers.

Prominent names on the shortlist include Begum Zakia Shah Nawaz, Rana Muhammad Iqbal, and Manshaullah Butt. Additionally, Colonel (Retd) Ayub Gadhni, Salman Naeem, Rana Tahir Iqbal, and Iftikhar Hussain Chhachhar have also been considered for cabinet positions. Others on the list are Ahmed, Rana Muhammad Arshad, Malik

Asad Ali Khokhar, Mian Imran Javed, and Osama Khan Leghari.

Furthermore, Shoaib Siddiqui from the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) has also been shortlisted. Sources suggest that the new cabinet members are expected to take oath later this week, finalizing the much-anticipated cabinet expansion in Punjab.



Sharjeel orders swift recovery of transport lands across Sindh



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has ordered the Transport Department to reclaim its lands across Sindh. He directed the relevant authorities to promptly recover all Transport Department-owned lands and submit a report.

A high-level meeting was held in Karachi under the chairmanship of Sindh's Senior Minister, Sharjeel Inam Memon, to review the progress of the Yellow Line BRT project. The meeting was attended by Transport Secretary Asad Zamin, Managing Director of Sindh Mass Transit Authority Kamal Dayo, Project Director of the Yellow Line BRT Zameer Abbasi, and other officials. The meeting discussed

various technical and administrative challenges of the Yellow Line project, while also reviewing the progress of bridge and depot construction.

During the meeting, Sharjeel Inam Memon directed that Department of Transport to remove the occupations of its owned lands. He termed the encroachment of Transport Department land by government agencies as regrettable and reiterated that such actions by certain government entities are unfortunate.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Yellow Line BRT is a major public transport project that will offer modern and low-cost travel facilities to the people. He instructed all concerned parties to speed up the construction process so

that the project could be completed quickly.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the completion of the Yellow Line BRT project will ease pressure on Karachi's transport system and provide convenience to passengers. He emphasized the government's commitment to overcoming all obstacles and ensuring the project is completed on time.

Project Director Zameer Abbasi briefed the meeting in detail about the recent status of the Yellow Line BRT. He told the meeting that construction work on the project is progressing rapidly to ensure timely completion. He also gave the meeting briefing on utility transfer issues, which are being sorted out as soon as possible.

JI Sindh criticizes govt's one-year performance

KARACHI (PPI): Jamaat-e-Islami Sindh chief Kashif Saeed Sheikh today expressed discontent with the ruling government's performance over the past one year, citing issues such as insecurity, terrorism, inflation, and economic decline as key concerns.

According to JI, Mr Sheikh highlighted the disparity between government claims of a nine-year low inflation rate and the rising prices of essential items like poultry, oil, meat, sugar, and fruits.

He questioned which items have actually become cheaper, pointing out that while the elite remain unaffected by price increases, ordinary citizens are struggling to make ends meet as expenses rise without a corresponding increase in income.

Sheikh urged the government to create employment opportunities and provide subsidies on essential goods to offer relief to the masses, rather than making them dependent on Benazir Income Support Program. He emphasized that without reducing fuel, gas, and electricity prices, controlling inflation is not feasible.

He also called for a reduction in the number of ministers and advisors, advocating for a smaller cabinet and policies of simplicity and austerity, instead of laying off lower-level employees. Sheikh acknowledged that inflation is a global issue but insisted that the government should address what is within its control.

Azma dismisses PTI claim

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said that the claim of the PTI founder and Bushra Bibi of not being given food in jail is completely false and baseless. She remarked that someone sitting in Peshawar dreamed that their leader was being deprived of food in jail.

Bukhari clarified that the PTI founder is receiving meat, vegetables, lentils and beetroot juice three days a week. Additionally, he is being provided with coffee, boiled eggs and dry fruits. She added that Bushra Bibi is also given whatever food she wishes. Both husband and wife are being provided with their meals as per routine, added Azma.

She questioned how a person who wakes up at noon can observe fasting. Two days ago, the party spokesperson also lied about the PTI founder's health. Yesterday, a team of four senior doctors from PIMS conducted a detailed half-hour medical examination and declared him completely healthy.

Azma concluded that whenever the "Fitna Party" runs out of any other card, they start playing the victim and sympathy cards.

Five-member dacoit gang arrested

KARACHI (APP): A five-member dacoit gang was arrested by the New Karachi Police in District Central during an operation on Tuesday, according to a police spokesperson.

The operation was launched after a tip-off about a planned robbery in the area. The police, led by the SHO of New Karachi Police Station, acted swiftly and apprehended the suspects near Geo Mobile Market before they could carry out the crime.

During the initial interrogation, the suspects confessed to planning a robbery at a house in Sector J-11. The police recovered three motorcycles and five 30-bore pistols from the gang members.

The suspects, identified as Haq Nawaz, Qudrat Hussain, Abdul Razzaq, Ali Hassan, and Jahangir, were taken into custody. One accomplice managed to flee the scene. A case has been registered, and further investigations are underway.

CM approves construction, repair of 170 tourist sites

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has given in-principle approval for the construction, repair, and restoration of 170 tourist sites and trails across the province. The CM also approved the establishment of Punjab's first Tourism and Heritage Authority to improve governance in the sector.

Chairing a special meeting here on Tuesday, CM Punjab emphasized the importance of enhancing tourism in various cities, including Lahore, Multan, Bahawalpur, Chakwal, and Jhelum.

The Changa Manga Forest Park and Lal Suhanra National Park will be developed to promote eco-tourism. Additionally, the Punjab Tourism and Heritage Authority Act

2025 will be presented to further strengthen tourism policies.

During the briefing, officials informed the Chief Minister about Punjab's first comprehensive tourism app, 'Magnificent Punjab,' which will soon be launched. The app will provide virtual tours of 170 tourist destinations and allow users to book hotels and access travel services like Food Panda. It will also feature a chatbot for real-time tourist assistance.

The chief minister also approved Punjab's largest and most comprehensive tourism plan, which focuses on promoting religious, historical, and eco-tourism. Under this initiative, tourist villages will be developed to give visitors an immersive experience

of ancient civilizations.

For the first time, tourism trails will be introduced in Punjab, connecting key heritage sites such as District Mall Road, the Walled City of Lahore, Sikh sites, and Mughal monuments along GT Road. Additionally, the Salt Range, Bhati Gate, Taxila Gate, Gujranwala, and Aimanabad will be developed as part of the province's Sikh tourism trails. Various tourist attractions across Punjab will be grouped into tourism clusters to enhance visitor experiences.

The plan also includes the restoration of significant historical sites such as Taxila Museum, Dharma Rachi Ka, Jolian, Sarkap, and Giri Fort, all linked to the Gandhara civilization. In Multan, the

historic Qila Kahna Qasim Bagh will be revived as a symbol of the Indus Valley civilization. A dedicated pilgrimage trail will be developed in Uch Sharif, while proposals for the restoration of ancient Gurdwaras and churches were also reviewed to promote religious tourism.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif reaffirmed her commitment to making Punjab a global tourism hub, ensuring that all destinations meet international standards. She announced that Taxila will be transformed into a major tourist site, complete with the construction of a five-star hotel. She further stated, "We are fully committed to the promotion of tourism in Punjab, and a dedicated tourist hub will soon be established."

Tessori asks PM to take notice of Gas shortage

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori today raised alarms over enemy forces allegedly funding online campaigns against Pakistan's armed forces and Army Chief, urging the public to stay vigilant.

He cautioned that these forces aim to destabilize the military, drawing parallels with countries like Iraq and Syria, but assured that the Pakistani nation stands united with its armed forces.

According to the Governor House information, Tessori addressed participants at an Iftar/Dinner at Governor House, stress-

ing the need for unity during Ramadan. He acknowledged the nation's challenges but expressed confidence that the difficult phase will pass.

Governor Tessori also highlighted the public's concerns over gas shortages, especially during Sehri and Iftar, and called on the Prime Minister to take notice. He directed the Sui Southern Gas Company to ensure an uninterrupted gas supply during these critical times.

Additionally, he announced that plots would be allocated to families of traffic accident martyrs. A lucky draw

held at the event awarded a 120-square-yard plot to Sukkur resident Tahir Hussain, who expressed delight at his win.

The event saw a large turnout, with Governor Tessori personally welcoming attendees, who appreciated his presence.

Many took selfies with him, expressing their gratitude. Tessori informed the media that this was the third year citizens joined the Iftar at Governor House and reiterated that lucky draw prizes would continue throughout Ramadan under the "Ittehad Ramzan" initiative, hoping to host 1 million people.

JPMC halts charged parking, easing burden on patients

KARACHI (PPI): The Young Doctors Association (YDA) today announced a significant victory with the elimination of charged parking at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), a move expected to ease financial pressures on patients and their families.

According to YDA JPMC information, Executive Director JPMC Dr Shahid Rasul issued the directive to halt the charged parking, responding to the YDA's concerns about the costs associated with basic hospital amenities.

The YDA team had previously submitted an application to Dr Rasul advocating for the removal of fees for parking and washroom facilities and addressing the issue of unauthorized occupants in the doctors' hostel.

The Executive Director's decision marks the successful resolution of the YDA's first demand. The association expressed gratitude to Dr Rasul for his prompt action and remains optimistic that their remaining concerns will be addressed, further enhancing the experience of those visiting JPMC.

LDA seals 102 illegal properties

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) is actively pursuing its special campaign against illegal commercial buildings, sealing 102 properties across various schemes here on Tuesday.

The sealed properties include private schools, restaurants, salons, academies, workshops, food outlets, shops, offices, and more. According to LDA Director General (DG) Tahir Farooq, strict and indiscriminate action is being taken against illegal commercial properties and defaulters of commercial fees.

Following DG Tahir Farooq's directives, LDA teams conducted extensive operations in different areas, sealing 20 properties in Johar Town, 31 in Gulberg and New Garden Town, 20 along Canal Road, and 31 in Allama Iqbal Town as part of the recovery drive.

The operation was carried out under the supervision of Chief Town Planner-1 Asad Uz Zaman and Chief Town Planner-2 Azhar Ali. The LDA remains committed to taking strict and impartial action against illegal commercial structures and fee defaulters.

Zero tolerance against cheating mafia: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat has warned the cheating mafia stating that they were exposed before and will face a zero-tolerance policy once again.

He indicated that FIRs will be registered against those involved, strict punishments will be enforced and he would personally follow up on the matter. He emphasised that controlling the cheating mafia is a mission and that no student's marks will be unfairly taken by another.

The minister highlighted that effective measures have been implemented to ensure transparent exams. No student will be allowed to have a substitute or take someone else's place, he added.

He said that surveillance cameras have been installed in all examination centers. Additionally, private staff will not be allowed to serve as exam invigilators this time, and the number of private examination centers has been significantly reduced. The education minister also announced

that special squads have been formed to monitor examination centres.

The chief secretary, commissioners, deputy commissioners, secretaries of education and the chairman of the task force will personally conduct surprise visits to the centres and their squads have been assigned to this task as well. He urged parents, civil society and journalists to report any suspicious activity in the examination centres by calling 04236288119.

PDP concerned over rising inflation during Ramazan

KARACHI (PPI): The General Secretary of the Pasban Democratic Party (PDP), Iqbal Hashmi, today expressed concern over the rising inflation in the country, stating that the increase in food prices during Ramazan does not reflect the success of the Uraan Pakistan Program.

Hashmi mentioned that due to inflation, the balance between people's income and expenses is being affected, and the prices of essential goods are beyond the purchasing power of the common man.

According to PDP, Hashmi urged the govern-

ment to recognize that creating employment opportunities is a constitutional responsibility and necessary measures should be taken for this. He emphasized the promotion of the work-from-home culture, stating that it can relieve people from the daily travel difficulties.

The Pasban leader called on the Monopoly Commission to take indiscriminate action against profiteers. He suggested focusing on the development of industries that can create large-scale employment opportunities and training the youth to start

their own businesses.

Hashmi stated that due to inflation, middle-class individuals are unable to afford education for their children. He proposed setting the minimum wage at sixty thousand rupees and suggested that domestic workers' salaries should also be regulated by law.

The PDP General Secretary said that without economic development, the issue of inflation could not be controlled and an integrated strategy was necessary for this. He added that economic development is not possible through photo sessions but requires practical steps.

16 held, 142 fined during crackdown against profiteers

KARACHI (APP): The Karachi administration's crackdown on profiteers continues during Ramazan as on the third day of Ramazan, 142 profiteers faced action, with fines totaling Rs 15.58 lakh. 16 individuals were arrested, and 12 shops were sealed.

In the first three days of Ramazan, 445 profiteers faced action, with fines exceeding Rs 1.48 crore. 60 profiteers were arrested, and 42 shops were sealed. In South District 44 profiteers faced action, with fines totaling Rs 6.41 lakh. 3 individuals were arrested.

In East District 31 profiteers faced action, with fines totaling Rs 4.62 lakh. In Korangi District 6 profiteers faced action, with fines totaling Rs 85,000. 1 individual was arrested, and 4 shops were sealed.

In Central District 19

profiteers faced action, with fines totaling Rs 54,000. In Keamari District 11 profiteers faced action, with fines totaling Rs 62,000. 2 individuals were arrested, and 2 shops were sealed.

In West District 10 profiteers faced action, with fines totaling Rs 78,000. In Malir District 21 shopkeepers faced action, with fines totalling Rs 1.75 lakh. 6 individuals were arrested, and 4 shops were sealed.

Commissioner Karachi has directed all deputy commissioners to ensure that citizens have access to essential items at official prices during Ramazan. Deputy Commissioner Kemari Raja Tariq Chandio has set up sugar sale stalls at official prices in collaboration with a local soier store to provide relief to citizens during Ramadan.

He personally monitored prices in various areas to ensure the campaign's effectiveness.

Commissioner Karachi has directed all Deputy Commissioners to ensure that citizens have access to essential items at official prices during Ramazan. These officers have been deployed across seven districts, with 10 officers assigned to Keamari and Korangi districts, and 11 officers to each of the remaining districts.

Journalists and family demand justice for Tashkeel murder

F.P. Report

KARACHI: "We demand justice and fair trial for the murder of Tashkeel Sandeelo, who died in a road accident by an over-speeding car. Government agencies and journalist organizations should come forward to support the deceased journalist's family".

During a condolence gathering held on Tuesday in Karachi, the Sindh Newspapers Society (SNS) and Awami Forum members stated this. They

offered condolences to the deceased journalist's family and showed solidarity in bringing the culprit to book.

Tashkeel Sandeelo, a senior journalist who worked for more than 25 years in Sindh media outlets, died in a road accident on Shahra-e-Faisal on 28 February 2025. The first investigation report (FIR) was lodged against an unknown car driver at Tipu Sultan Police Station on Monday. Due to a limited salary, Tashkeel struggled to cover his expenses and took on a part-time job with

the In-drive service to make ends meet. Tashkeel, alongside passenger Saqib Imtiaz, was killed instantly when their bike was struck by an overspeeding car.

The dead bodies were shifted to Jinnah Hospital by Chippa Ambulance, which the family members later received. Journalists, friends and family members demanded justice for Tashkeel and appealed to the Sindh government and journalist bodies to support the family. Tashkeel is survived by his wife and three children.

PTI calls for urgent action against drug menace

KARACHI (PPI): The Additional General Secretary of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh, Muhammad Rizwan Niazi, today urged the government to prioritize tackling the rising drug trend in Karachi, labeling it a destructive force for the youth.

According to PTI, Niazi said that immediate meas-

ures should be taken to curb the increasing drug use in educational institutions so as to protect the future generation from this menace is critical. He warned that failure to control drug trafficking could result in a bleak future for the youth, potentially leading them towards habitual criminality.

He stated that PTI was

committed to the city's welfare. He highlighted the mandate given by Karachi's citizens to PTI and pledged to amplify their concerns.

Additionally, he pointed out the severe electricity load-shedding and gas supply issues during the holy month of Ramadan that has caused distress during Sehri and Iftar. He called for urgent action to resolve

these challenges faced by the populace. Addressing the growing social issues in Karachi, Niazi stated that resolving them was a pressing necessity.

PTI, he assured, will undertake all possible measures to address the public's grievances and continue to stand by Karachi's residents in advocating for their rights.

Governor urges PM to take notice of power, gas loadshedding in Ramazan

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi, on Tuesday written a letter to Prime Minister of Pakistan, urging to take immediate action to end electricity and gas loadshedding in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Expressing serious concerns over electricity and gas loadshedding in the province during the holy month of Ramadan, the governor stated that KP is a province that produces an ample amount of electricity and natural gas, yet it is being deprived of its own resources. He criticized the ongoing power and gas outages, saying they have made life miserable for the people of the province. He further pointed out that despite the Prime Minister's announcement of uninterrupted power and gas supply during Ramadan, the reality on the ground is different. Load shedding during Sehri, Iftar, and prayer times has caused immense difficulties for citizens, he added. "The sanctity of Ramadan demands that people be provided with a peaceful environment," the Governor emphasized. He stressed that resolving these issues would allow the people of KP to focus on their religious obligations like the rest of the country.

Timely supply of medicines to Kurram by government continues

F.P. Report
PESHAWAR: The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continues to provide essential medical facilities to the people of District Kurram. On the directives of Health Advisor Ehtesham Ali, another 1,800 kg batch of medicines was delivered to DHQ Hospital Parachinar today. According to the Health Advisor, these medicines were transported via the official government helicopter to ensure timely medical assistance for patients in need. The consignment includes antibiotics, anti-hypertensive drugs, anti-inflammatory medicines, and medications for children's fever and cough. Additionally, essential medical equipment and laboratory serum have also been supplied to improve healthcare services at the hospital. The Health Advisor further stated that three days ago, the MS of Parachinar had requested the urgent supply of medicines, and prompt action was taken to dispatch the required stock. He assured that until ground routes are restored, the supply of medicines will continue through helicopters to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services in the region.

Govt commits for food security, poverty reduction via rural transformation

F.P. Report
PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Economic Transformation Project (KP-RETP) has signed contract agreements with Agribusiness Mobilization Partners (BMPs) at Project Management Unit (PMU) Peshawar to drive economic growth and strengthen the rural economy across the province, on Tuesday. KP-RETP is a flagship initiative of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, launched in partnership with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the European Union (EU). The project aims to contribute to poverty reduction and enhance food and nutrition security for 785,000 rural households in the province. As part of this initiative, KP-RETP has formalized agreements with BMPs to implement agricultural business activities. These partners will play a pivotal role in strengthening Professional Farmers' Organizations (PFOs), Public-Private-Producer Partnerships (4Ps), and Farm Services Centres (FSCs) across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They will work in coordination with the project's Regional Coordination Units to expand and support farmers' agribusiness. Whereas, two contracts have been signed with a consulting firm Rural Empowerment and Institutional Development (REPID) amounting PKR 95,722,243 for the Central Agribusiness Cluster and PKR 134,631,000 for the Southern Agribusiness Cluster. Additionally, two contracts have been signed with the consulting firm Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation in Joint Venture with Initiative for Development and Empowerment Axis, amounting to PKR 109,581,829 for the Northern Agribusiness Cluster and PKR 62,584,494 for the Chitral Agribusiness Cluster. Furthermore, a contract valued at PKR 129,896,956 has been signed with the consulting firm SMART Researchers in Joint Venture with Farmers Integrated Development Association for the Eastern Agribusiness Cluster. These projects are set for completion by June 2029, marking a significant step toward empowering rural communities and fostering sustainable agribusiness development in the region.

WFP delegation calls on KP food minister



PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of World Food Program (WFP) led by Chief of Supply called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru here Tuesday and discussed ongoing projects of food security in the province. The delegation also discussed matters relating to eform agendas in provincial food department. Talking to delegation, provincial minister said that effective steps have been taken to ensure food security in the province and to increase capability of staff employed in the department adding that various matters have digitized in food department. He also reaffirmed commitment to further improve cooperation with international organization to improve food security and quality. On the occasion, delegation assured cooperation to government in its reforms agenda and efforts to ensure food security in the province.

Broadcasting resilience: The unyielding journey of Radio Pakistan Peshawar - II

Hamid Ullah Khan & Ikram Ullah Marwat
DURING the Indo-Pak Wars of 1948, 1965, and 1971, and in the Kargil conflict in 1999, Radio Pakistan Peshawar played a central role in strengthening the morality of the nation and encountered the enemy's propaganda. It served as a front media to provide timely and accurate information, forward patriotic songs, and strengthen the voices of military and national leaders. Strategic communication in the ward not only strengthened the resilience of the people, but also strengthened the unity of the people by promoting strong and consistent narratives during wars. From 1979 to 1990, Radio Pakistan Peshawar opened up as a turbulent Soviet war in Afghanistan and as a result of hope and as an impressive force of regional geopolitics. When Peshawar developed into a sanctuary and a base for Afghan refugees, the station became a strong voice against Soviet invasion. Apart from the battlefield of ideas, Radio Pakistan Peshawar provided important information on aid measures, led refugees to humanitarian aid, promoted permanent peace messages and stability in volatile border areas, and served as a lifeline for displaced communities. Radio Pakistan Peshawar has been playing key role in various sectors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and its surrounding area. It providing timely news, promoted public awareness during crisis, promoted and supported state initiatives against extremism. The cultural programs preserved and promoted local languages Pashto, Khowar and Hindko. The station promoted political commitment by oozing programs for democratic participation and governance. Economically, local businesses supported it through advertising, highlighting development projects. Despite the challenges including the mob attacks in 2023, Radio Pakistan Peshawar remains a resilient voice for information, culture and community development. Radio Pakistan Peshawar is a cultural beacon promoting intellectuals, poets, writers, singers, and musicians. Through broadcasting it has preserved and enriched the literary and musical heritage of Pashto, Hindko, Khowar, and Urdu. As a melting pot of creativity, it continues to shape linguistic expression and artistic excellence, echoing various voices of the region. Radio Pakistan Peshawar is embracing digital transformation by expanding from traditional broadcasting to digital platforms presenting some flagship programs on social media platforms with the aim to enhance audiences' engagement. Some flagship programs of social media are Hujra, Salamoona Paghamoon, and V-log on Khyber Beats and From the Campus. Pakistan's oldest and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa most influential radio station, Radio Pakistan Peshawar, is celebrating its 90th anniversary today, marking another milestone in its rich history of broadcasting. Since its inception with its unwavering commitment to quality journalism and public service, it is hope that this esteemed broadcasting house will further serve the region in a more versatile role with professionals in programs, news, engineering, administration, accounts, and sales and beyond. Radio Pakistan Peshawar has played a pivotal role in promoting culture, literature, music communication, education, entertainment, health awareness, women's empowerment, sports, political leadership, and agriculture. It has provided a platform for the unheard, earning a distinguished reputation in the region. Radio Pakistan Peshawar has introduced numerous renowned Pashto and Urdu scriptwriters, enriching the literary landscape. Some notable Pashto scriptwriters include Hajji Samandar Khan, Amir Hamza Khan Shinwari, Said Rasool Rasa, Afzal Raza, Arbab Abdul Wakeel, Dr. Muhammad Azam Azam, Noorul Bashar Naveed, Nazir Bhati, Gul Afzal Khan, Abdullah Jan Maghmoom, Ajmal Khattak, Gul Muhammad Zaitab, Begum A.R. Dawod, Zaitoon Bano, Hamidullah Jan Bismil, and Saad Ullah Jan Barq. Some prominent Urdu scriptwriters who contributed to Radio Pakistan Peshawar include Raza Hamadani, Farigh



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah chairing a high level review meeting of investment and economic growth initiatives.

Pakistan's Wheelchair Warriors conquer Iran in BNP Tennis

F.P. Report
PESHAWAR: Colombo turned into a battleground of resilience as Pakistan's wheelchair tennis team scripted history, clinching the bronze medal in the BNP World Cup Wheelchair Tennis Championship Qualifying Round. In a nail-biting clash, Pakistan edged past Iran 2-1, proving their mettle on the international stage. Leading the charge was Peshawar's own Ehsan Ullah Danish, a name that now resonates with glory. Hailing from Landi Arbab, Peshawar, Ehsan isn't just a top-class athlete—he's a graduate and Sports Coordinator at the Paraplegic Center Peshawar and a man of many talents, excelling in tennis, social work and poetry. Besides leading the recent global event in lawn tennis, he also remained an international table tennis player who defeated Australian team in the Pacific Paralympic games of world table tennis event played at kwalampur Malaysia in 2006. At the Paraplegic Center, young individuals who undergo physical and psychological rehabilitation are honored as "graduates" and are empowered through sports, recreation, and creative pursuits. The victory sparked celebrations back home, with Paraplegic Center Peshawar's Chief Executive, Dr. Syed Muhammad Ilyas, leading the chorus of praise. He hailed Ehsan Danish and his other team members as a national heroes, commending their grit and determination in securing international glory for Pakistan. "This is just the beginning!" Dr. Ilyas declared, expressing confidence that with the right support, Pakistan's unsung heroes in all walks of life will continue to shine on the global stage, bringing home more medals, more pride, and more history!

CS reviews investment, economic growth initiatives

F.P. Report
PESHAWAR: In a high-level review meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, key progress updates under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) were presented, underscoring the provincial government's efforts to foster economic growth and attract investment across critical sectors. During the meeting, various departments shared updates on their respective initiatives under the SIFC framework. A dedicated unit has been established within Planning and Development Department to oversee and steer SIFC initiatives, ensuring effective coordination and execution of projects. Progress on the Cloud First Policy and the MoU on Digital Economy Enhancement Project were reviewed. These initiatives are seen as key drivers of digital transformation in the province. The development of Special Technology Zones (STZs) in Peshawar, Swat, and Mardan was also discussed, with directives to resolve pending issues on priority. Additionally, projects related to environment, tourism, infrastructure development, energy and power, industries, and health were reviewed in detail. The Chief Secretary reiterated that the SIFC is a game-changer for economic development, urging all departments to align their strategies with the council's objectives. He stressed the need for collaboration, innovation, and efficiency to attract investment and drive growth.

AD&SJ convicts two smugglers for life imprisonment

Humayun Khan
PESHAWAR: Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&SJ) Peshawar Hana Mehwish, has sentenced two accused, Muhammad Waqas and Irfan, for twice life imprisonment and imposed fine of Rs. 2 million for their involvement in smuggling Ice-drug and heroin worth millions of rupees, on Tuesday. Deputy Public Prosecutor Zulfiqar Ali argued that on August 8, 2023, the accused were attempting to smuggle 1845 grams of Ice-drug and 8675 grams of heroin in a vehicle with a government number plate. However, they were arrested by the police during the attempt. The prosecutor presented witnesses and evidence to support the case against the accused. The prosecutor emphasized that narcotics are a scourge on society, causing harm to individuals, families, and communities. He argued that the accused had committed a serious offense and deserved severe punishment. The defense counsel, argued on behalf of the accused. He claimed that the accusations against his clients were baseless and that the prosecution had failed to prove their guilt. He requested that the accused be acquitted. However, the court rejected the defense's arguments and found the accused guilty of the charges. The court sentenced the accused to life imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1 million each, totaling 100 years imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 2 million.



PESHAWAR: A man buying traditional chutney from a roadside vendor in Saddar bazaar. — INP photo

restoration works launched in the damaged Radio Pakistan Peshawar's building, focusing on reconstructing the historical structure based on the destruction of the May 2023 attack. The dedicated technical team's committed efforts quickly restored the transmission within just 26 hours of the incident, making sure the station was up and running despite the damage, the ongoing rehabilitation efforts will preserve the architectural integrity and the importance of the architecture. This restoration is evidence of Government's commitment to securing a historic heritage for media institutions and future generations. The writers are Senior Producers at Radio Pakistan Peshawar Hamid Ullah Khan (producerhamid@gmail.com) Ikram Ullah Marwat (ikrammarwat79@gmail.com) **Concluded** The writers are Senior Producers at Radio Pakistan Peshawar Hamid Ullah Khan (producerhamid@gmail.com) Ikram Ullah Marwat (ikrammarwat79@gmail.com)

Bukhari, Dr. Denis Ayzek, Mushtaq Shabab, Rani Andaleeb, Prof. Khalid Suhail Malik, Zubair Shah, and Prof. Taha Khan. Pashto poets who contributed to Radio Pakistan Peshawar include Hamza Shinwari, Shams uz Zaman Shams, Saahir Afridi, Dr. Muhammad Azam, Shafi Nasir, Sarwar Khattak, Saifur Rehman Salim, Layaq Zada Layaq, Said Rasool Rasa, Said Rasool Nasapa, Saadullah Jan Barq, Habib Ullah Afsaar, Qalandar Momand, Rahmat Shah Sayal, Ghazi Sayal, Muhammad Islam Armaani, Saiful Malook Sasiqui, and Arbab Abdul Wadood, while distinguished Urdu poets include Ahmad Faraz, Khahir Ghaznavi, Muhsin Ihsan, Raza Hamdani, Nasir Ali Sayad, Bushra Farukh, Nishat Sarhadi, Ishaq Wardag, and Ghulam Muhammad Qasir. Radio Pakistan Peshawar has nurtured legendary singers, including Sabz Ali Ustaz, Abdur Rehman Oor, Qamro Jan, Badsha Zarin Jan, Akbar Hussain, Fazl-e-Rabbi Ustaz, Ahmad Khan, Nigar Sultan, Aqal Meenan, Naveeta Khan, Khan Tahsil, Zar Sanga, Gulnar

Egam, Khyal Muhammad, Mah Abeen Azalbash, Kishor Sultan, Gulrez Tabassum, Nazia Iqbal, Shakeela Naaz, Fazal Malik Aakif, Sardar Ali Takkar, Gulzar Alam, Wagma, Bahar Ali, Moeen Ali, and Mashooq Sultan. The station has seen an evolution in leadership from its establishment as a Provincial Radio Station under All India Radio to its transformation into Radio Pakistan after independence. The first appointed Station Director was Muhammad Aslam Khan Khattak (1935-1937), followed by several key figures. The pre independence leadership are S.S. Niazi (1937-1938), K.S. Malik (1938-1939), D.S. Burq (1939-1941), M. Iftikharullah (1941-1942), J.K. Mehra (1942-1945) and S.S. Niazi (1945-1947) while the post independence leadership included S.S. Niazi (1947-1948), Mehmood Nizami (1948-1949, 1953-1954), Afzal Iqbal (1949-1950), Noon Meem Rashid (1950-1952) as well as other notable station directors include Qazi Ahmad Saeed, Sajjad Haider, Yousaf Bangash, Mehboob Ali Khan, and Layaq Zada Layaq. In 2021, In late February 2025,



In brief

Traders raise security concerns F.P. Report

WANA: The absence of a police force, apart from traffic police officers, in Rustam Bazaar, Wana, South Waziristan Lower, has raised serious security concerns among the local population. Shopkeepers and traders report feeling increasingly vulnerable as they go about their daily business in an environment lacking law enforcement presence. The situation has left both residents and business owners feeling helpless, with many expressing frustration over the lack of security. The recent crack-down on tinted windows, which was initiated to curb illegal activities in the region, was abruptly halted for unknown reasons, adding to public apprehension. Local elders and community leaders have strongly urged the government to deploy regular police patrols in the bazaar and implement an effective law-and-order strategy. They have also proposed setting up security checkpoints at key locations to prevent any untoward incidents. The deteriorating security situation is not only causing distress among residents but also affecting business activities in the area. Many hopes that authorities will take swift action to restore peace and stability, ensuring both public safety and economic continuity. Immediate measures, they believe, will not only enhance regional security but also help rebuild public trust in law enforcement agencies.

Profiteers' mafia active in Buner F.P. Report

BUNER: The residents demanded stern actions against profiteers and artificial price-hikers while blamed government servants for facilitating mafias at the stake of public interests, on Tuesday. This was disclosed by public while talking to media personnel during their visits to main markets of Buner and claimed that the self-inflicted inflation has been imposed on public while government servants are obtaining their shares from mafias. The extraordinary increase in the prices of essential commodities in various markets of Buner district, especially Swari Bazar, has made life miserable for the people. According to the information collected from various markets, the prices of meat is being sold up to 1000 rupees instead of 850 rupees per kg fixed in the official price list, while crushed meat (Qeema) is sold against rupees 1100 to 1200 per kilogram. Moreover, fruits like orange and pomegranate are also sold at high prices. This situation has made the poor fasting people worried.

FIR lodged against 5 SHOs

KHAIRPUR (INP): After orders from Sindh High Court's Sukkur Bench, a first information report (FIR) was lodged against five SHOs for staging a fake encounter in Khairpur. The FIR was filed on behalf of Momal Shaikh, widow of young man Mir Mohammad Shaikh, who was killed during a fake police encounter five months ago. In the FIR, the widow stated that they (husband and wife) were going to Choondiko from Sobhodero when suddenly some policemen intercepted them and demanded money, and after their refusal they arrested them. The nominated SHOs were Bashir Bahio, Mukhtiar Pathan, Shahid Khushak, Ghulam Abbas Sindhriani and Mushtaq Jatoti while sections of murder and attempted murder were also included in the FIR.



MALAKAND: Adviser to KP CM on Forests, Pir Musawir Khan inspecting tree plantation drive.

Schools closed in Galyat due to heavy snowfall

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Authorities have announced the closure of schools in Galyat for four days due to heavy snowfall and icy conditions. The Education Department has issued a notification in this regard. The hill stations of Murree, Galyat, and nearby areas are experiencing intermittent rain and snowfall. Additionally, the power supply has been suspended to Nathia Gali, Ayubia, Thandiani, and Changla Gali. Shahrukh Ali, the Director General of the Galyat Development Authority, confirmed that the relief operations are underway. He said all roads in Galyat are being cleared, and efforts are being made to reopen the main highway connecting Abbottabad to

Murree. Due to the severe weather conditions, the entry of tourists has been restricted, and visitors are being turned back, he added.

Earlier, the National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) issued a weather advisory, cautioning that a powerful westerly wave is expected to affect various parts of Pakistan from February 24 to March 1. The approaching system is expected to bring severe weather conditions, which include heavy rain, strong winds, thunderstorms, hailstorms, and significant snowfall in northern and western areas of the country.

The advisory highlights several regions likely to be affected. Islamabad, upper Punjab, the Pothohar Region, and central and southern/northeastern

Punjab are forecast to experience rain, wind, and thunderstorms, potentially accompanied by snowfall or hailstorms. The NEOC warns of the possibility of flash floods in vulnerable areas due to heavy rainfall.

Balochistan is also bracing for rain, wind, and thunderstorms, with snowfall expected over the hills in the western, northwestern, and northern parts of the province. Flash flooding is a concern in susceptible areas.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) can anticipate similar conditions, including rain, wind, thunderstorms, and hailstorms, along with snowfall in the upper and western regions, notably the Malakand and Hazara Divisions. Heavy rainfall in northern KP raises the risk of flash flooding and landslides.

Residents compelled to live in darkness

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: The people of Shangla are facing severe difficulties due to the prolonged power outage, which has entered its third day. Despite the restoration of electricity in some areas on Tuesday morning, the power supply remains inconsistent, with frequent load shedding and power outages.

The power outage occurred due to heavy rain and snowfall on Saturday night, which damaged the power infrastructure. The Pesco authorities had stated that work could not be done due to the ongoing rain and snowfall.

On Tuesday, the weather

remained cloudy, and the Pesco authorities restored power to the Alpuri feeder in the evening. However, the power outages continued, prompting severe protests from local residents and traders.

The power crisis in Shangla has become a chronic issue, particularly during the winter months. The prolonged power outages have made life miserable for the local residents, who are demanding immediate action from the government to resolve the issue.

Rescue 1122 issues performance report: Rescue 1122 Shangla provided emergency services to 253

incidents in February, including 14 road traffic accidents, 108 medical emergencies, 5 fire incidents, 2 gunshot wounds, and 6 vehicle recoveries. Additionally, 118 patients were transferred from various hospitals in Shangla to teaching hospitals.

According to the performance report for February, District Emergency Officer Rescue 1122 Shangla, Engineer Malik Sher Dil Khan, directed the rescue team to remain vigilant and take immediate action. He emphasized that the purpose of Rescue 1122 is to provide humanitarian services around the clock.

Admn paralyzed before profiteers

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In the blessed month of Ramadan, artificial inflation is on the rise in Mardan, the hometown of the provincial food minister artificially increasing the prices of meat and fruits, meat 1100 rupees per kg, veal 1200 rupees per kg, apple 450 rupees per kg, guava 300 rupees per kg, orange 400 rupees dozen other food and drink prices skyrocketed.

District Administration disappeared like a horn from a donkey's head Citizens started hanging According to the details, as soon as Ramadan started, due to the negligence and carelessness

of the administration, the butchers and fruit sellers started robbing the citizens with both hands by increasing their prices, the butchers sharpening their knives started charging 1100 rupees per kg for fat meat, 1200 rupees for calf meat and 1400 rupees per kg for boneless meat.

Fruit vendors sold apples at Rs 450 per kg, guava at Rs 300 per kg, orange at Rs 400 per dozen, banana at Rs 300 per dozen, and kino at Rs 300 per dozen, while the prices of food and drink are also skyrocketing. The district administration is in a long time, while the citizens are forced to buy the necessities

of life at arbitrary prices. The citizens have strongly demanded the provincial food minister Zahir Shah Toru to take legal action against the self-inflicted price hikers.

PTI deny allegation: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Peshawar Region's Information Secretary, Engineer Adil Nawaz, has strongly rejected the recent baseless and fabricated allegations made by Punjab's Minister, Uzma Bukhari. He stated that the KP government firmly believes in public service, transparency, and timely completion of development projects, all of which are well-documented.

Tree plantation drive inaugurated F.P. Report

KOHAT: Under the Billion Tree Plus Program of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a mega event was held at PAF Base Kohat in collaboration with the district administration, forest department and Pakistan Air Force, which was inaugurated by the Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah by planting an olive sapling on Tuesday.

On this occasion, the Base Commander PAF Kohat Khurram Bashir along with the Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram, Divisional Forest Officer Arsalan Tariq and other officials/officers and trainees of Pakistan Air Force, field staff of the forest department and CDGAD and district administration Kohat, planted 3000 saplings.

Commissioner Kohat Division, Base Commander PAF Kohat and Deputy Commissioner Kohat appealed the public to actively participate in the ongoing tree plantation campaign and each person should plant at least one sapling and ensure its protection also so that a green and clean environment can be provided to the new generation. They said that planting trees is a great charity. The oxygen produced by trees is equally beneficial for all the living beings, they said.

Residents hold sit-in against SEPCO F.P. Report

LARKANA: The residents staged a sit-in protest against SEPCO due to the non-repair of burnt electricity transformers which suspended traffic in the city, on Tuesday.

On this occasion, Dodo Deshi, Sohail Kunbhar, Isa Khan Gadehi and others said that for the past one year, the electricity transformers installed in the city of Badah have been burnt, but the SEPCO management has remained silent, while the business class, shopkeepers, businesses running on electricity have been completely stopped due to the lack of electricity supply.

The drinking facility has ended, due to which the children and adults of the city have contracted diarrhea due to drinking black water, they further said that despite the citizens protesting many times, no action is being taken by the SEPCO management.

KUST hosts 'one health approach: Challenges & opportunities seminar

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: The Department of Zoology at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) organized an international seminar titled "One Health Approach: Challenges and Opportunities", on Tuesday.

The event brought together distinguished scientists and experts from the UK, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan to discuss the latest scientific advancements and interdisciplinary collaborations in the field of One Health. Prominent international speakers, including Professor Georgios Giamas (UK), Professor Naseeb Ullah Kakar (Germany), and Dr. Bilal Aslam (Saudi Arabia), joined the seminar virtually sharing their insights on modern scientific concepts of the One Health Approach.

From Pakistan, Vice Chancellor of Federal Urdu University of Science and Technology, Professor Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari, delivered an in-depth keynote on the significance of One Health. He emphasized that human health, animal welfare, and environmental balance are interconnected, necessitating harmonized research and policy-making across various sectors to address global health challenges



effectively.

Adding to the discourse, Dean of Agriculture University Rawalpindi, Professor Dr. Irfan Yousaf, elaborated on the practical aspects and global implications of the One Health Approach. As part of the seminar proceedings, Professor Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari, along with KUST Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseeruddin and Assistant Commissioner Kohat Nimra Owais, inaugurated the OGDCL Pollinator (Honey Bee) Friendly Miyawaki Garden.

This initiative, introduced for the first time in Pakistan, aims to promote biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseeruddin commended the successful organization of the seminar and congratulated Dr. Syed Ishtiaq Anjum, Chairman Department of Zoology;

Chief Organizer Dr. Kaleemullah Marwat; and their team for their dedication and hard work. He reaffirmed the university's commitment to fostering academic and research-oriented programs in the future. Dean of the Faculty of Biological Sciences, Professor Muhammad Jamil, expressed gratitude to all esteemed guests and termed the seminar a milestone event for KUST.

The seminar saw an overwhelming participation of students and faculty members from KUST and various institutions, including Bannu University, Lakki Marwat University, Karak University, Postgraduate College Kohat, and Degree Colleges from Lachi and Gambat. The event successfully highlighted the pressing need for a collaborative and holistic approach to health and environmental sustainability, reinforcing KUST's role as a hub for scientific dialogue and innovation.

Iftar dinner organizes at Malam Jabba resort

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Tucked away in the breathtaking Malam Jabba valley of Swat, a special Iftar dinner has been organized, drawing in tourists from across the country. As the sun sets, fasting individuals gather to break their fast amidst the serene, snow-covered landscape.

The management of Pearl Continental (PC) Malam Jabba has pulled out all the stops to create an unforgettable Iftar experience. A delectable Iftar buffet, featuring an array of mouth-watering dishes, has been specially curated for the holy month of Ramadan. Sales Manager Saeed Khan, emphasized the hotel's commitment to providing an exceptional experience. "We've struck a perfect balance between our snowy, picturesque surroundings and our Ramadan menu, ensuring guests can revel in both the environment and exquisite cuisine."

The luxurious Iftar spread, showcased in the Grand Ballrooms, boasts

live cooking stations, where chefs prepare an assortment of traditional delicacies. This unique blend of flavors and ambiance has captivated tourists and locals alike, who praise the outstanding quality and taste of the Iftar dinner.

As the month of Ramadan unfolds, PC Malam Jabba's Iftar dinner has become a must-experience event, offering a magical fusion of natural beauty, warm hospitality, and sumptuous cuisine.

being engulfed in unrest. He strongly condemned the recent suicide attack on Maulana Hamid-ul-Haq, the administrator of Jamia Haqqania in Akora Khattak, along with other acts of violence. He lamented the increasing insecurity of religious seminars and mosques, attributing it to the provincial government's failure to maintain law and order. He urged both the federal and provincial governments to collaborate in restoring peace and stability across the region.

Ramazan packages: The Talha Foundation, a charity organization, distributed Ramadan food packages among 40 widowed, orphaned, and underprivileged families in Talash. The packages included essential groceries such as flour, rice, sugar, and lentils.

Coordinator Qari Farman Hussain stated that the initiative aimed to help needy families partake in the blessings of Ramadan. He highlighted that, with the support of overseas Pakistanis, the foundation has been assisting 100 deserving families in Talash for three years. He urged philanthropists to support the cause.

JI to provide free IT training to 1m youth

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-e-Islami Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (North) chief and Patron-in-Chief of the Al-Khidmat Bano Qabil programme, Inayatullah Khan, has urged the youth to equip themselves with the latest advancements in science and technology to stay competitive in the evolving job market. Speaking at a ceremony at Abdul Wali Khan University Campus, Timergara, he emphasized that the world is undergoing a rapid transformation, with job roles shifting dramatically.

He noted that in the near future, traditional professions such as driving, workshops, shopping malls, and petrol stations may become obsolete as the global economy transitions towards a digital and virtual landscape.

Inayatullah Khan reaffirmed Jamaat-e-Islami's commitment, in collaboration with Al-Khidmat Foundation, to providing free IT training to one million young individuals, preparing them for emerging challenges. He stressed that the youth represent the nation's future and must not

be misled by empty promises.

The event marked the successful completion of digital marketing and graphic design courses by 250 students under the Al-Khidmat Bano Qabil initiative. Prominent figures addressing the gathering included President of Al-Khidmat Foundation Lower Dir, Hafizullah Khaksar, General Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Lower Dir, Shoaib Ahmad, and Secretary Information of Jamaat-e-Islami Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (North), Hafiz Yaqub ur Rehman.

Speakers at the event underscored the growing significance of IT and skill development in today's world. They highlighted that the youth of Lower Dir and Pakistan possess immense potential but require proper guidance and training. Instead of solely seeking traditional employment, they should focus on acquiring IT skills to generate job opportunities and establish sustainable livelihoods.

Inayatullah Khan expressed deep concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, describing the province as

which can range from 50 thousand rupees to 2 lakh rupees. It is suggested that taxpayers' money be used to create a designated driving area for teens, where they can practice driving under strict safety measures while also generating revenue by paying for the experience.

If a teen driver is caught driving illegally, the license of the irresponsible parent should be revoked, and the vehicle should be held in police custody for a certain period, in addition to the existing legal procedures. As a society, it is our duty to report such cases and support campaigns against these offenders to break the cycle once and for all.

This writer is student of BS Mass Communication at NUML.

Underage driving: A remorseless practice

Zoha Hussain

THE perilous practice of underage driving is a prevailing norm in Pakistan. As soon as a teen's feet are able to push the accelerator recklessly, the responsibility of being the full-fledged driver for their family lies on their adolescent shoulders.

This remorseless practice is seen in every household that has the privilege of owning an automobile. One can't help but ask: why can't this practice be stopped? Are adolescents the only criminals, or is there more to this crime? Is there really nothing that can be done, and what are the causes of society's desensitization to this crime?

According to data from the

National Police Bureau (NPB), a staggering 9,391 accidents were reported in 2023, claiming the lives of over 5,000 people. These figures are not just statistics—they represent individuals, families, and dreams shattered in an instant. Apart from that, a Dawn report published in 2023, highlighted that within just 13 days, over 1,100 FIRs were registered against underage drivers in Rawalpindi. This sudden surge in enforcement came after a tragic accident in Lahore, where a teenage driver recklessly took the lives of six family members, serving as a grim wake-up call for all of us.

These odds not only prove negligence on the parents' behalf but also show how society is slumbering in oblivion. The

main culprits are the parents who give in to every single reckless demand of their teenagers. These parents would rather risk the lives of individuals on the roads than instill the idea of being responsible citizens in the minds of their teens. The truth is, these children are privileged and spoiled, and even if they are caught by the authorities, their guardians will go out of their way to protect them. The reality is that their honor matters more to them than the lives of the people their children—and they—recklessly put at risk.

As a society and as individuals, we have become so tolerant of these malicious practices that young criminals are taught how to drive on roads by peers or parents—who themselves learned

driving through the same cycle. Consequently, each household trains their child how to commit a crime, how to hide it from authorities and how to put the life of multiple people on the line. Therefore, each household creates a transgressor of law and order.

These teenage criminals are not blameless. If they are old enough to handle a car, they should also be mature enough to resist peer pressure and control the adrenaline rush that comes with breaking the law. Regardless of the situation, every individual possesses an intrinsic moral compass from a young age, allowing them to distinguish between right and wrong.

This argument provides us

with the two major causes due to which teens start driving at a young age. Firstly, they see their friends do the same without any remorse. They see the efficiency and fun but not the risk behind it, and that's how an average young mind works. Another reason is impatience. These kids can't wait to become adults and shoulder all the responsibilities, and they feel a rush of excitement when they sit behind the wheel feeling independent, yet again disregarding the risk.

A practice so instilled in our society is hard to remove, and some serious steps need to be taken. The National Assembly approved the Pakistan Penal Code Act 2020 in which whoever commits this crime can face three to five years of jail or fine

which can range from 50 thousand rupees to 2 lakh rupees. It is suggested that taxpayers' money be used to create a designated driving area for teens, where they can practice driving under strict safety measures while also generating revenue by paying for the experience.



GAZA STRIP: Palestinians gathered to receive aid provided by UNRWA, including food supplies, outside a distribution centre, at the Jabalia refugee camp.

White House seeks plan for possible Russia sanctions relief

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States is drawing up a plan to potentially give Russia sanctions relief as President Donald Trump seeks to restore ties with Moscow and stop the war in Ukraine, a US official and another person familiar with the matter told Reuters.

The White House has asked the State and Treasury departments to draft a list of sanctions that could be eased for US officials to discuss with Russian representatives in the coming days as part of the administration's broad talks with Moscow on improving diplomatic and economic relations, the sources said.

The sanctions offices are now drawing up a proposal for lifting sanctions on select entities and individuals, including some Russian oligarchs, according to the sources. So-called options papers are often drafted by officials working on sanctions, but the White House's specific request for one in recent days underscores Trump and his advisers' willingness to ease Russian sanctions as part of a potential deal with Moscow.

It was not immediately clear what Washington could specifically seek in return for any sanctions relief. Russia is one of the world's biggest oil producers and if US sanctions on its energy system were eased, it could help prevent fuel prices from rising if Trump cracks down on oil exports from OPEC-member Iran.

The White House, the State Department, the Treasury Department and the Russian embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Kremlin last year described relations as "below zero" under the administration of Joe Biden, a

Democrat who backed Ukraine with aid and weapons and imposed tough sanctions on Russia to punish it for its invasion in 2022. But Trump, who has promised a quick end to the war, has upended US policy swiftly, to open talks with Moscow, beginning with a phone call to Russian President Vladimir Putin on Feb. 12 that was followed by meetings between US and Russian officials in Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

US sanctions on Russia since the 2022 invasion of Ukraine have included measures aimed at limiting revenues from the country's huge oil and gas industry and weakening its ability to fund the war. Western governments led by Washington imposed a \$60-per-barrel price cap on Russia's oil exports. Biden also hit Moscow with designations on Russian energy companies and vessels that shipped its oil, including Washington's toughest yet measures on Jan. 10 shortly before leaving office. Trump in January threatened to ramp up sanctions on Russia if Putin was unwilling to negotiate an end to the war in Ukraine. But more recently, Trump administration officials have openly acknowledged the possibility of easing sanctions on Moscow.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said during a Feb. 20 interview with Bloomberg Television that Russia could win economic relief, depending on how it approached negotiations in the coming weeks. Trump told reporters on Feb. 26 that Russian sanctions could be eased "at some point." The White House asked State and Treasury officials to devise a possible sanctions relief plan before Trump last week extended a state of emergency over the situation in

Ukraine, the US sources said. The state of emergency sanctions certain assets and people involved in Russia's war. Those measures, imposed by then-President Barack Obama's administration, have been in place since March 2014, when Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea.

It is unclear which Russian sanctions the Trump administration would consider lifting first. Trump could issue an executive order that would allow the administration to begin the process of easing some Russian sanctions, but he would also need to seek congressional approval to lift measures on certain entities, said John Smith, a partner at Morrison Foerster law firm and the former head of the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control. Since 2022, Russia has been able to build a wartime economy with increased military spending and industrial production. But experts say the country's economy is vulnerable and in desperate need of Western sanctions relief.

Russia says it is open for economic cooperation. The Kremlin said last week that Russia had lots of rare earth metal deposits and was open to doing deals to develop them after Putin held out the possibility of such collaboration with the US. Any formal economic deal with Moscow would likely require the US to ease sanctions. Trump has been seeking a minerals deal with Ukraine - home to a trove of lithium deposits and rare earth minerals - as pay back for billions of dollars in US aid. However, no deal was signed after an explosive Oval Office meeting between Trump and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Kim accuses Trump admn of stepping up provocations

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korea's Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of leader Kim Jong Un, criticised the Trump administration for stepping up "provocations" and said it justified the nuclear state increasing its nuclear deterrent, state media KCNA said. Kim denounced the US aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson's visit to South Korea, saying the action was part of a "policy of confrontation" against North Korea.

"As soon as its new administration appeared this year, the US has stepped up the political and military provocations against the DPRK, 'carrying forward' the former administration's hostile policy," Kim said, according to Tuesday's KCNA report. DPRK is short for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "Hostile policy toward the DPRK pursued by the US at present is offering sufficient justification for the DPRK to indefinitely bolster ... its nuclear war deterrent," Kim added.

South Korea's defence ministry said in a statement on Tuesday that Kim Yo Jong's comments were nothing more than deception to justify its nuclear missile development. "North Korea's nuclear weapons are never acceptable, and the only way for North Korea to survive is to abandon its obsession and delusion about nuclear (weapons)," the ministry said in a statement. South Korea's navy said the US aircraft carrier arrived at the southern port city of Busan in South Korea as a show of force against North Korea.

The nuclear-powered Carl Vinson is the first US aircraft carrier to dock at a South Korean port since Trump's second term in office began in January. Kim Yo Jong also criticised the deployment of US B-1B strategic bombers over the Korean peninsula as part of joint drills with the US and Japan, as well as slamming a pledge by the three allies made at a security conference in Munich in February that called for the denuclearisation of the North. Trump held unprecedented summits with the North Korean leader during his first term and has touted their personal rapport. The US president has said he would reach out to Kim Jong Un again.

First minister 'incredulous' over Ukraine missile deal

LONDO (BBC): First Minister Michelle O'Neill has said she is "incredulous" at a UK government deal for a Belfast factory to supply air defence missiles to Ukraine.

The Sinn Féin vice-president said that "rather than buying weapons of war, I would rather see the money invested in public services".

The Thales missile factory is to supply 5,000 air defence missiles to Ukraine in a deal worth up to £1.6bn, the UK government announced. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer announced the order as he laid out a four-point plan to "reach peace and defend Ukraine".

In the Northern Ireland Assembly, O'Neill was asked by independent assembly member (MLA) Claire Sugden whether she supported the deal. The first minister said she found it "incredulous" at a time when "public services are being cut left, right and centre".

She added: "At a time when we've endured 14 years of austerity, at a time whenever winter fuel payments are being cut from older people, at a time when lots of small local businesses are going to go to the wall because they can't afford the national insurance hikes. "At a time whenever our farmers are worried because of the inheritance tax, I think at a time like that, rather than buying weapons of war, I would rather see the money invested in public services." O'Neill said she believed "the focus of the international community should always be to work towards negotiation and peace settlements".

France's PM tears into Trumps attack on Zelenskyy

PARIS (AP): France's prime minister tore into US President Donald Trump's Oval Office thrashing of Volodymyr Zelenskyy, calling it a staggering show of "brutality" that aimed to humiliate Ukraine's leader and bend him to the will of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The extraordinarily frank criticism from Prime Minister François Bayrou, speaking in a parliamentary debate on Ukraine, diverged from the more nuanced tone that French President Emmanuel Macron has adopted in the wake of the clash at the White House and dropped the diplomatic niceties that customarily mark French-US relations.

"In the Oval Office of the White House, a staggering scene unfurled before the lenses of the entire world, marked by brutality, a desire to humiliate, with the goal of making Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy fold through threats, so that he gives in to the demands of his aggressors," Bayrou

said. "All this was summed up in one phrase before the planet's cameras: 'Either you find a deal with Putin or we will abandon you,'" Bayrou said, apparently referring to Trump's comments in the Oval Office. Trump's actual words to Zelenskyy were "you're either going to make a deal or we're out."

Continuing his speech to France's parliament, Bayrou added: "For the honor of democratic responsibility, for the honor of Ukraine and, I dare say, for the honor of Europe, President Zelenskyy did not fold and I think we can show him our appreciation." Lawmakers got to their feet in the National Assembly chamber to applaud. In opening the parliamentary debate, Bayrou said that Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and its diplomatic fallout have left Europe in grave peril. He spoke of "an historic situation that in our eyes is the most serious, the most destabilized, the most dangerous of all those that our country and our conti-

nent have experienced since the end of World War II."

The French prime minister said that the Oval Office scene - where Zelenskyy was berated both by Trump and US Vice President JD Vance before being asked to leave the White House - left "two victims." The second was both the trans-Atlantic relationship with traditional American allies and Washington's image, he said. Bayrou said that the Oval Office scene "compromised another fundamental alliance: the one that the United States had with themselves, their history, and with a certain ideal of defending the law, of defending the weak against the forces of tyranny." Bayrou has been Macron's prime minister since December. Although Bayrou doesn't speak directly for the presidency, the veteran French politician has long been a crucial partner for Macron. In opening his address to parliament, Bayrou said that he was speaking for Macron's government.

Japan won't join UN meeting on nuclear weapons ban

TOKYO (AP): Japan will not attend a UN conference on the treaty banning nuclear weapons, a top government official in Tokyo said, noting US nuclear deterrence is crucial to the country's security and that its participation would send the "wrong message." Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said Japan's national security is the primary reason it will not participate as an observer at the conference, which starts in New York.

"Under the severe security environment, nuclear deterrence is indispensable to defend the people's lives and assets, as well as Japan's sovereignty and peace," Hayashi told reporters. Japan's participation as an observer at the conference would "send a wrong message about the Japanese policy (supporting) nuclear deterrence and interfere with our effort in

security, peace and safety." The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was approved in 2017 and went into force in 2021 following a decades-long campaign aimed at preventing a repeat of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II.

Japan, despite being the only victim of the nuclear attacks, has refused to sign the treaty, saying its goal is not feasible without the participation of any of the nuclear weapons states. Hayashi said participating as an observer would also interfere with Japan's ongoing effort to gain support for strengthening the non-proliferation treaty and hinder nuclear disarmament. He did not give further details about Japan's next steps.

Japanese officials have said they share the ultimate goal of achieving a nuclear-free world but that Japan

needs to be realistic amid growing global conflicts. Atomic bombing survivors and their supporters have criticized Japan's government for making a hollow promise while clinging to the US nuclear umbrella. The survivors and their supporters have urged the Japanese government to participate in the conference as an observer amid growing global attention after Nihon Hidankyo, the atomic bombing survivors' grassroots organization, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba is a defense expert and vocal supporter of nuclear deterrence who has called for a more open debate about the role of US extended deterrence in the region. Japan has also expressed more openly its desire to ensure "extended deterrence" by US nuclear weapons in recent years amid growing tensions with China.

Colombian president aims to reduce drug violence

BOGOTA (AP): Colombian President Gustavo Petro announced a plan to reduce coca planting in a northeastern region rattled by rebel attacks by paying farmers while they switch to legal crops.

Petro said at a cabinet meeting that his government will seek to eradicate 25,000 hectares of coca in the Catatumbo region within 140 days, as part of an effort to decrease violence and weaken rebel groups that profit from the cocaine trade. The region has approximately 55,000 hectares of coca crops and is one of Colombia's main producers of cocaine.

Petro said farmers in Catatumbo will eradicate their coca plantings voluntarily and will be paid by the government while they transition to legal crops. He added that the Colombian military will continue to operate against rebels in the

region while the government will try to improve roads that enable farmers to get legal crops to markets. "Peace in Colombia depends on the voluntary decision of farmers who grow coca to eradicate their crops," Petro said in the meeting.

In January, more than 36,000 people were displaced from their homes in Catatumbo, a mountainous region of around 400,000 people that straddles the border with Venezuela. Rebels from the National Liberation Army, or ELN, launched coordinated attacks against civilians they accused of being collaborators of a rival group known as the FARC-EMC.

An estimated 80 people were killed in the attacks, which prompted Colombia's government to suspend peace talks with the ELN and declare a 90-day emergency that allows

it to limit some civil liberties in the area without congressional approval. Petro has accused the rebels of trying to take over the region to control its coca crops and its drug-trafficking routes.

Cocaine production in Colombia has been rising since 2013, according to the UN Office on Drug and Crime. It reported in October that cultivation of coca bushes increased by 10% in Colombia in 2023, while potential cocaine production increased 53% from the previous year. A 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian government and the nation's largest rebel group, the FARC, aimed to curb coca cultivation in rural areas. But in some rural areas, smaller armed groups have filled the power vacuum left by the FARC, actively promoting the lucrative cocaine trade.

Israel clears another refugee camp as squeeze on West Bank tightens

RAMALLAH (Reuters): Israeli troops demolished houses and cleared a wide roadway through the Nur Shams refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, in a weeks-long operation against militant groups that has forced tens of thousands of Palestinians from their homes.

The operation, during a fragile ceasefire in Gaza that has halted fighting there for the past six weeks, has emptied some of the biggest refugee camps in the northern West Bank in what some Palestinians see as a trial run for wider clearances later. Nur Shams, outside the city of Tulkarm, is the latest camp to be virtually emptied of its inhabitants following a

camp in the volatile city of Jenin to the east and a separate camp within Tulkarm itself. Residents say bulldozers have been clearing a broad roadway through the area where houses once stood to create easy access for military vehicles, continuing one of the Israeli military's biggest operations in the West Bank for years. Of the usual population of some 13,000, almost none was left inside the main camp, said Nihad al-Shawish, head of the Nur Shams camp services committee.

"There were about 3,000 people left in the camp and as of today, they have all left," he said. "There are still some people just outside on the outskirts but there is no

one left in the camp." There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military, which has previously said its operation aims to root out fighters from Iranian-backed militant groups, including Hamas and Islamic Jihad, that have established strongholds in the camps of the northern West Bank.

At least 12 people have been killed in Tulkarm during the operation, including both armed militants and civilians, according to Palestinian health officials. The Israeli military said it had made hundreds of arrests in the northern West Bank over recent weeks, confiscating 120 weapons and destroying hundreds of explosive devices.

Rebels in eastern Congo abducted 130 hospital patients, UN says

DAKAR (AP): Rwanda-backed M23 rebels abducted at least 130 sick and wounded men from two hospitals in a major city in eastern Congo, the United Nations said. On Feb. 28, M23 fighters raided the CBCA Ndoso Hospital and Heal Africa Hospital in Goma, a strategic city they seized earlier this year, the UN Human Rights Office spokesperson, Ravina Shamdasani, said in a statement.

The rebels took 116 patients from CBCA and 15 others from Heal Africa they suspected of

being Congolese army soldiers or members of the pro-government Wazalendo militia. "It is deeply distressing that M23 is snatching patients from hospital beds in coordinated raids and holding them incommunicado in undisclosed locations," Shamdasani said, calling for their immediate release.

M23 rebels have swept through eastern Congo since the beginning of the year, seizing key cities and killing some 3,000 people in the most significant escalation of conflict in over a decade. In a

lightning three-week offensive, the M23 took control of eastern Congo's main city Goma and seized the second largest city, Bukavu. The region is rich in gold and coltan, a key mineral for the production of capacitors used in most consumer electronics, such as laptops and smartphones. The rebels are supported by about 4,000 troops from neighboring Rwanda, according to UN experts, and at times have vowed to march as far as Congo's capital, Kinshasa, over 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) away.

Rwanda has accused Congo of enlisting ethnic Hutu fighters responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda of minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus. M23 says it's fighting to protect Tutsis and Congolese of Rwandan origin from discrimination and wants to transform Congo from a failed state to a modern one. Analysts have called those pretexs for Rwanda's involvement. At least 11 people were killed and scores injured last week when explosions in Bukavu struck a rally held by leaders of the M23 rebel group.

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The task ahead for the summit's attendees is to show how this plan remains relevant despite the many developments that have taken place since its inception in 2002, with new details including Gaza reconstruction and Palestinian post-war governance. Washington must understand that the ideal solution is the most obvious one: not Israeli expansionism or Palestinian militancy, but Palestinians and Israelis living side by side, in peace, with two states.

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On January 15 when the ceasefire was announced, the people of

The unity that has been passed from generation to generation has built a community that refuses to be erased. This is what will help Gaza rise again.

Trump makes fateful wager by testing his lifelong faith in the power of tariffs

DONALD Trump just took the biggest gamble of his young second presidency.

His hammer-blow 25% tariffs against Canada and Mexico that hit at mid-night dealt a fresh shock to an economy showing alarming signs of slowing growth and rising inflation – a perilous mix for any president.

Trump also doubled an additional tariff on all Chinese imports to 20%, in a trio of decisions that sent stocks – a cherished metric of his own performance – tumbling. The timing was inauspicious, before Trump makes a joint address to Congress Tuesday evening that will be watched by a nation nervous about stubbornly high housing and grocery prices. But to the narrower audience of his most faithful supporters, who show no sign of peeling away, Trump is likely to bill his new trade wars as proof of resolve and commitment to his populist promises.

Trump's decision to press the button, after previously delaying the duties on US neighbors a month ago, reflects a duel between his political heart and his head.

The often-volatile president has seen tariffs as an almost supernatural economic tool since his deals as a real estate mogul in the rip-roaring 1980s. Alongside immigration, the conceit that foreign nations are constantly ripping America off forms the foundation of his political career.

"It's going to be very costly for people to take advantage of this country. They can't come in and steal our money and steal our jobs and take our factories and take our businesses and expect not to be punished," Trump said Monday. "And they're being punished by tariffs. It's a very powerful weapon that politicians haven't used because they were either dishonest, stupid, or paid off in some other form."

Until the final hours of Monday, investors hoped Trump would take an off ramp. Earlier, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told CNN that Mexico and Canada had done a "nice job" on limiting illegal border crossings into the United States but needed to do more to halt the flow of fentanyl – raising expectations of another possible tariff pause, as happened a month ago after both nations strengthened border security.

But Trump's announce-

ment that there was no time left for Canada and Mexico to act sent stocks on a late-afternoon plunge, with the Dow down 650 points or 1.48% at the close and with the S&P off 1.76% in its biggest single-day decline of the year.

"The market was expecting something to happen that would mean that the tariffs wouldn't be implemented ... it comes on top of a strong whiff of stagflation – meaning lower growth and high inflation that has been apparent in a number of data releases and as we know tariffs will just accentuate the smell of stagflation," Mohamed El-Erian, president of Queens College, Cambridge, told Richard Quest on CNN International.

Trump's decision to

Trump's decision to launch full scale trade wars with America's neighbors is a landmark moment in his second term and is just the latest occasion when he's stuck to his sweeping campaign trail promises despite the enormous disruption that honoring his word entails. And it's a reminder of the ambition underlying his return to the White House – and to what he considers unfinished business. If the tariffs endure, they will underscore his determination to follow through on goals he was talked out of in his first term by establishment political aides. Now, he's trying to remake the world on multiple fronts. Before escalating his effort to overturn the world free trade system and decades of globalization, Trump cast doubt on US security guarantees that underwrote the transatlantic alliance since World War II. And his effort to gut US federal agencies alongside Elon Musk is an attempt to obliterate the domestic governing order and career civil service that prevailed through many presidencies of both parties. Trump's faith in tariffs survives every warning by economic analysts that consumers rather than rival trade powers will pay for them. Tariffs – a device used for generations earlier in America's history but that was largely phased out in the 20th century – are stamped in the DNA of Trump's "America First" movement.

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Stephen Collinson

ties.

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Tariffs – a device used for generations earlier in America's history but that was largely phased out in the 20th century – are stamped in the DNA of Trump's "America First" movement. Their implementation against Canada mirrors the worldview behind his eruption at Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in the Oval Office last week. For Trump, all foreign policy is a monetary transaction in which the United States is either winning or being taken advantage of. This mindset precludes the idea that

America has friends or allies with common interests. Instead, his use of tariffs to try to wring concessions from Mexico and Canada on immigration shows that his White House views them not as an exclusively economic tool but as part of a deeper national security arsenal.

Trump's turn against neighbors – with whom he clinched an updated North American trade deal in his first term – has fractured bonds that run deep.

It threatens to pitch Canada, long a faithful friend and half of one of the world's most profitable trading relationships, into a recession and to cause steep job losses. This, as well as Trump's suggestions that the Great White North become the 51st state triggered fury north of the border and widespread boycotts of US goods.

Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly promised Monday that the Ottawa government was "ready" with \$155 billion worth of tariffs on US goods – including a first tranche worth \$30 billion. Mexico is also vowing to respond, raising the

prospect of prolonged economic warfare unless Trump steps back – perhaps with a concocted claim of victory before the new tariffs have had time to seriously damage the regional economy.

Trump has placed himself in a political box. If he imposes tariffs, he's playing with fire. If he doesn't, everyone will think he's always bluffing, and he'll dent his own economic leverage.

Even if he relents, Trump's constant threats are darkening an unsettled environment for investors and consumers.

For all its legendary resilience, the US economy is flashing weakness. Consumer confidence is tumbling along with consumer spending. The Atlanta Federal Reserve's GDPNow model on Monday projected a 2.8%

decline in growth for the current quarter.

So, Trump – who is also promising reciprocal tariffs on most global imports next month –could be playing with economic fire.

The risk is especially acute since voter frustration with high housing and grocery prices helped elevate him to victory in last year's election. Failing to fix those problems – or exacerbating them with tariffs on lumber and agricultural goods – could cause a backlash, especially for Republican lawmakers in next year's midterm elections. In a CNN/SSRS poll published Sunday, 52% of respondents said that Trump had not paid sufficient attention to the country's most important problems.

Trump's rationale for wielding tariffs is that decades of free trade policies and steps like bringing China into the World Trade Organization hollowed out US manufacturing and sent millions of US blue collar jobs abroad. He's not wrong – although those policies also raised US living standards with a flood of lower priced imports. And

Trump believes that re-erecting trade barriers will bring those jobs and factories back.

"As an example, North Carolina ... I used to go there to buy furniture for hotels, and it's been wiped out. That business all went to other countries. And now, it's going to come back into North Carolina," the president said on Monday. To drive home his point, he appeared in the White House Monday with the CEO of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing, who pledged to pour \$100 billion into chip manufacturing in the United States.

But with less than four years left in Trump's term, will businesses undertake the expense and disruption of locating plants from lower wage economies abroad? And even if they do, the higher costs of labor, materials and transport in a developed economy could mean higher prices in stores.

Democrats, who've struggled to respond to Trump's shock and awe, suddenly have an opening.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who has sometimes advocated tariffs as part of a wider economic strategy, warned that the prospect of inflation would dampen Trump's address on Tuesday. "Notice the fix this puts him in," the Democrat told CNN's Kasie Hunt on the inaugural edition of her new show "The Arena."

"Remember, he (was) saying on day one he would lower prices for American families, on day one," Warren said. "After he gets elected, he said he got elected based on grocery prices and his promises – now we're six weeks in, he's done nothing to lower prices. And, in fact, it looks like inflation is going up. With these tariffs, we know that costs will go up for families."

"So, he's exactly upside down from his promise."

Warren's comments highlighted Trump's gamble. There's no way that importers can bear the cost of tariffs of 20% or 25% without passing them onto consumers. And when tomatoes, and fruit and gas and alcohol shoots up in price and new cars are suddenly out of reach, his lifelong and untested faith in the magic properties of "beautiful" tariffs could crash headlong into reality.

Why some in the Global South are not mourning the demise of USAID

UNITED States President Donald Trump's blitzkrieg campaign against the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has demolished the organisation described as the "world's largest donor" and left aid workers scrambling to salvage the international development aid and humanitarian response system. Many have lamented the grave consequences of the US president's unprecedented decision as well as moves by other countries, such as the United Kingdom, to cut aid.

In a LinkedIn post commenting on the situation, Luca Crudeli, who said he has been "immersed in development since 2003", spoke of "the sense that the moral center of our work is quietly slipping away" and "the uneasy realization that development's humanistic soul might be lost in a shuffle of contracts and strategic scorecards".

But describing "development" as having a humanistic soul would be to many people in the Global South a contradiction in terms. That is not to say that many people who work in "development" are not decent, moral human beings genuinely interested in improving the welfare of others around the world. Nor is it to deny that the aid industry delivers crucial assistance that millions rely on to survive.

It is to say that the soul of "development" has always been much less humanistic than its proponents assert. In fact, the entire enterprise of aid has been a tool for geopolitical control, a means of preserving, rather than eliminating, global inequality and the resource extraction that feeds it. In recent days, following the demise of USAID, there has been growing openness about this reality – consciously or unconsciously.

For example, a statement issued by InterAction, which "unites and amplifies the voices of America's leading humanitarian and development organizations", made that quite clear. These organizations, it said before a hasty rewrite, "work tirelessly to save lives and advance US interests globally". It added that the attack on USAID had suspended "programs that support America's global leadership and creates dangerous vacuums that China and our adversaries will quickly fill".

That doesn't sound very humanistic, does it?

Marina Kobzeva, who has spent nearly two decades as an aid worker commented on how colleagues from the Global

Patrick Gathara

North and the Global South reacted differently to the statement. She described the former bemoaning it as "poor wording, ... an honest mistake" while the latter expressed a sense of vindication: "Finally, they are showing their true colours."

Western humanitarianism has not just lost its way. It has been intimately tied to Western colonialism from the start. For example, the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference, which set the stage for Europe's conquest of Africa, was framed as a humanitarian event.

And although the first humanitarian organisations were created to deal with the barbarous consequences of conflict in Europe as post-World War II reconstruction projects wound down, many started playing an active role in the Global South, where they actively propped up

And although the first humanitarian organisations were created to deal with the barbarous consequences of conflict in Europe as post-World War II reconstruction projects wound down, many started playing an active role in the Global South, where they actively propped up imperial domination. The aid industry, in effect, inherited colonialism's "civilising mission". Its do-gooder image papers over the extractive nature of the international system and attempts to ameliorate its worst excesses without actually challenging the system. If anything, the two are in a symbiotic relationship. The aid industry legitimises extractive global trade and governance systems, which in turn produce the outcomes that legitimise the existence of the aid agencies. As a result, today, despite the proliferation of aid and development agencies, the racialised global order has barely budged, and deep inequality continues to characterise the relations between nations. A 1997 study by the US Congressional Budget Office found that foreign aid played, at best, a marginal role in promoting economic development and improving human welfare and could even "hinder development depending on the environment in which that aid is used and the conditions under which it is given".

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ment in which that aid is used and the conditions under which it is given".

It is thus not surprising that as the aid sector finds itself on the brink, some of those it claims to help would not be entirely saddened to see its back. Heba Aly, a former CEO of The New Humanitarian news agency, noted that at a recent meeting, "some activists from the Global South proved less worried about aid cuts than the donors were in the hope this would force their own leaders to take responsibility & stop depending on aid".

This highlights how aid substitutes fundamental reform of both global and national systems of colonial extraction for charity.

The following-out of Western aid will undoubtedly be tragic and painful. Some of the world's most vulnerable people will suffer, and many will die. We must not lose sight of this in arguments about the righteousness or wicked-

ness of aid in general. The fact is, we should address the world as it is, not as we wish it to be, and do all we can to ameliorate the impact.

That said, this is also an opportunity to begin to build a world without aid. "If this is the beginning of the end of aid," Aly wrote, "we should focus on structural transformation." That is the reform of global trade and financial systems that have seen the poorest pay for the lifestyles of the rich.

That does not mean it would be a Hobbesian world without solidarity. Rather, it would be one where charity is not allowed to be a cover for global injustice.

And the end of aid should also see the end of "development", a pernicious ideology that assumes the "developed world", whose prosperity is built on the ruination of other societies and of the planet, is an example worth emulating. We need to work for an order that truly embodies a humanistic soul.

Oscars night and the cultural death of Zionism

OSCARS night was full of surprises. A relatively small-budget movie, "Anora," won the most awards. However, the real star of the event was the Israeli-Palestinian documentary "No Other Land." The documentary explores the Israeli occupation forces' malicious activities in the West Bank, including the expansion of settlements and subjugation of Palestinians in Masafer Yatta, the hometown of Basel Adra, the Palestinian co-director.

While one might look at "No Other Land" as an artistic work documenting the suffering of the Palestinians, it is much more than that. The reception it received from an audience of celebrities signaled more than appreciation for a good film. It signaled the cultural death of Zionism

Palestinian filmmaker Adra started his acceptance speech by announcing that, two months ago, he became a father. He said that he hopes his daughter will not have to suffer what he goes through, "always fearing settler violence and home demolitions and forcible displacement that my community is living and facing every day under Israeli occupation." However, even before he finished his sentence, the audience gave him a loud round of

applause. He said the documentary represents "the harsh reality they have been enduring for decades." He called on the world to take serious action to stop the "injustice and to stop the eth-

Israeli filmmaker Yuval Abraham, who co-directed the documentary, said that when he looks at Adra, he sees his brother, but they are unequal. He said they live under a regime where he as an Israeli lives and enjoys freedom, while Adra does not. He was referring to the apartheid regime Israel has installed in the West Bank, where

nic cleansing of the Palestinian people."

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Palestinians live under military rule and Israelis live under civilian rule. Abraham spoke about the "ethnic supremacy" that currently governs the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians.

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And Zionism is all about ethnic supremacy, as one can see with Zionists claiming an exclusive biblical right to the land. Abraham called for national rights for both peoples. He also criticized US policy and said that America is "blocking" the path to peace. When he mentioned US foreign policy toward the Middle East, he received a loud round of applause. Meanwhile, Guy Pearce, who was nominated for

the best supporting actor Oscar, was wearing a "Free Palestine" pin.

This Hollywood scene totally contrasts with the 50th edition of the

Israeli filmmaker Yuval Abraham, who co-directed the documentary, said that when he looks at Adra, he sees his brother, but they are unequal. He said they live under a regime where he as an Israeli lives and enjoys freedom, while Adra does not. He was referring to the apartheid regime Israel has installed in the West Bank, where

Oscars in 1978, when British actress Vanessa Redgrave won the Oscar for best supporting actress for her role in the movie "Julia." The movie was about a woman who helped Jews escape Nazi Germany. Many pro-Israel groups objected to her nomination given her record of supporting Palestinians and her criticism of Israel and Zionism. During her acceptance speech, she decried the

"Zionist hoodlums" who tried to prevent her from getting the award. She was booed by the audience when she criticized Zionism. Today, on the

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While in the 1970s people looked at Zionism as the right to self-determination for the Jewish people and at Palestinians as terrorists standing in the way of

the completion of this noble plan, today the image has changed. People see very clearly the Israeli brutality and its supremacy. Today, many people on the left are talking about Israel

Israeli filmmaker Yuval Abraham, who co-directed the documentary, said that when he looks at Adra, he sees his brother, but they are unequal. He said they live under a regime where he as an Israeli lives and enjoys freedom, while Adra does not. He was referring to the apartheid regime Israel has installed in the West Bank, where

contrary, criticism of Zionism at the Oscars receives a standing ovation. If this signifies anything, it is the cultural death of Zionism. This is far more dangerous to Israel, the Zionist state, than its failure to eradicate Hamas.

While in the 1970s people looked at Zionism as the right to self-determination for the Jewish people and at Palestinians as terrorists standing in the way of

East, but because it came from two mainstream American authors and not from fringe voices. While signing my book, Mearsheimer told me it was a war of ideas. Now, after watching the

Israeli filmmaker Yuval Abraham, who co-directed the documentary, said that when he looks at Adra, he sees his brother, but they are unequal. He said they live under a regime where he as an Israeli lives and enjoys freedom, while Adra does not. He was referring to the apartheid regime Israel has installed in the West Bank, where

Oscars and comparing the reactions to Redgrave's and Adra's acceptance speeches, I realize that Israel is losing the war of ideas that Mearsheimer deemed so important.

Israel's strength comes from the support it has, mainly from the US but also from the Western world. The West's guilt over the Holocaust created a sense of duty that it needed to support Israel

and secure its survival. If this support is now gone, it will be very difficult for Israel to continue on the path it is taking today. Unfortunately, Israel does not see this. It fails to realize that the world is changing. Israel is no longer seen as the weak underdog that needs protection from belligerent Arab neighbors. On the contrary, it is seen as the aggressor. However, Israel has been emboldened by the occupation of the White House.

For now, Israel still has the material support of the US. While the Trump administration has cut medical and other grants to the American people, aid to Israel has increased. However, this is not sustainable. Of course, Israel is using money and its lobbying machine to guarantee the support of Congress. Lawmakers compete in showing loyalty and support to the Zionist state. Nonetheless, this can flip in a moment when the public mood flips – when the average American no longer believes the Zionist lies. The Hasbara, or Zionist propaganda, has been working well so far, but every propaganda campaign eventually reaches a point where it loses credibility and people start realizing that it is propaganda that hides the truth. When this moment comes, Israel will be in deep trouble.



PSX welcomes distinguished team from Iraq

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) welcomed a distinguished delegation of Iraqi scholars from the Scientific Foundation for Financial Transactions (SFFT Iraq) to explore opportunities for collaboration in Islamic finance and strengthen the Islamic capital markets in both nations. The delegation included esteemed scholars: Ayatollah Syed Izz-al-Din-Ai-Hakim, Allama Syed Ahmed Ezz-El-Din-El-Hakim, Allama Sheikh Qasim Al-Issawi, Sheikh Muayyad-al-Abbadi, and Allama Sheikh Sajid Raza Khan Najafi. SFFT is a leading Iraqi research institute specialising in Islamic finance, and the visit was facilitated by the Al-Sadiq (AS) Institute, Karachi.

Farrukh H. Sabzwari (PSX's MD and CEO) and PSX's senior management welcomed the delegation. Also in attendance were distinguished members from PSX's Shariah Focus Group, including Mr Mohammad Shoaib (CEO of Lucky Investment Company), Ms Sarwat Ahson (Executive Director of CFA Society Pakistan), Mr Harris Munawwar (Head of Investment, Bank Islami) and Hasan Raza.

During the session, PSX officials provided an overview of Pakistan's capital market and highlighted the country's evolving landscape of Islamic finance. The discussions focused on key areas such as the debt market, equity segments, listing options on the Main and GEM boards, and capacity-

building initiatives to enhance bilateral cooperation.

The Iraqi scholars expressed their gratitude for PSX's hospitality and shared their keen interest in learning from Pakistan's successful Islamic finance practices. A delegation member remarked, "Our objective is to leverage Pakistan's proven models of Islamic finance to benefit our own market. With 50 percent of Iraqi banks operating on Islamic principles and remarkable growth-from 200 billion dinars to a trillion dinars over the past six years-we see immense potential for collaboration in Islamic finance."

The scholars emphasised that this interaction, rooted in the strong brotherly ties between Pakistan and Iraq, aims to catalyse the development of the Iraqi



capital market. They also highlighted the importance of joint innovation in financial products tailored to Islamic finance, which could drive substantial growth in their market.

Commenting on the visit,

Sabzwari stated, "We are thrilled to host our esteemed Iraqi counterparts and explore partnership opportunities. Our discussions have opened new avenues in areas such as ETFs, debt markets, equity, and spe-

cialised boards like the GEM board. By focusing on capacity building and product innovation, we are confident that our collaborative efforts will benefit both Pakistani and Iraqi capital markets."

This visit marks a significant step toward deepening economic and financial cooperation between Pakistan and Iraq, fostering an environment of mutual learning and innovation, particularly in Islamic finance.



KARACHI: Business leader of Lucky Group (YBG) group Mohammad Ali Tabba cutting a ribbon to inaugurate Head Office of Lucky Investments Limited (Formerly Interloop Asset Management Limited) at Finance & Trade Centre.

Lucky Investments Ltd inaugurates head office at Finance & Trade Centre

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Mohammad Ali Tabba, the prominent business leader of Lucky Group (YBG) group inaugurated Head Office of Lucky Investments Limited (Formerly Interloop Asset Management Limited) at Finance & Trade Centre.

Present at the occasion were directors and senior management of the company including Chairman Mohammad Ali Tabba, Director Jawed Tabba and CEO, Mohammad Shoaib, CFA.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Ali Tabba, the chairman of the company said: "The launch of Lucky Investments marks a significant milestone in our journey. Financial Services is a new vertical that Lucky Group is adding to its lines of businesses. As we embark on this new chapter, we remain dedicated to providing Shariah-compliant investment solutions that meet the evolving needs of institutional and retail clients."

Mohammad Shoaib,

CFA, also speaking at the occasion said: "The launch of Lucky Investments is a testament to Lucky Group's values of innovation and excellence."

As a first Islamic asset management company being launched by a business conglomerate in Pakistan, Lucky Investments is committed to providing comprehensive wealth management solutions to its customers. This will help to increase the rate of savings in Pakistan which is currently very low at 13% of GDP.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where four ships, MSC Krystal, Eleni-T, Asia Unity and MP MR Tanker carrying Container, Palm oil and Mogas, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal and FOTCO oil Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile six more ships, America, Valence, Lian Shun Hu, Toiny, IVS Progress and Montevideo-I scheduled to load/offload Container, Fuel oil, Chick Peas and Coal also arrived at outer anchorage during last 24 hours. A total of seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two more ships, MSC Krystal and Team View left the port.

Cargo volume of 102,022 tonnes, comprising 63,884 tonnes imports cargo and 38,138 tonnes export cargo carried in 4,681 Containers (2,468 TEUs Imports 2,213 TEUs Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 18 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, America, Valence, Nymph and IVS Progress scheduled to load/offload Container, River Sand and Coal are expected to take berths at QICT, MW-2 and PIBT are respectively, while two more container ships, MSC Positano and Maersk Cairo are due to arrive at outer anchorage today (Wednesday).

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 756 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 756.91 points, a positive change of 0.68 percent, closing at 112,743.80 points as compared to 111,986.89 points on the last trading day.

A total of 206,851,125 shares were traded during the day as compared to 208,881,544 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs11.337 billion against Rs11.881 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 429 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 221 of them recorded gains and 150 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 58 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 12,563,739 shares at Rs.1.40 per share,

Citi Pharma Limited with 12,282,173 shares at Rs.92.93 per share and Pak International Bulk with 10,341,268 shares at Rs.9.12 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.61.32 per share closing at Rs.23,066.34 whereas runner-up was Sapphire Textile Mills Limited with Rs.28.82 rise in its share price to close at Rs.1,200.00.

Mehmood Textile Mills Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.42.52 per share price, closing at Rs.385.73, whereas the runner-up was Reliance Cotton Spinning Mills Limited with Rs.33.41 decline in its per share price to Rs.483.67.

Rupee sheds 10 paise against dollar

The Rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and

closed at Rs279.76 against the previous day's closing of Rs279.66.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs280 and Rs281.50, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs2.63 to close at Rs293.49 against the last day's closing of Rs290.86, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen went up by 02 paise and closed at Rs1.87, whereas an increase of Rs3.03 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs355.20 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs352.17.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 02 paise each to close at Rs 76.17 and Rs74.59 respectively.

Gold prices increase by Rs4,800 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs.4,800 and was sold at Rs 306,300 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 301,500 on previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.4,115 to Rs.262,602 from Rs. 258,487 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat went up by Rs.3,772 to Rs.240,727 from Rs. 236,955.

The prices of per tola silver increased by Rs.45 to Rs.3,315 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.39 to Rs.2,842.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$47 to \$2,916 from \$2,869 whereas the prices of silver in international market increased by \$0.39 to \$31.80, the Association reported.

IBA hosted IMF team for faculty discussion and student interaction

F.P. Report

KARACHI: IBA Karachi had the honor of hosting a distinguished delegation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), organized by the IBA Center for Business and Economic Research (IBA-CBER), led by Mr. Nathan Porter, Mission Chief to Pakistan, IMF, along with Mr. Mahir Binici, Resident Representative for Pakistan, IMF, and Muhammad Ali, Office Manager, IMF Pakistan, at the IBA Main Campus.

The delegation engaged in discussions with faculty members from the IBA School of Economics and Social Sciences (IBA-SESS) and interacted with students on Pakistan's economic trajectory.

Dr. Aadir Nakhoda, Assistant Professor and Research Fellow, IBA-CBER, welcomed the delegation. The visit commenced with an insightful faculty discussion.

Notable faculty members in attendance included Dr. Asma Hyder, Dean, IBA-SESS, and esteemed members of the Economics Department - Dr. Muhammad Nasir, Chairperson; Dr. Qazi Masood Ahmed, Professor; Dr. Muhammad Salman Khalid and Dr. Syed Ateeb Akhter Shah, Assistant Professors; and Ms. Javeria Younas Abbasi, Lecturer. They engaged in an in-depth exchange with the IMF representatives on key economic and policy matters.

Following the faculty session, the IMF delegation participated in a student interaction session titled 'Pakistan's Way Forward.' During the session, Porter shared valuable insights



on Pakistan's macroeconomic landscape, policy development, and future economic challenges. The floor was then opened for a Q&A session, where students actively participated with insightful questions, and the IMF representatives responded thoughtfully.

Concluding the visit, Dr. Hyder expressed gratitude to the IMF delegation and presented a token of appreciation to Porter on behalf of the IBA fraternity. Additionally, Dr. Qazi honored Binici with a token of appreciation.

The session ended with closing remarks and a group photograph, marking the end of a productive and insightful visit. IBA-CBER continues to foster meaningful dialogues, strengthening its role as a hub for academic and policy discussions on Pakistan's economic and financial landscape.

70 Glorious Years of IBA - A Legacy

Worth Celebrating: IBA Karachi, Pakistan's leading and most prestigious institution, has nurtured generations of trailblazers, with 20,000+ alumni driving innovation and leading organizations across the globe.

Equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure, modern learning spaces, and cutting-edge facilities, IBA offers a world-class education that empowers students to shape the future. Committed to sustainability, IBA fosters an eco-conscious campus community, continuously reducing its carbon footprint through impactful green initiatives.

With a rich legacy and an unwavering pursuit of progress, IBA continues to redefine education, leadership, and responsible innovation. Here's to the next 70 years of Visionary Leadership, Academic Excellence, and Sustainable Impact.

Exports increase by 8.17% to \$22.022 billion during Jul-Feb

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country increased by 8.17 percent during the first eight months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding months of last year.

Exports during July-February (2024-25) were recorded at \$22.022 billion against \$20.359 billion during July-February (2023-24), according to Pakistan

Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data.

On the other hand, imports into the country went up by 7.40 percent by growing from \$35.199 million last year to \$37.802 million during the first eight months of the current year.

Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the months under review was recorded at \$15.780 billion

against the deficit of \$14.480 billion last year, showing an increase of 6.33 percent.

Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports in February 2025 decreased by 5.57 percent to \$2.439 billion from \$2.583 billion in February 2024.

On the other hand, the imports went up by 10.03 percent by going up from \$4.306 to \$4.738 percent,

according to PBS data.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country came down by 17.35 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.951 billion during January 2025.

The imports also witnessed a decrease of 9.89 percent when compared to the imports of \$5.258 billion in January 2025, PBS reported.

KMBL partners with Qazi Shariah Consultancy — to strengthen commitment to Islamic banking



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Khushhali Microfinance Bank Limited (KMBL) has taken a significant step toward expanding its Islamic banking offerings by collaborating with Qazi Shariah Consultancy. This strategic partnership is aligned with the State Bank of Pakistan's Vision 2028, which aims to facilitate the transition of conventional banks into Shariah-compliant finan-

cial institutions, in line with the Federal Shariat Court's decision.

With the SBP's guidelines setting the framework for a robust Islamic banking system, KMBL is proactively embracing Shariah-compliant financial solutions to cater to a growing demand for ethical and riba-free banking services. Through this collaboration, Khushhali Microfinance Bank Limited (KMBL) will benefit from

Qazi Shariah Consultancy's extensive expertise in Islamic finance, ensuring that its products and services align with Islamic banking principles.

The official signing ceremony was attended by key executives from both organizations, including Aameer Karachiwalla - President & Chief Executive Officer, KMBL, Muhammad Aftab Alam - Chief Business Officer, KMBL, and Maazullah

Khan - Consultant, Qazi Shariah Consultancy.

Speaking on the occasion, Aameer Karachiwalla, CEO of Khushhali Microfinance Bank Limited (KMBL), emphasized the significance of this partnership. "As part of our commitment to financial inclusion and ethical banking, KMBL is proud to join hands with Qazi Shariah Consultancy. This partnership marks a milestone in our journey toward offering fully Shariah-compliant financial solutions, in line with the State Bank of Pakistan's vision for the industry. We are dedicated to ensuring that our customers have access to innovative, riba-free banking services that meet their financial needs while adhering to Islamic principles."

Through this collaboration, KMBL aims to develop and expand its Islamic banking portfolio, ensuring compliance with Shariah governance while enhancing financial accessibility for individuals and businesses seeking ethical banking solutions.

Climate change & financial risk modelling: A critical framework for Pakistan's resilience

Ali Ashar Jaffri

Climate change has become a critical global issue, with severe implications for ecosystems, economies and societies. Financial modelling has emerged as an essential tool for assessing and mitigating climate-related risks, helping institutions anticipate the economic impacts of both physical and transition risks. As extreme weather events increase, central banks and regulators worldwide are integrating climate risks into financial frameworks to ensure stability.

The Paris Agreement (2015) and TCFD (Task Force on Climate Related Financial Disclosures) emphasize transparency and risk management for financial institutions, urging them to consider both physical (e.g., floods, droughts) and transition (e.g.,

regulatory shifts, technological changes) risks. A study warns that without mitigation, global GDP could shrink by 18% by 2100. In Pakistan, these risks are heightened, particularly in agriculture, energy and banking sectors.

The sectors most vulnerable are a) Agriculture & Livestock b) Forestry & Fishing c) Manufacturing & Construction and d) Energy & Water Supply

Financial stress tests help gauge the resilience of sectors and institutions to these risks, while also identifying specific vulnerabilities in asset valuations and market pricing. Climate-related losses in Pakistan include USD 29 billion (1992-2021), with floods causing a USD 15.2 billion economic setback in 2022.

Pakistan's situation: Ranked among the top 10 most vulnerable nations,

Pakistan suffers major losses due to climate impacts, with agriculture being particularly at risk (24% GDP contribution). The State Bank of Pakistan is pushing banks to integrate climate risks into lending strategies, yet challenges persist, such as data gaps and regulatory uncertainties.

The TCFD highlights that 60% of large corporations



globally are adopting climate risk disclosure, but emerging economies like Pakistan still face significant data gaps.

Court Notice

In the Court of Syed Zamarrud Shah Judge Banking Court-II Federal Judicial Complex Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar. Case No: 266/1 Next Date: 21-4-2025 Suit for recovery of Rs. 1402616/- ZTBL Charsada Branch Vs. Haroon, Notice Versus: Haroon s/o Farid Khan R/o Mullahali Miangan P/o Nissatta Tehsil & Distt Charsadda. Where is the plaintiff Bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs. 1402616/- against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institutions (Recovery of Finances) Ordinance 2001. You are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt / publication of the notice in the newspaper filing which an exparte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issue today on 26.2.2025 under my signature & Seal of the Court.

Judge

Banking Court-II Peshawar



In brief

Germany's hockey team to play four-match series
L A H O R E (Monitoring Desk): Following the ICC Men's Champions Trophy 2025, Pakistan is set to witness the revival of international hockey in the homeland as Germany's junior hockey team will arrive in Lahore on Wednesday (tomorrow) morning for a four-match series against Pakistan's junior squad. The series will begin with three matches scheduled to take place in Lahore on March 6, 8, and 11. The final match will be held in Islamabad on March 13. Due to the holy month of Ramadan, all matches will be played under floodlights. The arrival of the German junior team and the commencement of this series highlight Pakistan's efforts to restore its place on the global hockey stage.

Liverpool don't fear PSG
PARIS (Agencies): Arne Slot says Liverpool have nothing to fear at the Parc des Princes as he prepares his Premier League title favourites for a block-buster Champions League clash against runaway Ligue 1 leaders Paris Saint-Germain. Slot's side take the next step in their bid for a first Champions League crown since 2019 when they face PSG in the last-16 first leg on Wednesday. The six-time European champions lost on both their previous visits to PSG, in 1997 and 2018. But Liverpool have been beaten just four times in all competitions this season and only once in the Champions League - against PSV Eindhoven in their final league-phase game, when they had already qualified for the last 16. The Reds finished first in the league phase with seven wins from eight games, including a 2-0 success against holders Real Madrid, and have been equally dominant on the domestic stage. Inspired by the sublime form of Egypt forward Mohamed Salah, Slot's men are 13 points clear at the top of the Premier League as they close in on a record-equaling 20th English title. Liverpool can also win the first trophy of the Slot era when they face Newcastle in the League Cup final at Wembley on March 16. With 20 victories, the Reds have won more league games than any team in Europe's top five leagues so far this season. After a recent wobble, Liverpool got back on track with a pair of 2-0 wins against Manchester City and Newcastle that took them a giant step closer to Premier League glory. They also benefited from a weekend off to rest before the PSG tie due to their early exit from the FA Cup. No wonder Slot made it clear Liverpool have no reason to feel any trepidation about their trip to Paris. "Do we fear PSG? We don't fear anybody. But I'm impressed by their quality, they are on an upwards curve a bit similar to ours at the moment," he said. "I don't think the likes of Liverpool, Arsenal, Paris Saint-Germain, Barcelona, Real Madrid fear opponents. "But we definitely respect them and there's a reason for that. They won so many games in a row and they have so many quality players." - "It could have been the final" - Like Liverpool, PSG are marching relentlessly towards the French title, opening up a 13-point lead thanks to a 24-game unbeaten run in Ligue 1 this season. But Luis Enrique's team have been less formidable in the Champions League, where they were forced into the play-off round after defeats against Arsenal, Atletico Madrid and Bayern Munich left them in 15th place.

Kohli leads India to Champions Trophy final with victory over Australia



DUBAI (AFP): Veteran batsman Virat Kohli rolled back the years with a polished 84 as India pulled off a tense chase to beat Australia by four wickets in the first semi-final of the Champions Trophy on Tuesday. Set 265 for victory, India lost the 36-year-old Kohli in the closing overs but KL Rahul's unbeaten 42 steered the team home with 11 balls to spare at the Dubai International Stadium. They will face South Africa or New Zealand in the final on Sunday in Dubai with India playing all their matches at the venue after they refused to tour hosts Pakistan for the eight-nation event. Lahore was the alternate venue for the final had India missed out. Australia elected to bat and posted the highest total of 264 all out at Dubai International Cricket Stadium in this tournament after key knocks from skipper Steve Smith, who made 73, and Alex Carey, who hit 61. In reply India lost two early wickets before Kohli and Shreyas Iyer, who made 45, put the chase back on track in their partnership of 91. Cooper Connolly, making the team in place of injured Matthew Short who was forced out of the tournament on Monday, trapped skipper Rohit Sharma lbw on 28 for his first ODI wicket. Kohli and Iyer then took stock against an inexperienced Australian attack missing their top fast bowlers including Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood to injuries. But the next line of bowlers

stood up as leg-spinner Adam Zampa bowled Iyer before pace bowler Nathan Ellis rattled the stumps of Axar Patel for 27. Kohli, known as a master chaser who recently hit an unbeaten 100 in India's win over arch-rivals Pakistan on February 23, stood firm in another stand with wicket-keeper-batsman Rahul. Kohli was dropped by Glenn Maxwell off Connolly on 51 but Zampa denied him another ton when he clubbed a googly to Ben Dwarshuis at long-on to leave India at 225-5 and Australia still

hoping. But Rahul kept calm and with Hardik Pandya, who hit three sixes in his 28, put on 34 off 31 balls to ease the pressure. Ellis removed Pandya, another catch at long-on, but Rahul hit the winning six as a largely Indian crowd roared in delight. Earlier, Australia lost regular wickets but kept coming back with partnerships including 50-plus stands between Smith and Labuschagne, who made 29, and then the captain and the left-handed Carey.

India pace spearhead Mohammed Shami stood out with figures of 3-48 as Australia's innings lasted 49.3 overs. Spinners Varun Chakravarthy and Ravindra Jadeja took two wickets each. Left-handed opener Travis Head gave the team a quick start with his 39 after losing his partner Connolly for a duck. India's victory is a reversal of their last match against Australia when they lost in the 2023 ODI World Cup final in Ahmedabad. The second semi-final is on Wednesday in Lahore.

Raducanu could face Gauff at Indian Wells



INDIAN WELLS (Agencies): Britain's Emma Raducanu will play world number three Coco Gauff in the second round at Indian Wells - if she can beat Japan's Moyuka Uchijima in the first round. Raducanu is scheduled to play world number 52 Uchijima on the tournament's opening day on Wednesday. It will be the British number two's first tournament since a stalking ordeal at the Dubai Tennis Championships last week. The former US Open champion was shaken after a man "exhibited fixated behaviour" during her second-round match. The man was later detained and given a restraining order, Dubai Police said. Raducanu was deliberating whether to travel to the United States for the hard-court event following the incident, but has decided to compete. In the men's draw, Novak Djokovic's second-round opponent could be Australian Nick Kyrgios. The 24-time Grand Slam champion is also projected to meet Carlos Alcaraz in the last eight, in a repeat of their Australian Open quarter-final. Andy Murray has flown to the United States to continue his coaching role with Djokovic, with the pair having worked together on a trial basis at January's Australian Open. British number one Katie Boulter, who has a first-round bye, will play Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu or American Ann Li in the second round. In the men's draw, Cameron Norrie faces Luca Nardi and Jacob Fearnley will play 18-year-old Brazilian Joao Fonseca, who won his first ATP singles title at the Argentina Open last month. The winner of that match will play British number one Jack Draper, who has a first-round bye. The Californian event is one of the biggest tournaments of the season outside of the four Grand Slams, with the world's best men and women competing in a combined ATP/WTA event over a fortnight. British women's number three Sonay Kartal is hoping to reach the main draw when she plays American teenager Clervie Ngounoue in the second round of qualifying at 18:00 GMT on Tuesday. British men's number four Billy Harris lost 6-3 6-2 to American opponent Michael Mmoh in his first-round qualifier.

Pakistan announces probable players for qualifying match against Syria



I S L A M A B A D (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) on Tuesday announced the list of probable players for the forthcoming AFC Asian Cup 2027 qualifiers away match against Syria. The development came a day after the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) lifted its international suspension against the South Asian country. FIFA hit Pakistan on Feb. 6 with a third international suspension in less than eight years after the federation rejected its electoral reforms. Following the suspension, the PFF unanimously approved FIFA's proposed constitutional amendments in an extraordinary

meeting in Lahore last Thursday. The lifting of the suspension will enable Pakistan to take part in the AFC Asian Cup. The green shirts will kick off their AFC Asian Cup 2027 qualifying campaign with an away match against Syria. "The [Pakistan-Syria] match will be played on March 25, 2025 in Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia," the PFF said in a statement. Stephen Constantine, who previously served as the Pakistan head coach from late 2023 until mid-2024, has been reappointed as head coach for the match against Syria, according to the PFF. The AFC Asian Cup qualifiers will be played on a home-and-away

basis, with Pakistan placed in Group E alongside Syria, Afghanistan and Myanmar. **PAKISTAN PROBABLES**
Goal-Keepers: Yousuf Butt, Saqib Hanif, Abdul Basit and Adam Khan
Defenders: Abdullah Iqbal, Easah Suliman, Haseeb Khan, Junaid Shah, Mamoon Moosa, Mohammad Fazal, Abdul Rehman and Waqar Ihtisam
Midfielders: Alamgir Ghazi, Ali Uzair, Ali Zafar, Muhammad Umar Hayat, Rahis Nabi, Toqeer ul Hassan, Umair Ali and Moin Ahmed
Forwards: Fareedullah, Harun Hamid, Imran Kayani, Mkeal Abdullah, Abdul Samad, Shayak Dost and Muhammad Adeel Younas.

PCB names Mohammad Yousuf as batting coach for New Zealand tour

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain Mohammad Yousuf has been appointed as the batting coach of the national men's team ahead of the upcoming tour of New Zealand. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed his appointment on Tuesday, replacing Shahid Aslam in the role. Pakistan's tour of New Zealand is set to take place from March 16 to April 5, comprising five T20 Internationals and three One-Day Internationals (ODIs). While Yousuf takes charge of the batting department, Aqib Javed will continue as Pakistan's interim head coach for the New Zealand tour. Initially appointed until the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, Aqib has been asked to extend his tenure as the PCB continues its search for a permanent head coach. The T20I series will commence on March 16 in Christchurch, followed by matches in Dunedin (March 18), Auckland (March 21), Mount Maunganui (March 23), and Wellington (March 26). After the T20Is, both teams will shift focus to the ODI series, starting in Napier on March 29. The second ODI will be played in Hamilton on April 2, while Mount Maunganui will host the final game on April 5. With Yousuf's wealth of experience as a former top-order batter, Pakistan aims to refine its batting approach under his guidance, hoping for a strong performance in the crucial white-ball series against New Zealand.

N Z raring to go for CT semi after 'tough travel'

LAHORE (AFP): Skipper Mitchell Santner said New Zealand have endured some "tough travel" but insisted they are raring to go for their Champions Trophy semi-final against South Africa on Wednesday in Lahore.

New Zealand convincingly won their first two games of the ODI tournament in Pakistan, then lost to India in Dubai on Sunday, and have now flown back to Pakistan again for the encounter at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium. "It was actually more of a daytime sleep," Santner said on Tuesday on the eve of the semi-final. "I think it was a tough travel but it's nice to get it done, get here and kind of a reset and get ready for today (training) and tomorrow's game." The Champions Trophy is played on a hybrid model after India refused to travel to Pakistan over political tensions, instead playing all their matches and their semi-final in Dubai. All the other teams in Group A -- Pakistan, New Zealand and Bangladesh -- had to travel to Dubai to play India, who promptly won all three matches. India faced Australia in the other semi-final in Dubai on Tuesday. Critics have condemned the tournament's unusual arrangement as giving India an unfair advantage. South Africa also travelled to Dubai not knowing who they would face in the semi-finals, but instead returned to Pakistan less than 24 hours later without playing a game. Santner said scheduling in international cricket "is an issue just all around". "I think when you do have time to rest and recover it's very important," said the skipper, whose side beat hosts Pakistan and then Bangladesh in the group phase. New Zealand were well beaten by India by 44 runs but had already reached the semi-finals by then. "One-day cricket can be very exhausting on the body, so for us it's making sure that the bowlers are ready," Santner said.

SA preparing for knock-out game as any other: Bavuma

LAHORE (AFP): Captain Temba Bavuma said South Africa will not change their approach for Wednesday's Champions Trophy semi-final against New Zealand despite the team's poor record in knock-out matches. South Africa have a history of coming up short on the global stage, losing their 2023 ODI World Cup semi-final to Australia and the T20 World Cup final to India last year. That continued a long trend of disappointing results at major tournaments, but Bavuma is keen not to dwell on the past. "We will approach the semi-final as we normally would," said Bavuma, whose team topped Group B after big wins over England and Afghanistan, and a wash-out against Australia. "It's just another game for us, yes it's important but we definitely won't be blowing it out of proportion that it's a semi-final." Bavuma is well aware of the challenges posed by New Zealand, who beat hosts Pakistan and Bangladesh before losing to India in Group A. "Obviously we want to play our best cricket come tomorrow. We understand New Zealand will come with certain challenges and we will have to prepare accordingly," said Bavuma, who played down the Kiwis' 44-run defeat by India in Dubai on Sunday. "They (New Zealand) have lost to India which is a strong team especially in Dubai," said Bavuma. "But I don't think New Zealand will be down on any type of confidence. They have won most of their matches, so from the confidence point of view they won't be lacking." New Zealand beat a depleted South Africa in Lahore by six wickets last month in a tri-series match ahead of the Champions Trophy. Bavuma said that game allowed them to get a better idea of what to expect from New Zealand. "I think that game gave us a look at the New Zealand team," said Bavuma. "They will not be different from that match but we are different and strong."

Salman named T20I captain; Babar, Rizwan dropped

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Tuesday appointed all-rounder Salman Ali Agha captain of the Pakistan Men's T20I squad with Shadab Khan as his deputy in a new look New Zealand bound squad selected for the five-match T20I series in New Zealand. Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan, though selected for the ODI series, are the conspicuous absentees from the T20I squad while Saim Ayub and Fakhar Zaman missed out selection due to injuries and are likely to return to action in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) X in April. However, Mohammad Rizwan has been retained as ODI captain with Salman Ali Agha as the vice-captain. Pakistan interim head coach Aqib Javed alongside newly elevated T20I captain Salman Ali Agha, during a press conference at the Gaddafi stadium here on Tuesday, announced the T20I and ODI squads for the New Zealand tour which includes five T20Is and three ODIs between March 16 and April 5. In another development PCB has appointed former batting great Mohammad Yousuf as batting coach of the Men's cricket team. Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf have been selected for the T20I series in New Zealand while they were dropped from the ODI squad and Aqib

Javed defended their absence from the ODI team due to below par performances in the format. Abdullah Shafique has been recalled for the ODI series after being ignored for the Champions Trophy while five players are likely to debut in T20Is and ODIs are part of the squad. All-rounder Irfan Khan Niazi has been picked in both the squads after being left out in the Champions Trophy squad. As per the interim head coach Aqib Javed, the decision to appoint Salman and Shadab as T20I captain and vice-captain, respectively, has been made with an eye on two major upcoming tournaments - the ACC Men's T20 Asia Cup 2025 (September 2025) and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 (February/March 2026). Salman previously led Pakistan in a T20I series against Zimbabwe last year, winning 2-1. As part of preparations for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, Pakistan is set to play a minimum of five T20Is in the ACC Asia Cup 2025 and three T20Is each against West Indies (away, July), Afghanistan (home, August), Ireland (home, September), South Africa (home, September/October), Sri Lanka (home, November) and Australia (home, January 2026). Mohammad Rizwan will continue

leading the ODI side as Pakistan builds towards the ICC Men's 50-over Cricket World Cup 2027, which will take place in Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe in October/November 2027. T20I squad - Salman Ali Agha (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Abdul Samad, Abrar Ahmed, Haris Rauf, Hasan Nawaz, Jahandad Khan, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Haris, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Omar Bin Yousuf, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufyan Moqim and Usman Khan. ODI squad - Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Akif Javed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Imam-ul-Haq, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Wasim Jr, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Sufyan Moqim and Tayyab Tahir. A wicketkeeper/batter will be added to the ODI squad following the T20Is. In the T20I squad, there are three uncapped players - Abdul Samad, Hasan Nawaz and Mohammad Ali - while Akif Javed and Mohammad Ali the two players who have yet to debut in ODIs. The four players have been rewarded for their impressive performances in the Champions One-Day and T20 Cups. In the Champions T20 Cup, Abdul

Samad scored 115 runs at a strike-rate of 166.67 after aggregating 145 runs at a strike-rate of 122.88 in the Champions One-Day Cup. Likewise, Hasan Nawaz had a staller Champions T20 Cup, finishing as the second leading run-getter with 312 runs at a strike-rate of 142.47. Mohammad Ali with 22 wickets was the leading wicket-taker in Champions T20 Cup, while he took three wickets in the Champions One-Day Cup. Akif Javed has been selected in the ODI side after his seven wickets in five Champions One-Day Cup matches, while he took 15 wickets in the Champions T20 Cup. Openers Fakhar Zaman and Saim Ayub were not considered for either format on medical advice. Fakhar suffered a left lower intercostal muscle sprain during Pakistan's ICC Champions Trophy 2025 opener against New Zealand, while Saim is recovering from a right ankle fracture sustained on the first day of the Cape Town Test against South Africa in January. Both are expected to be fully fit for the HBL Pakistan Super League 10, starting in Rawalpindi on 11 April 2025. Aqib Javed will continue as interim head coach for the New Zealand tour. His original term was until the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, but he has

been asked to extend his tenure while the search for a permanent head coach begins. Mohammad Yousuf has been appointed as batting coach. Player Support Personnel - Naveed Akram Cheema (team manager), Aqib Javed (interim head coach), Azhar Mahmood (assistant coach), Mohammad Yousuf (batting coach), Mohammad Masroor (fielding coach), Cliffe Deacon (physiotherapist), Drikus Saiman (strength and conditioning coach), Talha Butt (analyst), Irtiza Komal (security manager), Dr Wajid Ali Rafai (team doctor), Syed Na'eem Ahmad (media and digital manager) and Sergio Basil Mullins (masscur). **New Zealand tour schedule:** 16 Mar - first T20I, Hagley Oval, Christchurch 18 Mar - second T20I, University Oval, Dunedin 21 Mar - third T20I, Eden Park, Auckland 23 Mar - fourth T20I, Bay Oval, Mount Maunganui 26 Mar - fifth T20I, Sky Stadium, Wellington 29 Mar - first ODI, McLean Park, Napier 2 Apr - second ODI, Seddon Park, Hamilton 5 Apr - third ODI, Bay Oval, Mount Maunganui.



In brief

PFA destroys adulterated milk

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Rawalpindi officials during Sehri time on Tuesday morning destroyed some 3,500 litres of adulterated milk. According to a PFA spokesman, the food authority teams set checkpoints at the entrance and exit points of the city and inspected vehicles supplying milk to different local outlets. About 185,000 litres of milk were checked, and on screening of samples some 3,500 litres were found adulterated with water, which were wasted on the spot, the spokesman said. A total fine of Rs 155,000 was imposed on the drivers of three trucks carrying adulterated milk, he added. The spokesman said that the PFA's special teams were working during Sehri and Iftar time, and urged the citizens to contact the helpline 1223 in case of any complaint.

Police arrest 8 criminals

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police during actions against criminals on Tuesday arrested eight accused for possessing illegal arms, supplying liquor and LPG decanting, besides proclaimed offenders. According to the police spokesman, the Kallar Syedan Police nabbed accused Matloob recovering a Kalashnikov and ammunition from him. Similarly, the Dharmial Police arrested accused Shabbaz with a 30-bore pistol. Likewise, the Race Course Police recovered 10 litres of liquor from accused Umar. Meanwhile, three accused were held for illegally refilling cylinders with liquefied petroleum gas. The Waris Khan Police arrested two Akbar Shahzad and Noor Rehman, and the Bani Police nabbed accused Imtiaz on that count. The Waris Khan Police also nabbed two proclaimed offenders, including Bilawal Yaqoob - wanted in a cheque dishonour case, and Suleman - wanted in a damage case.

9 nabbed for gambling

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Race Course Police on Tuesday nabbed nine accused for gambling on cards with stake money. According to the Rawalpindi Police spokesman, the accused including Sajid, Raheel, Kashif, Rashid, Sheith Hassan, Zeeshan, Wasif, Qaiser and Ishfaq were caught red handed while playing cards with Rs 14,300 put on stake. Besides the bet amount, eight mobile phones and playing cards were recovered from the accused.

Man arrested for killing wife

RAWALPINDI (APP): Naseerabad police on Tuesday arrested an accused involved in the murder of his wife. According to a Police spokesman the accused Abdul Salam tortured, killed his wife and attempted to make it like suicide. The police had registered a case on the information of the incident and after investigation found that the victim's husband was involved in the murder case.

4 drug peddlers held

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Police on Tuesday arrested four drug peddlers from different areas and recovered more than three kilograms charas from them. According to a police spokesman, the Pirwadhai Police netted Umar with 1.12 kg charas while the Cant Police held accused Nadeem with 860 grams of the contraband item. Similarly, the Ratta Amral and Westridge Police nabbed accused Abdul Jabbar and Rehan respectively with 800 grams and 520 grams charas.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid discussing the various pro-poor activities, in a meeting with MD Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Senator Capt. Shaheen Khalid Butt.

Chairperson BISP, MD PBM discuss mutual cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid in a meeting with the Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) Senator Captain (R) Shaheen Khalid Butt on Tuesday discussed avenues of mutual cooperation in welfare initiatives for the socio-economic uplift of disadvantaged communities.

During the meeting held at the PBM office, Senator Rubina Khalid congratulated Shaheen Khalid Butt on assuming the charge of MD Bait-ul-Mal and expressed her hope for strengthening collaboration between the two organizations.

The meeting focused on

data sharing of deserving individuals through the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER), skill development programs under the Benazir Hunarmand Program, and future welfare projects.

Senator Rubina Khalid said that BISP is set to launch the Benazir Hunarmand Program to provide certified skill training to eligible individuals, enabling them to secure international employment opportunities. "In light of the rising demand for skilled labor in the global market, providing certified training will help deserving individuals achieve economic independence and break the cycle of

poverty," she remarked.

The Chairperson emphasized that data sharing between BISP and PBM would help identify and target deserving individuals more effectively, ensuring the transparency and success of joint welfare projects. MD Bait-ul-Mal Shaheen Khalid Butt assured his full support and cooperation, reiterating PBM's commitment to work alongside BISP for the betterment of underprivileged segments of society.

Both leaders agreed to further strengthen coordination between the two institutions for the uplift of marginalized communities across the country.

Cabinet expansion aims to boost governance: Talal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister Talal Chaudhry on Tuesday said that the recent expansion of the federal cabinet was necessary to improve governance and efficiency.

Talking to the private news channel, he explained that several ministers were handling multiple portfolios, which was affecting the government's performance. "The decision was taken to ensure better results. The names of the new cabinet members will be finalized soon," he said. He also acknowledged that coalition governments come with certain challenges, as allied parties expect representation. He emphasized that now the cabinet is reflecting a national outlook, with representation from all provinces.

He further stated that the country is witnessing political and economic stability, which has been possible due to the vision of Prime Minister and a strong coordination between state institutions and the government. The government remains committed to strengthening governance and maintaining stability for Pakistan's economic progress, he added.

Sufi saints' role in preaching Islam vital, Gov Punjab

RAWALPINDI (APP): Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has said that Islam spread all over the world due to the services of saints. The religious services of Baba Syed Lal Shah Qalandar are remembered in golden letters. He expressed these views while talking on the occasion of visiting the shrine of Baba Syed Lal Shah Qalandar in Surasi Syedan, Gulhaira Gali, Murree. According to the details, the Governor laid a wreath on the shrine and prayed for the elevation of ranks of Baba Syed Lal Shah Qalandar. The shrine administration met Sardar Saleem Haider.

ANF recovers 185 kg drugs in 8 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 8 operations managed to recover 185 kg drugs worth Rs 24 million and arrested 15 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Tuesday.

He informed that 5.5 kg heroin and 1.5 kg ice were recovered from a Suzuki pickup intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza, Islamabad while 2 suspects were arrested during the operation. In another operation near Motorway Toll Plaza, 2.4 kg opium and 2.4

kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle and 2 suspects were arrested.

8.4 kg hashish was recovered from a car near Motorway Toll Plaza, Islamabad and 2 drug dealers were arrested during the operation. In 4th operation, 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from a suspect going on a motorcycle on Sialkot Pasrur Road.

248 grams heroin was recovered from the bag of a passenger leaving for Bahrain at Jinnah International Airport, Karachi. During a raid in Machar Colony,

Karachi, 132 kg hashish and 400 grams ice were recovered from a house and 3 suspects were arrested.

In 7th operation, 12 kg hashish was recovered from a car checked near a hospital in Sukkur and 2 drug dealers were arrested.

18 kg hashish was recovered from two drug smugglers going on a motorcycle in Sukkur city. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Narcotics Control Act and further investigations are under process.

Commissioner directs ensuring edibles at affordable prices

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, has directed authorities to ensure the availability of essential food items at affordable prices during the holy month of Ramadan.

Special Ramadan bazaars in the federal capital are offering food items at rates significantly lower than those in other major cities, including Lahore.

According to official details, the prices of essential commodities in Islamabad's Ramadan bazaars have been set at Rs. 54 per kg for potatoes, Rs.

73 per kg for onions, and Rs. 49 per kg for tomatoes. These rates are notably lower compared to other cities. Additionally, fruits such as bananas, sweet oranges, musambi, and pomegranates are also being sold at reduced prices, making them more accessible to the public.

Randhawa has instructed Assistant Commissioners to ensure that Price Control Magistrates closely monitor the supply and sale of food items in their respective areas. He emphasized that officials must remain present in markets and

Ramadan bazaars to address consumer complaints promptly. "There should be no compromise on the affordability and quality of food items in these bazaars," he stated.

To further safeguard consumers, Randhawa directed that a sufficient supply of food items be maintained throughout Ramadan and that official price lists be prominently displayed at all bazaars.

He also warned of strict action against overcharging and profiteering, reiterating the administration's commitment to protecting consumers from exploitation.

CDA Chairman unveils plan for Gandhara Citizens Club

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, has announced that the Gandhara Citizen Club building, a long-neglected landmark, would be renovated and made operational.

Randhawa, in a high-level meeting with the CEO of the Public Private Partnership Authority (P3A), Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan, and consultants from KPMG focused on the revitalization of the

Gandhara Citizens Club, upgrades to F-9 Park, and the development of five-star hotels in the federal capital. During the discussions, the chairman CDA emphasized that the project would be financially sustainable, with KPMG providing expertise to develop an optimal financial and operational model. The revenue generated from the club's operations will be reinvested into the improvement of F-9 Park, ensuring that public welfare remains a top priority.

In addition to the

Gandhara Club project, Chairman Randhawa directed KPMG to prepare a feasibility report for the construction of five-star hotels in Islamabad. A formal market study for this initiative has already been initiated, aiming to boost the city's hospitality industry and attract tourism.

Chairman Randhawa praised the technical support of P3A and KPMG, stating, "Their expertise and capabilities will be fully utilized to make CDA's projects financially viable and bankable."

Laghari, Kyrgyzstan envoy discuss bilateral energy cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Avazbek Atakhanov on Tuesday called on Federal Minister for Power, Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari.

During the meeting, discussions focused on strengthening bilateral relations, emphasising energy cooperation between the two countries. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to expanding collaboration in key sectors, especially in the power sector, said a press release.

Federal Minister Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari acknowledged the excellent brotherly relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan and expressed the desire to further

enhance cooperation across various fields.

He also highlighted the strong educational ties between the two nations, noting that a significant number of Pakistani students are pursuing higher education in Kyrgyzstan, reflecting the strength of its academic institutions.

The Minister briefed the Ambassador on the ongoing reforms being undertaken by the Government of Pakistan in the power sector, aimed at improving efficiency and sustainability. He extended an invitation to Kyrgyz investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan's energy sector and participate in various projects. He also emphasized the

potential for joint ventures in renewable energy.

The Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan appreciated Pakistan's reform efforts in the energy sector and expressed his country's willingness to collaborate in areas of mutual interest. He noted that enhanced cooperation in power infrastructure and energy connectivity would contribute to regional stability and economic growth.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening bilateral cooperation for mutual benefit and agreed to continue discussions on future projects that would strengthen economic and strategic ties between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Hazrat Fatima praised as role model for women

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers at an event on Tuesday termed Hazrat Fatima (RA) as a role model for Muslim women all over the world as she has left behind glowing examples to follow.

This was stated at a conference organized by Markazi Imam Hussain Council, which was held here to mark the 1435th death anniversary of Hazrat Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Chairman of Markazi Imam Hussain Council Dr. Ghazanfar Mehdi while presiding over

the event said Hazrat Fatima was a distinguished daughter, wife and mother. She was an ideal for others in all aspects of life.

Kifayat Hussain Naqvi, senior member of the Islamic Ideology Council, in his online address said due to the vision of Hazrat Fatima, the Arabs of ancient times who used to bury their daughter alive started sending their daughters to madrasas. Chairman Lions Club Sibtain Raza Lodhi said Hazrat Fatima set an example with her life based on struggle and devotion.

Representative of the

Gilgit-Baltistan Governor, Syed Mubarak Ali Shah said the teachings of Hazrat Fatima had a great impact on his son Hazrat Imam Hussain (AS), who became a symbol of determination as he sacrificed his entire family for Islam in the battlefield of Karbala.

Professor Salma Khan said that the teachings of Hazrat Fatima Zahra (AS) should be included in the educational curriculum.

President of Daira Ehsan Kabria, Bazm-e-Urooj President Naem Akram Qureshi, and others also spoke on the occasion.

Railways generates Rs. 7,575 mln from land leasing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has auctioned approximately 6,678 acres of land for various purposes through a competitive bidding process, leasing it to government entities and private individuals to generate revenue for the department.

"The department has earned a total revenue of Rs. 7,575 million from leased land over the last two financial years," an official from the Ministry of Railways told APP.

The official explained that Pakistan Railways leases out its land through an open auction process in accordance with the Railway Property and Land Rules, 2023, which were duly approved by the federal cabinet. The department provides land to government institutions for public welfare projects, subject to payment of lease charges and ground rent as per the approved policy.

"Proactive efforts are underway to lease the remaining available land through advertisements across all operational divisions as well as through the Real Estate Development and Marketing Company (REDAMCO)," he added.

As of December 2024, Pakistan Railways has operated 1,450 freight trains since July 2024, generating

Rs. 15.214 billion in revenue from freight operations. The department recorded its highest-ever revenue of Rs. 88.8 billion during the fiscal year 2023-24 by implementing measures to optimize revenue generation and reduce costs.

The official said that both passenger and freight trains are being operated at optimal capacity, reducing operational expenses and boosting earnings. Furthermore, the department has shifted from long-term to short-term land leasing to remain competitive and maximize revenue.

Pakistan Railways has made significant progress in train punctuality, improving from 79% in the previous year to 82% in FY 2023-24. The department has also expanded its online booking services through its website and mobile applications (Android and iOS) under the RABTA system, leading to increased customer engagement.

To enhance passenger convenience, the department has installed Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs) for faster ticket purchases, set up information counters, introduced real-time departure boards under the RABTA system for up-to-date travel information, and launched premium dining cars on select routes.

Pakistan, Japan express shared optimism for cooperation

ISLAMABAD (PPI): A meeting of the Pak-Japan Parliamentary Group, convened by Senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto and organized by Ms Misbah Khar, Secretary of the group, was held here at Parliament House on Tuesday to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries.

Senator Bhutto, along with senior officials from the Senate Secretariat, warmly welcomed Akamatsu Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan. Senator Bhutto emphasized the importance of Pakistan-Japan relations and highlighted the mutual benefits with strong bilateral ties between the two countries.

During the dialogue, he noted Pakistan's beautiful landscapes, particularly in the northern regions, and suggested that Pakistan could capitalize on this to boost its tourism sector. He also mentioned

Pakistan's travel advisory and Japan's strong ties with the World Bank and the economic sector, which have supported Pakistan.

Currently, the bilateral economic trade stands at \$1.72 billion, and Senator Bhutto stressed the need to further enhance it. He pointed out that platforms such as JICA and FISC can facilitate foreign investments, and Pakistan seeks Japan's assistance through these channels.

Pakistan has been a reliable partner of Japan in various sectors, and Senator Bhutto expressed a desire for increased investment from Japanese companies.

He cited the 2023 Tokyo Investment Board, which saw participation from over 127 major investment groups, as an example of successful initiatives. He reiterated that Pakistan is keen to pursue more opportunities to boost trade and enhance bilateral relations.

Regarding the skills sector, Senator Bhutto highlighted the signing of a memorandum on technical internship programs and special skill work programs. He also acknowledged the significant contributions of the approximately 25,000-strong Pakistani diaspora in Japan.

Akamatsu Shuichi expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and recalled his previous meeting with the Chairman of the Senate last month as a privilege. He emphasized his mutual commitment to strengthening bilateral ties with Pakistan. The Ambassador underscored that diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Japan have existed for over 73 years, and Japan has provided economic cooperation to Pakistan for more than 70 years.

He assured that Japan would continue to expand this assistance. The Ambassador also highlighted

ed the role of over 80 Japanese companies operating in Pakistan, contributing to both economic and social development.

He mentioned that around 1,000 Japanese tourists visit Pakistan annually, and as security concerns stabilize, this number is expected to rise. Additionally, he pointed out the 2025 Osaka Conference as a significant opportunity for Pakistan.

The Ambassador also commended the mutual cooperation and parliamentary exchanges between the two countries and expressed eagerness for more dialogue following Japan's upcoming elections. Both sides expressed optimism for continued bilateral dialogue and cooperation, with plans for further engagement in the next meeting, which will involve broader participation from the Parliamentary Group.

Child killed in roof collapse

MAHMOOD RAQI (Pajhwok): A child has been killed and three others have been wounded as a result of a roof collapse incident in the Nijrab district of Kapisa. The governor's office said the roof of a house caved in due to rainfall, killing a nine-year-old child and injuring three members of his family. Security personnel and Emergency Situations Committee members had been dispatched to the area to assist the family. The injured were taken to a local health centre.

Teenage barber gunned down

MAHMOOD RAQI (Pajhwok): A 15-year-old barber was gunned down by unidentified attackers in Kapisa on Tuesday morning. In a statement, the governor's office said the incident happened in the Bako Kham area of Hes-e-Awal district on Tuesday. It said the teenager was on his way home from a mosque after Fajr prayer when unidentified men shot him dead. According to the statement, security forces have launched an investigation into the incident.

Tajikistan announces CASA-1000 project to be operational by 2027

KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of Tajikistan has declared that the CASA-1000 electricity transmission project, which spans Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, is nearing completion, with significant progress being made in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Daler Juma, announced that while construction in Pakistan is on track to be finalized in the first half of this year, work in Afghanistan is actively

ongoing.

The CASA-1000 project is designed to transport electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan through Afghan territory, with an operational target set for 2027.

As part of the project, a high-voltage converter station is being constructed in Pul-e-Khumri, located in Baghlan province, Afghanistan. This facility is projected to supply Afghanistan with 300 megawatts of electricity, while the remainder will be directed to Pakistan.

The project is not just a regional power initiative; it is expected to generate significant revenue for Afghanistan. Reports indicate that the country could earn approximately \$99.1 million annually from transit fees, which would represent 90% of the total revenue generated by the project.

The establishment of the Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan has reportedly intensified efforts to implement major infrastructure projects like CASA-1000, highlighting the importance of regional energy cooperation.

Turkey detains 20 Afghan refugees

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Turkish police arrested 20 Afghan refugees who had entered the country "illegally" and transferred them to the foreign nationals' deportation center. The refugees were identified and detained after their driver had abandoned them on the roadside.

Turkish media reported that local residents of the Akyazi neighborhood informed the police about the presence of the Afghan refugees, leading security forces to apprehend them.

After completing the necessary administrative procedures, the refugees were transferred to the Sakarya deportation center before being sent back to Afghanistan.

The identification and arrest operations for refugees without valid residence documents continue across Turkey, and so far, hundreds of Afghan refugees have been detained and deported.

In addition to the increasing arrests of foreign refugees, particularly Afghan refugees, reports of violent treatment by Turkish police towards Afghan refugees have also been emerging.

Meanwhile, nationwide operations targeting the detention and deportation of Afghan migrants have significantly increased in recent weeks in Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran.

Last week, Turkish media reported the detention of 80 refugees, including 75 Afghan nationals, in the cities of Erzurum and Sivas.

Recently, Turkey's Statistical Institute announced that Afghan nationals, after Iraqis, form the second-largest foreign population in the country, numbering 139,251 individuals.

Previously, Turkey's Ministry of Interior had announced that over the past five years, more than one million "illegal" migrants had been detained in the country, with the number for 2024 reaching 175,786.

According to official statistics, over 300,000 Afghan migrants live in Turkey, many of whom face serious challenges such as detention, residence restrictions, and forced deportations.

This crackdown on Afghan refugees highlights the ongoing challenges and risks faced by asylum seekers in Turkey, as well as the tensions around migration and refugee policies in the region. The international community has raised concerns about the safety and well-being of these refugees, especially amid rising deportations.

Aid delivered to widows and orphans

NANGARHAR (BNA): The Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs has distributed food supplies to 600 widows and orphans in Nangarhar province as part of its Ramadan aid initiative.

According to a statement from the ministry's press office, the aid packages included eight essential food items to support the vulnerable families during the holy month of Ramadan.

During the distribution process, Mohammad Saber Zwak, the head of the Martyrs and Disabled Affairs Directorate in Nangarhar, expressed his gratitude to the charitable organization for their generous support.

Grenade blast kills farmer

S H I B E R G H A N (Pajhwok): A man was killed when a hand grenade left over from past wars exploded in northern Jawzjan province, an official said on Tuesday.

Police spokesman Qari Abdul Sattar Halimi told Pajhwok Afghan News: "Qurban Gildi, 63, a resident of Hindu Kush village of Mardian district, was working in his agricultural land when he hit the unexploded ordnance.

Kabul Municipality to expropriate 127 properties for road expansion

KABUL (TOLOnews): Kabul Municipality has announced the expropriation and demolition of more than 100 properties in the Joy-e-Shir area of the capital.

Nematullah Barakzai, a representative of the Kabul Municipality, stated that the purpose of this initiative is to expand the Joy-e-Shir to Pul-e-Artal and reduce congestion in the Zirzameeni area in Deh Afghanan.

The municipality representative said: "With the construction of this road, a major congestion issue in the Zirzameeni area will be resolved.

During the road construction, 127 properties will be expropriated, and the removal of obstacles is already underway."

According to Kabul Municipality, the Joy-e-Shir is considered one of the key infrastructure projects, extending over 1,869 meters in length.

At the same time, several residents of the area,



whose homes have been expropriated, are demanding swift compensation from the municipality for their land.

"They promised to pay the demolition compensation in three installments.

Those whose homes have been demolished and expropriated have gone to

the district office and the municipality, where they were assured payment. However, we have not received anything yet," stated Shafi Ghanizada, a resident of the Joy-e-Shir area in Kabul.

Another resident, Timur Shah, expressed optimism about the project, saying:

"There was a lot of congestion here. This project is a good step toward resolving it, and we are hopeful."

According to Kabul Municipality officials, the Joy-e-Shir expansion project will officially begin once all obstacles are removed, and the expropriation process is completed.

IEA rejects Trump's claim that Bagram base under China's control

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate has dismissed US President Donald Trump's claim that Bagram Air Base is being run by the Chinese.

Speaking to Afghanistan's RTA media outlet, Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid dismissed Trump's remarks as "emotional", and said US officials should "refrain" from making "statements based on unsubstantiated information".

He also said that Bagram was controlled by the Islamic Emirate and "not China". "Chinese troops are not present here nor do we have any such pact with any country," he said.

"We request that Trump's team explain to him and correct his information about Afghanistan."

Mujahid's remarks come after recent statements by Trump that Bagram is controlled by China and that Washington was planning to return to the military base, which is about 40 km north of Kabul.

Trump implied Washington should move to reclaim disused and demilitarised military equipment that was not brought home with departing troops during the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021.

"I'm the one who got our military presence to under 5,000 but we were going to keep Bagram," Trump said, "not because of Afghanistan but because of China, because the air base is exactly one hour from where China makes its nuclear missiles. So, we were going to keep Bagram."

Trump first claimed that Bagram was under China's control during his election campaign but he has since repeated the claim since taking office. China has however also denied claims that it was in control of the air base.

Take anemia seriously, pregnant women warned

KABUL (Pajhwok): Health experts warn anemia can have serious consequences for the health of pregnant women and young girls.

If symptoms of this condition, such as dizziness, pallor, insomnia and rapid heartbeat, are noticed, individuals are advised to consult a doctor promptly.

Dr Khadija Misbah, an obstetrics and gynecology specialist in Kabul, told Pajhwok Afghan News while anemia could affect anyone, adolescent girls, pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers were particularly vulnerable.

She pointed out girls were more likely to develop anemia due to menstruation, while women faced a higher risk because of multiple pregnancies. Poor diet and certain medical conditions also contribute to anemia.

"In our country, widespread food insecurity and poor nutrition are major factors," Dr Misbah noted. "Mothers often lack sufficient food and fail to consume healthy, nutritious meals on time, which contributes to anemia."

Dr. Misbah listed common anemia symptoms, including irritability, loss of

appetite, pale skin, yellowish complexion, hair loss, brittle nails, lack of energy, fatigue, insomnia and an increased heart rate.

She also highlighted the risks posed to breastfeeding mothers, explaining it could lead to anemia or malnutrition in their babies.

For young girls, anemia can cause joint pains, fatigue, hair loss, lack of interest in activities, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath, headaches and dizziness. "Initially, the symptoms of iron deficiency might be mild, but if not addressed, they could worsen over time," she said.

Dr. Misbah recommended maintaining a balanced diet, especially food rich in iron, regular exercise and spacing pregnancies as effective preventive measures against anemia.

She stressed the importance of seeking medical advice if any symptoms were observed.

Dr. Sonita Bahram, another Kabul-based obstetrics and gynecology specialist, agreed: "Anemia is common among girls and women, often due to improper nutrition and irregular menses."

She said after a thorough examination, doctors could assess the severity of anemia and prescribe iron supplements in mild cases. Severe anemia may require blood transfusions.

She added dark circles under the eyes, brown spots on the face, vision disturbances, dizziness, headaches, insomnia, irritability, increased heart rate, and low blood pressure could all be signs of anemia.

The doctor cautioned anemia could be life-threatening and advised girls and women showing symptoms to consult physicians immediately.

She asked young girls to eat a balanced diet with vitamin C-rich foods, leafy vegetables and calcium-rich items like milk and eggs.

Pregnant women should receive regular medical care and take iron supplements, especially during the first three months of pregnancy.

Dr Zarghona Mehdi, another obstetrician and gynecologist, said malaria, jaundice, liver diseases, and gastrointestinal issues could also cause anemia in young girls and pregnant women.

Turabi assesses flood affected areas in Uruzgan

URUZGAN (BNA): Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, the Head of Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority conducted a visit to Uruzgan province to assess the damage caused by recent floods.

The visit, reported by the press office of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, focused on several affected regions, including Sarkhom, Balah, Mashinaw, Chora, and Wand.

During his inspection, Mullah Turabi engaged with local residents, expressing his condolences for their losses and actively listening to their concerns and challenges.

He emphasized the importance of understanding the local situation and gathering suggestions from the community to address their needs effectively.

In his remarks, Mullah Turabi assured the residents that their feedback would be communicated to the leadership of IEA.

He expressed his commitment to advocating for appropriate solutions to the challenges faced by the affected communities.

Nine wounded in Ghazni, Maidan Wardak accidents



GHAZNI CITY/ MAIDAN SHAHR (Pajhwok): Nine people have been injured as a result of traffic accidents in southern Ghazni and central Maidan Wardak provinces, officials said on Tuesday.

Ghazni police spokesman Abu Khalid Sarhadi

told Pajhwok Afghan News four people were injured in a collision between three vehicles in 4th police district of Ghazni City on Tuesday.

Separately, Maidan Wardak police headquarter in a statement said a vehicle

veered off the road and overturned in Haidar Khel area of Syedabad district, leaving five wounded.

Blaming the accident on reckless driving, the police said the injured were evacuated to hospital for treatment.

Iran urges Afghanistan to be more decisive in war on drugs

KABUL (Ariana News): Iran's deputy interior minister Ali-Akbar Pour-Jamshidian praised Afghanistan for banning the cultivation, and buying and selling of drugs in the country but asked Kabul to be more decisive in the fight against narcotics.

The official made the

remarks in a meeting with an Afghan delegation, headed by Mullah Abdul Haq Akhund Hamkar, the Afghan deputy interior minister, in Tehran.

Pour-Jamshidian highlighted that Iran has long had close relations with Afghanistan and that Tehran aims to foster coop-

eration and interactions between the two countries to resolve issues.

He also discussed the issue of water rights, and said that since the two sides are willing to address challenges, "we can solve this problem, which can contribute to enhancing collaborations in security and economy sectors", IRNA reported.

He also proposed the expansion of cooperation between Iranian and Afghan anti-narcotics police, and the anti narcotics force of Pakistan, to combat drug trafficking more effectively.

"Today, the war on drug trafficking is a scientific task. Traditional methods are not working anymore. Fortunately, the Iranian Anti-Narcotics police is equipped with the most up-to-date equipment and training. "The country can share its experiences and expertise with Afghanistan," he added.

Hamkar, for his part, said that over the past 45 years, there has been no limitation on poppy cultivation and buying and selling narcotics, but it has changed now.

Migrants face uncertainty

KABUL (TOLOnews): Some Afghan migrants with US immigration cases once again say they are facing an uncertain fate. They add that they are struggling with various financial challenges, as well as the risk of deportation and detention by Pakistani authorities and urgently need support.

"In 2021, we received an email from the US State Department instructing us to reach a third country. Now, we have been living in Pakistan for three and a half years," said one Afghan migrant with a US immigration case in Pakistan.

"We urge the United States to resume the relocation process for migrants. So far, no concrete action has been taken in this regard," said Another individual with a US immigration case.

Meanwhile, some migrant rights activists stress that the United States must fulfill its commitments to Afghan migrants. "The United States must urgently restart the process of relocating and resettling these migrants," said Ali Reza Karimi, a migrant rights activist.

"Those living in Pakistan today, as well as those waiting in countries like Turkey, Qatar, and other locations for their cases to be processed, are facing serious problems," said another activist, Jamal Muslim.

Calligraphy exhibition opened

HERAT (TOLOnews): To support and promote the art of calligraphy in Herat, a permanent exhibition of this art has been established in Ikhtiyaruddin Castle in the province. Calligraphy panels with Islamic scripts have been hung on the mudbrick walls of the Ikhtyaruddin Fortress, connecting the past with the present.

Meanwhile, artists in Herat are hopeful that this exhibition will introduce their artistic creations to the world and provide opportunities for their sale.

"This exhibition is permanent. Previous exhibitions lasted only a week, after which each master would take their works back home. If, like other international exhibitions in

many countries, these artistic works were published in book form and made available to the public, they would be taken into homes and preserved. Our request to the government is to support this initiative by publishing the works of masters in book form and making them accessible to people," Abdul Jalil Tawana, head of the Herat Calligraphers and Calligraphy Association, told TOLOnews.

"When visitors encounter different Islamic scripts and study these works, they develop an interest in them, which may lead them to purchase these pieces and, in a way, support the artists," Shamsuddin Nuri-zadeh, a calligraphy master, told TOLOnews.

"The Herat school of calligraphy existed here; during the Timurid era and even before that, Herat was one of the Islamic world's scientific and cultural centers. Our effort is to preserve this Islamic cultural heritage," said Ghulam Yahya Herawi, another calligraphy master in Herat.

The permanent exhibition of Islamic calligraphy panels, displayed within the mudbrick walls of the Ikhtiyaruddin Castle, showcases the splendor and beauty of calligraphy.

Officials from the Herat Directorate of Information and Culture assure that they are working to foster the growth of calligraphy and establish a sustainable foundation for supporting

artists in this field. Hamidullah Ghayasi, head of culture and arts at the Herat Directorate of Information and Culture, stated with confidence: "We will provide any assistance within our capacity to calligraphy artists and continue our strong support."

From the depths of Herat's rich history, styles of calligraphy have emerged that are now recognized as symbols of beauty and cultural identity in many neighboring countries and across the region.

Nastaliq, Shikasteh Nastaliq, Naskh, and Kufic—these four pillars of Islamic calligraphy have deep roots in Herat's soil, flowing onto paper for centuries and continuing to this day.



PESHAWAR: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, called on Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur.

EU Commission proposes 800b defence plan

BRUSSELS (Reuters): The European Commission proposed on Tuesday new joint EU borrowing of 150 billion euros (\$157.76 billion) to lend to EU governments for defence as part of an overall 800 billion total financing effort to boost Europe's defence capabilities.

The 150 billion euros of new joint borrowing is to go towards building pan-European capability domains like air and missile defence, artillery systems, missiles and ammunition, drones and anti-drone systems or to address other needs from cyber to military mobility, the Commission said.

"It will help Member States to pool demand and to

buy together. This will reduce costs, reduce fragmentation increase interoperability and strengthen our defence industrial base," Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. EU leaders will discuss the proposal at a special summit devoted to defence spending on Thursday.

The Commission also proposed to lift limits imposed by EU rules on government spending in case of defence investments. "If Member States would increase their defence spending by 1.5% of GDP on average this could create fiscal space of close to 650 billion euros," von der Leyen said.

The Commission also pro-

posed that EU countries can use for defence purposes money they receive from the EU budget in funds to equalise the standards of living across Europe. All these elements could provide up to 800 billion euros for EU governments to spend on defence projects.

"Europe is ready to assume its responsibilities. Europe could mobilize close to 800 billion euros for a safe and resilient Europe. We will continue working closely with our partners in NATO. This is a moment for Europe. And we are ready to step up," she said. The Stoxx Europe Aerospace and Defence index rose on the news to 2284.88 from 2265.36.

Six fugitives arrested from UAE

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Tuesday successfully arrested six fugitives from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), wanted in cases of terrorism, murder, attempted murder, robbery and fraud.

A spokesperson for the FIA said that the arrests were made through major operations led by FIA's NCB Interpol. The arrested individuals were identified as -- Sufyan Ali, Akasha Iqbal, Zohaib Shehzad, Abdul Latif, Muhammad Jaleel and Muhammad Ramiz Ashraf and were wanted by Punjab Police for various criminal cases.

The accused Sufyan Ali was wanted in terrorism and attempted murder case registered at Wazirabad city police station in 2022, Sialkot, while Zohaib Shahzad was involved in a robbery case at Satrah police station.

Fugitive Abdul Latif was wanted by airport police station Rahim Yar Khan in a murder case whereas Muhammad Jaleel, a fugitive for nine years, was wanted by Dera Ghazi Khan police in a robbery case.

Trump pauses military aid to Ukraine

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump has paused military aid to Ukraine in a dramatic escalation of his spat with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Trump will pause all aid until Kyiv is committed to what he determines are good-faith negotiations for peace, multiple US media outlets reported, citing unnamed Trump administration officials. "The president has been clear that he is focused on peace. We need our partners to be committed to that goal as well," an unnamed White House official was quoted as saying by multiple outlets.

"We are pausing and reviewing our aid to ensure that it is contributing to a solution." The move came hours after Trump accused Zelenskyy of not wanting peace "as long he has America's backing" in a post on Truth Social, escalating a war of words that culminated in a stunning public clash between the two leaders at the White House.

The decision to suspend the transfer of hundreds of millions of dollars in arms and ammunition that are in the pipeline is likely to deal a serious blow to Ukraine's efforts to repel Russia's invasion. While the US Congress has not approved any new military aid beyond the tens of billions of dollars already committed to Ukraine since Trump's inauguration in January, former US President Joe Biden approved transfers to continue supplying equipment for at least several years.

The US has appropriated \$182.8bn in response to Moscow's 2022 full-

scale invasion of Ukraine, according to the US Department of Defense, though that figure includes broader spending related to security, such as US military training in Europe. Before Trump's order, Washington was on track to supply monthly deliveries worth \$920m this year, up from \$500m in 2024, according to an analysis by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies and International Studies (CSIS).

In an interview with NBC's Meet the Press last month, Zelenskyy said his country would have a "low chance to survive" without US support. "As it was, Ukraine was barely hanging on, with the Russians hammering their front lines and making continuous though expensive gains," Mark Cancian, a former US Marine Corps colonel who is a senior adviser with CSIS, told Al Jazeera. "Without the US military aid, Ukrainian forces will gradually lose combat capability. My guess is that the Ukrainians can hold out for two to four months before their lines buckle and the Russians break through."

The fresh nadir in US-Ukraine relations comes after Trump took issue with Zelenskyy's suggestion that the end of his country's war against Russia's invading forces was likely still "very, very far away". Speaking at the White House on Monday, Trump said Zelenskyy "better not be right" and that the war should "end fast".

"If somebody doesn't want to make a deal, I think that person won't

be around very long," Trump said. "That person will not be listened to very long." Speaking on X after Trump's latest criticism, Zelenskyy did not directly refer to the US president's remarks but said Kyiv would continue to work with partners. "We have already had talks and other steps to come soon. It is very important that we try to make our diplomacy really substantive to end this war the soonest possible," Zelenskyy said.

"We need real peace and Ukrainians want it most because the war ruins our cities and towns. We lose our people. We need to stop the war and to guarantee security. We are working together with America and our European partners and very much hope on US support on the path to peace. Peace is needed as soon as possible." There was no immediate comment from Zelenskyy or his office on the pause in military aid. Trump's move was widely condemned by Democratic lawmakers and other supporters of Ukraine. Democratic US House of Representatives member Pramila Jayapal blasted the pause as a "shameful day in American history".

"Let's be clear — this is not about bringing peace. Donald Trump is siding with Russia, Putin, and dictators across the world over our allies and the defense of democracy," Jayapal, who represents a district in Washington state, said on X. Michael McFaul, a former US ambassador to Russia under former US President Barack Obama, labelled the move "tragic". — Al Jazeera

PHC refrains govt from printing textbooks

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Waqar Ahmad and Justice Sabit Ullah has granted status quo and refrained the government from entering into a profit-sharing agreement with private publishers for the printing of textbooks, on Tuesday.

The court issued direction on a petition filed by MN Printers and other publishers, who challenged the government's decision to award contracts to private publishers without following the due process of bidding.

The petitioners' counsel, Jahan Zeb Mehsud advocate argued that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board's 2017 policy requires that

contracts for textbook printing be awarded through a competitive bidding process. However, the government has bypassed this process and awarded contracts to favored publishers, which would harm the local publishing industry.

The lawyer claimed that the government's actions were in violation of the law and the textbook board's policy. He stated that the federal government had initially decided to provide free textbooks to students under single curriculum policy, but later changed its policy and awarded contracts to private publishers without following the due process.

The counsel argued that the government's decision to award contracts to favored publishers would not only

harm the local publishing industry but also violate the principles of transparency and fairness. He requested the court to intervene and direct the government to follow the due process of bidding.

PHC issued the stay order and directed the government to respond to the petition by Thursday. The petitioners have also argued that the government's decision to award contracts to favored publishers would result in a loss of revenue for the government, as the private publishers would not pay royalties to the government. They claimed that the government's decision was motivated by a desire to favor certain individuals and companies, rather than to promote the public interest.

Imran, Bushra denied food for Sehri, Iftar: Saif

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Adviser on Information, Barrister Dr. Muhammad Ali Saif, has claimed that PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi are not being

provided food for Sehri and Iftar during Ramadan.

In a statement, Barrister Saif alleged that restricting meetings with Imran Khan during Ramadan is a deliberate act of mental and physical distress. He added that both Khan and Bushra

Bibi are being forced to fast without having a Sehri meal.

Furthermore, he claimed that they are also being prevented from performing religious rituals, which has caused widespread concern among the public.



رمضانِ کریم

عوامی ریلیف

حکومت خیبر پختونخوا کی اولین ترجیح

..... وزیر اعلیٰ خیبر پختونخوا

سردار علی امین خان گنڈاپور

کی خصوصی ہدایت پر رمضان المبارک کے دوران عوام کو ریلیف فراہم کرنے کیلئے صوبے کے تمام اضلاع کے لیے حکمت عملی مرتب

ہر ضلع کی انتظامیہ اور متعلقہ ادارے مہنگائی، ذخیرہ اندوزی کی روک تھام، مقرر کردہ نرخوں پر اشیائے خورد و نوش کی فراہمی ممکن بنانے کیلئے مصروف عمل ہوگی۔

صوبے کے تمام اضلاع میں
دوران رمضان

- پرائس مانیٹرنگ ڈیسک کا قیام
- مانیٹرنگ ٹیموں کی تشکیل
- ذخیرہ اندوزوں کی خلاف کاروائی
- تاجر، دکاندار سرکاری نرخ واضح آویزاں کرنے کے پابند







عوام اپنی شکایات

وزیر اعلیٰ کمپلینٹ سیل - مرستیال ایپ

یا پھر اپنے متعلقہ ضلع کے ڈپٹی کمشنر

کے نمبر پر درج کر سکتے ہیں



INF(P)895/25

حکومت خیبر پختونخوا

محکمہ اطلاعات و تعلقات عامہ


