

ECO SG visits Pakistan
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, begins a significant three-day official visit to Pakistan today, aiming to enhance regional collaboration and development. Dr. Khan's itinerary includes meetings with Pakistan's top leadership, such as the President, Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and other federal ministers.

Blast near Levies vehicle
F.P. Report

MALAKAND: An explosion occurred near a Levies vehicle in Batkhela, in the Malakand district on Tuesday, however fortunately, all personnel remained unharmed. Levies police said, the incident took place on Canal Road in Batkhela when a Malakand Levies vehicle was passing through the area. A powerful explosion was triggered by an explosive device planted behind a government building.



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PM invites foreign investors

— Says win-win situation in Pakistan's minerals sector to bring equal dividends to all

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday invited the foreign investors and entrepreneurs to avail of the investment-friendly policies of Pakistan in the minerals exploration sector by bringing in their investment, technology, research and expertise.

Addressing Pakistan's Minerals Investment Forum held at the Jinnah Convention Center, the prime minister said Pakistan was blessed by Allah Almighty with huge natural resources spanning over the rugged mountains of Balochistan to snow covered mountains of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the pristine tops of Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He said the valleys of Sindh and plains of Punjab possessed immense natural resources as well worth trillions of dollars value.

"If we are able to harvest these great assets, I can say without any contradiction that Pakistan will say goodbye to the IMF programmes," he said, acknowledging that the global financial institution had been a great source of support for the country for decades. The prime minister said that with adequate tapping of the natural resources, they would get rid of these mountains of loans, debts and the foreign borrowed money which had been costing them huge.

He urged the foreign investors to convert the existing opportunities into reality as they were vying without borrowing foreign loans, solid partnerships which would result into win-win partnership. The event held under the auspices of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), more than 300 delegates from across the globe were attending the forum. Governors, Chief Ministers, Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, ministers, parliamentarians, representatives of various local and foreign companies and diplomats were present on the occasion.

Terming the existing potential in

the minerals sector beneficial for all, the prime minister said that Pakistan was blessed with fertile land and top of it, its people were brave and ready to accept all challenges as 'they can turn sand into gold'. He expressed the confidence that if they put their acts together and geared towards the set goals, they could get the beneficial dividends and also assured complete support from the federal government, provinces, institutions and the Pakistan army in this regard.

The prime minister also welcomed all the companies from the Europe, US, China, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkiye etc; to invest in country's minerals sector. He informed that relevant provincial governments had been working to provide conducive environment to the foreign investors as Sindh province had the largest coal deposits which could feed cement plants and other industrial units thus saving Pakistan's valuable foreign reserves spent on importing coals.

Punjab had discovered the iron ores deposits in Chiniot while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, AJK and Gilgit Baltistan had the enormous potential in this sector, he added. The prime minister said in the past, the foreign companies were issued permission for shipping out raw material from Pakistan but as per government's policy, they would not be allowed to ship out raw material out of Pakistan.

He emphasized that as a part of their integral policy, the foreign investors were encouraged to set up downstream industries to convert the raw material into finished form and then export it which would be a win-win situation for all. From Pakistan's national perspective, it was the duty of his government to work in this regard, he said.

He declared that now this policy would be a cardinal principle of the international partnerships. The prime minister said moreover, exporting raw material had more freight cost as compared to the finished goods. He further observed that the investors would bring in their technology over period of time and train the youth in

Pakistan.

He further underscored that through the joint partnerships, the foreign investors would train the local youth with modern skills so that they could become entrepreneurs themselves. Welcoming the minerals companies from the KSA, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, USA, China, Britain the prime minister urged them to consider training Pakistani youth by establishing vocational centers, which was also an important area for consideration adding this encompassing policy would bear tremendous dividends for all.

He further said that the vast rather arid areas in different parts of the country would be soon converted into industrial hubs, reassuring that all the governments, he himself as the country's chief executive along with the dynamic army chief, and the international partners with their collaborative efforts would turn Pakistan into a developed and prosperous country in the world. The prime minister also expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Minister of Energy Ali Pervaiz Malik, his team and all other relevant departments, besides the valuable support from the Army Chief and his colleagues; and the international partners for arranging and participating in the successful event.

He opined that the event was not only successful but also very productive besides, it gained the confidence of entrepreneurs sitting there, across Pakistan and the entire world. The prime minister also appreciated the commitment of Mark Bristow, President and CEO of Barrick Gold, to Reko Diq project and said that he was impressed with his acumen and steadfastness. Under his commitment, the project stalled in the last 20 years, had witnessed considerable progress which would be a lesson for others, he added. The prime minister, chief of army staff and the chief ministers also witnessed signing of different MoUs and agreements in the minerals sector.

(Continued on Back Page)



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visiting stalls at the exhibition 'Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2025.'

PPP leader Taj Haider passes away



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Secretary General and senior politician Taj Haider passed away after a brief illness on Tuesday. He was 83. According to his family, Taj Haider was under treatment at a local hospital. Details about his funeral and burial will be announced later.

He was born on March 8, 1942, into a scholarly family in Kota, Rajasthan. He received his early education from Govt Boys High School, Ranchor Line, Karachi. He ventured into the field of fine arts and also wrote for television. Taj Haider played the role of Professor Aadiwala in his drama serial Aabla Pa. He also wrote columns for various newspapers.

Taj Haider participated in the Socialist Convention of 1967 and formally joined the Pakistan People's Party the same year. He was among the founding members of the PPP. In recognition of his contributions, he was awarded the Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 2012 for his scientific services.

President Asif Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed deep sorrow over the death of Taj Haider. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah also offered condolence to the family, saying that his passing is a great personal loss and a blow to all PPP workers.

He described Taj Haider as a wise, thoughtful, and composed leader who always stood for democracy and public service.

Pakistan to emerge as leader in global mineral economy: COAS

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir has said Pakistan is ready to emerge as a leader in the global mineral economy.

Addressing the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2025 in Islamabad on Tuesday, he said Pakistan welcomes international institutions to introduce their expertise, explore investment opportunities, and partner with the country in developing its vast resource potential.

The Army Chief emphasized that Pakistan needs engineers, geologists, operators and skilled mining professionals to harness its

mineral wealth. That is why, students are being sent abroad for training to advance this sector. He said currently, twenty-seven Pakistani students from Balochistan are receiving training in mineral exploration in Zambia and Argentina. He said the goal is to develop a strong workforce, expertise, and human resources for the mineral sector.

General Syed Asim Munir further said economic security has become a critical component of national security. He assured that the Pakistan Army would ensure a robust security framework and proactive measures to safeguard the interests and

trust of partners and investors.

He also emphasized that the development of upstream and downstream mineral industries in Pakistan will be prioritized. The Army Chief stressed the importance of investing in refining and value addition in Pakistan to optimize costs and diversify markets.

He said with vast mineral reserves beneath the feet of the Pakistani people, skills in their hands and a transparent mineral policy in place, there is no room for despair or inaction. He urged the people to move forward and strive for both their country and themselves.

Imran's sisters, PTI leaders detained

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Police on Tuesday detained several PTI leaders, including Aleema Khan, Aliya Hamza, Sahibzada Hamid Raza, and others, after party workers protested over the denial of permission to meet Imran Khan at Adiala Jail.

According to sources, on the day of the meeting with Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi, Imran Khan's sisters, Bushra Bibi's family members, PTI leaders Aliya Hamza, and Zaheer Abbas arrived at Adiala Jail. PTI lawyers, including Barrister Ali Zafar, Ali Imran Shehzad, Hasnain Sanbal, Raja Mateen, and Khan Aqal Khan, also reached Adiala Jail.

Before entering the jail, Imran Khan's family was stopped. His sisters Aleema Khan, Uzma Khan, and Qasim Khan Niazi were stopped near a private pharmaceutical company. At the Gorkhapur checkpoint, a protest took place after the denial of the meeting. The police offered to arrange a meeting between the PTI founder's sisters and cousin Qasim Niazi with him.

US terminates semester exchange program for Pakistani students

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a decision that has caused shockwaves among the Pakistani students, the United States has decided to discontinue the Global Undergraduate Exchange Program from Pakistan in light of Donald Trump's aggressive national security review.

The program, named Global UGRAD, was ongoing for 15 years and it provided opportunity to hundreds of Pakistani students to get in touch with the US education system. The program is handled by USEP

Pakistan which is a bi-national commission established in 1950 by the US and Pakistan governments. Its mission is to promote understanding between the peoples of Pakistan and the US through educational and cultural exchange programmes.

It said in a statement: 'We understand that this news may be disappointing, especially for those who applied this year and were looking forward to this opportunity. Over the years, the Global UGRAD Program has provided life-

changing experiences to thousands of students, fostering academic growth, cultural exchange, and leadership development. We are immensely proud of the impact this program has had on its participants and the communities they have touched.' It bears mentioning that the US is undergoing a major overhaul in literally all major departments since Donald Trump has assumed office. It has stirred panic among thousands of foreigners and even the Green Card holders. — Agencies

LHC summons AGP

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday summoned the Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) to assist in the hearing regarding the petitions filed against the ban on X (formerly Twitter).

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Aalia Neelum heard the petitions. The bench also included Justice Farooq

Haider and Justice Ali Zia Bajwa. During the hearing, the Additional Attorney General stated that a report from the PTA had been submitted. A list of government officials using X was requested, but they couldn't provide such a list.

Advocate Azhar Siddique argued that the PTA and the federal government were not on the same page regarding the ban on Twitter. Chief Justice Aalia

Neelum remarked that the concept of being on the same page does not apply in court — neither the lawyer nor the court are on the same page.

Advocate Azhar Siddique added that no written response had been provided by the federal government. On what grounds did PTA block Twitter? The court had requested a list of government officials using the platform.

KP CM refutes propaganda over amends to Mines and Minerals Act

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, has strongly dismissed rumors and misconceptions regarding the proposed amendments to the Mines and Minerals Act, terming them as baseless propaganda. In a video statement, the Chief Minister clarified that no provincial authority/power is being handed over to any entity through these amendments.

"The powers of the province cannot and will not be surrendered," he asserted, adding that such claims are false, fabricated, and appear to be motivated by personal vendettas. Gandapur stated that his government is introducing reforms in the minerals sector, and unfortunately, vested interests are attempting to misrepresent these reforms for their own benefit. The Chief Minister highlighted that through improved policies and reforms, his administration has sig-

nificantly increased provincial revenues from the minerals sector. "For the first time in 76 years, we successfully auctioned four placer gold mining sites through a transparent process, generating Rs. 5 billion for the province," he said. "Previous governments failed to curb the illegal mining that persisted at these sites for decades." He added that the revenue earned from these four sites alone surpassed the total annual earnings of the Minerals Department in past years. Gandapur emphasized that his government is committed to boosting the province's financial self-sufficiency through continued reforms and tighter regulations against illegal mining activities. Under the proposed legal framework, equipment used in illegal mining operations will be confiscated by the government. Additionally, the Chief Minister stated that special attention was being focused on value addition of the province's valuable minerals adding that exporting raw

minerals neither benefits our industries nor creates jobs, nor does it increase our revenue. To encourage local investment and value addition, the government plans to extend lease periods for investors who set up value addition facilities within the province. Conversely, leaseholders who delay the start of mining operations after acquiring leases will face shortened deadlines, discouraging speculative holding of mineral rights that results in provincial losses. Gandapur also addressed the structural reforms, noting that decision-making on mining leases-previously concentrated in the hands of a single official, the Director General-will now be transferred to a multi-member committee composed of officials from relevant provincial departments, ensuring greater transparency.

He reaffirmed that these amendments are part of a broader reform strategy aimed at elevating the minerals sector and reiterated that alle-

gations of transferring control over provincial resources are nothing but mere propaganda. "The people of this province gave us a mandate to defend their rights," he said. "From NFC shares to Net Hydrel profits, merged district funds, and tobacco cess, we are fighting for every legal and constitutional right of this province." He appealed to the public not to fall prey to misinformation campaigns. "This is our land, and we will not compromise on its interests or allow interference in our authority," he declared.

Concluding his remarks, the Chief Minister urged critics to engage in informed debate. "If someone has concerns, they are welcome to discuss them with the relevant records. These proposed amendments have only been introduced in the assembly and will be debated thoroughly by both the government and opposition. Constructive suggestions for improvement will be welcomed." He rejected the narrative that provincial

powers are being handed over, calling it entirely unfounded. "Those spreading such propaganda are neither sincere to the people nor to the province."

Meanwhile, the 5th meeting of the Senate of Agriculture University Dera Ismail Khan was held here on Tuesday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair. This marked the first time the Chief Minister chaired a university senate meeting in his capacity as Chancellor of the university. Provincial Minister Sajjad Barkwal, Secretary Higher Education department, the Vice Chancellor, and other Senate members attended the meeting. The minutes of the previous Senate meeting and various statutes of the university were approved in the meeting.

The meeting was briefed on the university's academic activities, development projects, administrative affairs, issues, and other matters. It was informed that Agriculture

University D.I. Khan was established in 2018 and currently has 1,308 students enrolled in various programs. The university is offering five MS/MPhil programs, 18 degree programs, and 21 diploma courses.

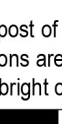
The Chief Minister emphasized the need for financial discipline, self-sufficiency, improvement in academic standards, and promotion of modern research in public sector universities. He directed that university degrees and courses be aligned with the demands of the modern job market to improve the employment rate of graduates.

Ali Amin Gandapur instructed that priorities be set for the construction of the university's building and that work begin without delay. He assured that the necessary financial resources would be provided on a priority basis. Furthermore, he directed for steps to resolve the issue of asset distribution between Gomal University and Agriculture University D.I. Khan.



KARACHI: UAE Ambassador Hamad Obaid Al Zabi meets Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House. —APP Photo

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Email: Badaberfic@gmail.com

Postal Address: Education Flight Air Headquarters (Unit), Peshawar

Contact: 091-9507778

Faisal Khan Tarakai inspects arrangements for board exams

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Education, Faisal Khan Tarakai, paid a visit to Government Higher Secondary School Cantt No. 1 in Peshawar Saddar on Monday to inspect the ongoing arrangements for the matriculation examinations. During his visit, he reviewed the examination halls and spoke to media representatives regarding the province-wide exam preparations.

Speaking to the media, the Minister said that comprehensive arrangements have been made across the province for the smooth conduct of matriculation examinations. "CCTV cameras have been installed in all examination halls, connected directly to the control rooms of the respective education boards," he stated.

He further said that the Education Monitoring Authority, in coordination with district administration and education officials, is closely monitoring the examination system. To ensure transparency, examination halls of private schools have also been shifted to government facilities.

Section 144 has been enforced in the vicinity of exam centers to maintain order, and students are being provided with proper furniture, clean drinking water, electricity, and all necessary facilities, he added.

The Minister emphasized that all chairpersons, secretaries, and controllers of the education boards, along with other staff, have been appointed strictly on merit before the commencement of exams.

He warned that any examination staff found involved in paper leakage, facilitating cheating, or any other malpractice will face strict action under the Efficiency and Discipline (E&D) Rules, including permanent disqualification from exam duties and other severe penalties.

Faisal Khan Tarakai reiterated the provincial government's commitment to uphold merit and transparency in the education sector, in line with the vision of former Prime Minister Imran Khan.

"We want hardworking students to get what they rightfully deserve," he said.

He also urged the media to play its role in highlighting issues related to examinations, promising swift and appropriate action on any reported problems.

Responding to a question, the Minister said that ever since Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf came into power in the province, education has remained a top priority.

"Revolutionary changes have been brought into the education system of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," he claimed, adding that in last year's matric exams, students from 19 government schools secured top positions.

He also noted that government school students, including those enrolled in the double shift program, performed exceptionally well in the ETEA and MDCAT exams.

The Education Minister further said that information desks have been established at both the Directorate of Education and the Secretariat level.

"Hotlines, WhatsApp numbers, and other contact facilities have been made available to ensure swift resolution of any issues raised," he said.

Faisal Khan Tarakai concluded by saying that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa currently leads all other provinces in terms of examination system reforms, provision of school facilities, teacher training, and student performance—and further improvement measures are actively underway.



PESHAWAR: Commissioner of Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud inspecting the control room established by Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar to control cheating in Martic examinations.

85,933 candidates appear in matric exam conducted by BISEP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A total of 85,933 candidates from Peshawar, Charsadda, the tribal district of Mohmand, Khyber, and Chitral participated in the matriculation exams under the Peshawar Board of Education. To accommodate these candidates, 713 examination centers were set up across the five districts. The attendance rate for the exams was recorded at 96.4%.

The exams were conducted in a transparent, peaceful, and secure environment. On the first day of the exams, the delivery and return of examination materials were carried out in an efficient and secure manner. To ensure uninterrupted power supply during the exams, the relevant authorities from WAPDA were contacted. It is expected that the power supply will continue without interruption from 8 AM to 1 PM on all exam days.

Administrative officers visited the examination centers in their respective areas to ensure the provision of necessary facilities to students and to prevent cheating. By the grace of Allah, there were no major complaints from any district, including paper leaks. Any minor complaints in certain centers were promptly addressed. In accordance with the directives of the provincial government, all resources were utilized to maintain transparency, prevent cheating, and provide a peaceful and secure environment for students.

These views were expressed by the Commissioner of Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud during a media briefing on the first day of the exams. He was accompanied by Secretary of Peshawar Education Board, Mehdi Jan, and Controller of Examinations. During their visits to various examination centers, they collected feedback from students regarding the facilities provided and issued necessary instructions to the administration.

The Chairman of the Peshawar Education Board also monitored the examination centers in real-time via CCTV cameras at the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar office. During the surveillance, a candidate was caught cheating in the Bara area of Khyber District, and strict action was taken against them. A final warning was also issued to the examination staff. Furthermore, the Commissioner met with students and applicants at the Peshawar Education Board office to address their concerns and issues.

Timely completion of projects in Chitral directed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting of the Mini Micro Hydel Power Houses Committee was held in Boney under the chairmanship of Deputy Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Suriya Bibi, in which a detailed review of the ongoing projects was taken in collaboration with PEDO and Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP).

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Chitral Upper, project contractors, members of the Power House Committee and senior officers of AKRSP. The meeting considered the pace of ongoing development works, delay in providing electricity to the public and the rehabilitation process.

Deputy Speaker Suriya Bibi strictly directed the concerned institutions to start the rehabilitation work immediately and complete all the projects within the stipulated time. She clarified that the provision of electricity is the fundamental right of the people, and further delay in this will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

She advised the committee members to keep a close eye on the ongoing projects and monitor the progress by inspecting the site from time to time to ensure transparency and speed.

At the end of the meeting, the Deputy Speaker assured the concerned institutions that a progress report would be presented in the next meeting, and accountability would be required for slowness.

Governor hails Qaizar Miankhel's landmark win in Dera bar elections

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Tuesday extended his heartfelt congratulations to Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Divisional President Qaizar Khan Miankhel on his sweeping victory, along with his group, in the District Bar Dera elections.

In his congratulatory message, the Governor said that by defeating the group supported by the Chief Minister, Qaizar Khan and his team have proven that the legal fraternity still stands with truth, justice, and democratic forces.

He praised the lawyers of Dera for making history by rejecting the Chief Minister's endorsed candidate.

5th Int'l Public Health Conference begins at KMU



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 5th International Public Health Conference, organized by the Institute of Public Health and Social Sciences (IPH&SS), Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar, officially commenced with the launch of two days of pre-conference workshops. The inauguration ceremony was graced by Kamran Afridi, Secretary Higher Education, who was accompanied by Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Vice Chancellor KMU. Also present on the occasion were Prof. Dr. Khalid Rehman, Director IPH&SS, Prof. Dr. Abdul Jalil, Director Institute of Family Medicine, along with other faculty members.

This four-day conference, themed "Innovation and Collaboration in Public Health", presents a comprehensive agenda comprising expert discussions, unique academic insights, and hands-on training opportunities.

In addition to the pre-conference workshops held on April 7 and 8, the main conference will take place on April 9 and 10, 2025, at the main campus of KMU in Peshawar. A large number of national and international delegates are expected to attend.

A total of 22 pre-conference workshops have been organized, focusing on a wide range of important public health topics. These include ethics and leadership in primary care, community nutrition assessment, public-patient partnerships in health research, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), communicable disease control, and the impact of climate change on health. Other key areas addressed in the workshops are dental public health, mental health challenges, and family medicine and primary care approaches that contribute to strengthening health systems.

While addressing the participants after the inauguration, Secretary Higher Education Kamran Afridi said that the conference plays a pivotal role in offering participants a unique opportunity to learn from distinguished experts in the field, stay informed with the latest developments, and seek feedback on their research projects. He expressed confidence that the workshops will serve as a vital platform for enhancing interaction with researchers, policymakers, and healthcare leaders.

He further noted that these pre-conference workshops will not only help improve participants' practical skills but also encourage innovative thinking from diverse perspectives. Kamran Afridi emphasized that whether one is a student, researcher, practitioner, or policymaker, the 5th International Public Health Conference 2025 offers a rare opportunity to understand the current health challenges and contribute effectively toward finding impactful public welfare solutions.

KPBC observes strike

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) has observed strike and boycotted from courts proceedings today across the province in protest against Israel's bombing on Gaza, on Tuesday. KPBC argued the Muslim world to play their role in achieving a ceasefire.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council observed strike from courts proceeding across the province to show solidarity with the Palestinians. The bar council strongly condemns Israel's actions and calls for the Muslim world to play a role in achieving a ceasefire in Palestine. KPBC urges the Muslim world to raise their voices to stop the genocide of Palestinians and condemned silence of human rights against Israeli atrocities against innocent people.

Syed Qasim Ali Shah holds Public Day in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah, on the occasion of Public Day, met with the local people, organizational office bearers, chairmen, and party workers at his residence today. A large number of citizens presented their problems and difficulties to the Provincial Minister. The public submitted applications regarding issues of water, electricity, sanitation, roads, health, education, and other matters.

Provincial Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah listened attentively to the grievances of the citizens and issued instructions to the concerned departments for their immediate resolution. He stated that public service is his top priority, and all available resources will be utilized to resolve the problems of the people.

He further added that solving public problems is the responsibility of the government, and he will make every possible effort to meet the expectations of the people.

During the meeting, party leaders and local chairmen appreciated the efforts of the Provincial Minister and assured him of their full cooperation.

Govt committed to prosperity of People: Pir Musavir Khan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Forests, Environment, Wildlife, and Climate Change, Pir Musavir Khan, has reiterated the provincial government's dedication to the development and welfare of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the leadership of Chief Minister. Speaking during a meeting with delegations from various regions at his office in the Civil Secretariat on Tuesday, Pir Musavir Khan emphasized that every effort is being made to improve the lives of the province's residents through reforms and large-scale developmental projects.

He highlighted that the provincial government is actively working across various sectors, including health, education, and infrastructure, to address public issues. The successful completion of these initiatives, will not only alleviate the challenges faced by the people but will also bring about meaningful and positive change in their daily lives.

Pir Musavir Khan assured the public that the provincial government, led by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), is committed to serving the people and has implemented historic steps for their welfare. One of the key initiatives was the recent Ramadan package, through which financial assistance was distributed to deserving individuals across the province.

During the meeting, the Special Assistant listened attentively to the concerns of the visiting delegations, resolving some issues immediately while issuing directives to relevant department heads to address others promptly.

Speaking further about the government's ongoing developmental projects, Pir Musavir Khan pointed out several significant initiatives, including the solarization of mosques and places of worship, and the distribution of solar systems to deserving households.

He emphasized that such projects, aimed at enhancing sustainability and providing essential resources, are unprecedented in the province's history.

Pir Musavir Khan concluded by reiterating the provincial government's commitment to creating a welfare-oriented society in line with the vision of PTI founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan. He also assured the public that people-centric initiatives would remain a priority in the upcoming budget.

1061 Pakistani doctors to get residency in the US

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a historic achievement, 1,061 Pakistani doctors have successfully obtained residency positions in the United States (US), marking the highest number of Pakistani physicians ever to get this number in a year.

President PM&DC Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj congratulated the doctors who were successful in achieving US Residency positions. He added that the impressive performance of these doctors exemplifies the high standards set by the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) in overseeing medical education in the country and its strong curricula and training programs. He reiterated the commitment to develop academic excellence among doctors and described this initiative as the start of a transformative journey aimed at further improvements.

He added that with a rigorous system of checks and balances, the PM&DC has played a crucial role in guiding Pakistani medical and dental colleges to establish robust curricula and comprehensive training programs.

In the statement, he highlighted that it is a significant milestone for Pakistan's medical education, noting its improved standards and growing international recognition. He emphasized that the residency application process in the United States is highly competitive and candidates have to demonstrate exceptional academic performance, they have to pass the rigorous United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), and navigate a demanding application process that includes interviews and the submission of comprehensive documentation. Only the most dedicated and resilient candidates thrive in this challenging selection.

Some notable esteemed institutions from which the maximum doctors have achieved the residency positions in the United States, includes King Edward Medical University, Allama Iqbal Medical College, Dow Medical College, Shifa College of Medicine, and Jinnah Sindh Medical University (JSMU) and Khyber Medical University.

Prof. Dr. Taj further added that this success will further improve the PM&DC's vision of mounting excellence in medical education for preparing future healthcare professionals to meet global standards. As these graduates enter the medical field, they carry with them the legacy of their institutions and the assurance that they have received a quality education that will serve them and their patients well in their professional journeys.

By achieving recognition from the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has taken a significant step toward enhancing the standards of medical education in Pakistan. This prestigious acknowledgment has also reflected the quality of the educational frameworks established by PM&DC but also provides immense opportunities for Pakistani doctors and graduates to flourish on both national and international stages. With WFME recognition, graduates have also gained greater credibility and acceptance in the global healthcare community, allowing them to pursue advanced training, residency programs, and career opportunities worldwide.

Dr. Taj's vision is to empower graduates and aspiring doctors to excel not only within their home country but on a global scale. The mission is clear: to ensure that these future healthcare professionals possess the skills and knowledge necessary to shine both nationally and internationally, thereby making a significant impact in the field of medicine.

The success of these 1,061 doctors sends a powerful message about the upward trajectory of medical training in Pakistan. It's a promising sign for the future of healthcare, both locally and globally, as more Pakistani physicians contribute to international medical systems, bringing compassion, knowledge, and cultural diversity to the field.

Arbab Khizer foresees forward bloc in PTI

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Arbab Khizer Hayat, Additional Secretary Information of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), has revealed that more than two dozen members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Assembly are set to abandon Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, leading to the formation of a forward bloc within the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Among these members, those from Peshawar, Charsadda, Mardan, Swat, and Bajaur are expected to be the most prominent. He further disclosed that a no-confidence motion against the Chief Minister will be presented in the Provincial Assembly before April 24, after which a coalition government comprising PML-N and its allies will be formed in the province. Additionally, the decision regarding the reserved seats for women will be made in the coming days. Following this, the opposition's numbers will exceed 55, and with the inclusion of the PTI's forward bloc, the opposition will cross 80 members, creating an opportunity for them to form the government. Arbab Hayat emphasized that corruption is rampant in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the province is on the brink of bankruptcy.



In brief

TMO blamed for corruption F.P. Report

WANA: The alleged corruption and negligence of the Tehsil Municipal Officer (TMO) Wana caused serious distress among the public. Every day, millions of rupees are being collected from key locations like the livestock market, private general bus stand, and NADRA car parking, yet unfortunately, the entire bazaar and surrounding residential areas have turned into heaps of garbage. Political leader Taj Muhammad Wazir harshly criticized the performance of TMO Wana, saying that not even a single cleanliness campaign has been initiated and corruption is rampant. He claimed that the TMO has set new records of corruption in recent days, while practically, no one seems to be addressing the deteriorating condition of the town. The business community and other social circles have also demanded that higher authorities immediately launch an investigation against the TMO of Lower South Waziristan and bring those responsible to justice. Taj Muhammad Wazir further revealed that the road being constructed from Wana to Dera Ismail Khan is being built by private individuals, but there has been no report or serious progress from the TMO regarding this crucial project. Public critics warn that if the government does not take immediate notice, the situation could deteriorate further.

Nurses to hold protest F.P. Report

LARKANA: The Young Nurses Association (YNA) organized an Eid meeting, in which nurses from Larkana division including Chandka Hospital, SICVD Hospital, Trauma Center participated in large numbers, on Tuesday. YNA leadership along Supreme Council members Tahir Hussain Bhutto and Waheed Ahmed Mugheri, Provincial Vice President Ghulam Qadir Mugheri, and Larkana Chairman Qasim Jiskani, president Zubair Ahmed Mangi, General Secretary Abdul Shakoor Chhutto, Vice Chairman Liaquat Ali Chachar, Senior Vice President Rubina Shabnam, Vice Presidents Comrade Hari Chand, Nouman Ahmed Mughal, Naseer Ahmed Gorar, Deputy General Secretary Muhammad Amin Waggan, Joint Secretary Najeeb Ahmed Bhutto, Treasurer Muhammad Yameen Waggan, and Spokesperson Bilawal Qureshi and others argued for full participation in the protest movement to solve the problems faced by the nurses and clarified that the nurses have not received promotions for many years.

CEO Health inspects hospital F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) District Health Authority Toba Tek Singh Dr. Kashif Bajwa, paid a surprise visit to the Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital Kamalia, on Tuesday. CEO conducted inspection on the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and the district administration. Under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naem Sindhu, remains actively engaged in ensuring quality healthcare facilities for the public. He thoroughly reviewed cleanliness, medical facilities and administrative affairs, while MS Dr. Adeel Arif was also present.

Tourists throng KPCTA's info desk in Derajat festival

F.P. Report

DI KHAN: A large number of tourists and visitors thronged the information desk set up by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) and the Department of Archaeology and Museums at the ongoing Derajat Festival in Dera Ismail Khan to obtain information about the tourist



attractions in the province.

Besides providing information and assisting tourists and visitors, the KPCTA is also arranging guided historical tours for the tourists to the Kafirkot temples and Rehman Dheri archaeological sites on April 12 and 13, for which registration is currently

open.

At the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa information desk, Deputy Manager Saeed Khan was providing tourism-related details, while at the archaeology desk, Assistant Curator Mehran Ashraf is offering valuable information about historical sites.

Visitors were being informed about the tourist attractions across Khyber

tourists for historic heritage sites, including Kafirkot temples.

These are ancient Hindu temples, known as Kafirkot North and South, believed to be around 2,000 years old. These temples are located within two different forts, approximately 35 kilometers apart.

Similarly, Rehman Dheri is one of the oldest known urban settlements in South Asia, located in Dera Ismail Khan, dating back to between 3300 BCE and 1900 BCE. The ongoing Derajat Cultural Festival at the Ratta Kulachi Stadium features a variety of cultural games, musical performances and informational booths on provincial tourism, culture, and archaeological heritage.

Visitors are also enjoying parades, cattle shows, PT shows, fireworks, tent pegging, livestock exhibitions, horse riding and impressive march-past performances. Thrilling events like 4x4 jeep races, motorcycle race competitions and other contests are expected to draw even more public attention at the Derajat Cultural Festival in the coming days. The festival aims not only to preserve local traditions but also to connect the younger generation with their cultural heritage.

CM okays DHQ hospital upgradation: Advisor

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Advisor for Health Ikhtesham Ali has said that Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has approved the upgradation of the Divisional Headquarters Hospital Kohat and soon it will be equipped with Kap Lab, CT Scan, MRI and other important machines, for which a team of experts has already been formed.

He expressed these views while talking to the media along with the Provincial Law Minister Aftab Alam Advocate and MPA Daud Afridi Advocate on Monday evening. Ikhtesham Ali said that the upgradation of DHQ Hospital Kohat will significantly reduce the burden on hospitals in Peshawar as Kohat is the gateway for all southern districts. The Health Advisor said that there is also a program to upgrade the hospitals at the tehsil level of Kohat as well.

Law Minister Aftab Alam said, beside the upgradation of the DHQ Hospital Kohat, the Police Hospital is also being activated. Similarly, work is being accelerated on the

under construction building of Liaquat Memorial Women and Children Hospital Kohat and every effort is being made to complete it before its scheduled time. He thanked Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur and Health Advisor Ikhtesham Ali for taking interest in the upgradation of the Kohat hospitals.

MPA Daud Afridi said that the Kap Lab. will cost Rs. 680 million. Similarly, the installation of Kap Lab., MRI, CT scan and other machines in the hospital will improve the medical facilities and the problem of referral to Peshawar will be solved on permanent basis.

Commissioner inspects exam hall: Commissioner Kohat Syed Motasim Billah Shah paid surprised visit to the Government Higher Secondary School Comprehensive Kohat and Government High School No.2 where he reviewed the arrangements for holding the free and fair Matriculation examination on Tuesday morning.

It may be recalled that the students of private schools are also giving exam in the Centers of

Government Schools. Commissioner Kohat found the body search system at the main gate to be excellent and the cameras to be functional. However, the lighting system in the examination hall was not upto the mark, which was fixed on the spot on the directions of the Commissioner Kohat.

On the special directions of the Commissioner Kohat Division, the concerned Deputy Commissioners in all the five districts of the division are visiting the examination centers along with their subordinate administrative officers to review the arrangement for holding of free and fair exams.

Describing the overall situation of the examination centers as satisfactory, Motasim Billah Shah strictly directed the administration of the concerned schools that no unauthorized persons should enter the schools, especially the premises of examination centers, otherwise the principal of the concerned school will be responsible for it. Commissioner Kohat directed to ensure the conduct of clean and transparent examinations at all costs.

US CG Ms Kristin visits South Punjab Secretariat

Saqib Mushtaq

MULTAN: US Consul General Ms. Kristin K. Hawkins, visited the South Punjab Secretariat and held a meeting with Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab, Mr. Fuad Hashim Rabbani, to discuss areas of mutual cooperation and development.

During the meeting, both sides emphasized the strong and enduring Pakistan-US relations and expressed confidence in further strengthening this partnership in the future. Ms. Hawkins assured that the US would explore avenues of support for key sectors in South Punjab, particularly agriculture, information technology, and women empowerment. She appreciated the role of the South Punjab Secretariat in promoting regional development, service delivery, and good governance.

Fuad Hashim Rabbani briefed the US Consul General on the region's strategic location and economic potential. He highlighted poverty as a major challenge despite the region's abundant resources. He proposed US cooperation for providing training to the youth in IT and Artificial Intelligence, which would enhance employment opportunities and foster innovation-led



growth. She was also briefed on the success of the "Zero Out-of-School Children" initiative in District Layyah, which is now being extended to Lodhran and other districts with support from NGOs and without placing financial burden on Government budget. The meeting also covered innovation in agriculture, crop diversification, modern farming techniques, and the role of research in poverty reduction and economic improvement.

Highlighting climate change challenges, Mr.

Rabbani briefed the Consul General about a project to develop mango orchards using the seed-ball technique on 300 acres of forest land along River Chenab, with an estimated cost of Rs. 70 million, and sought financial and technical assistance for the project. He reaffirmed the Government commitment to deepening collaboration with the US, focusing on technical support, capacity building, and people-to-people engagement to accelerate holistic development in the region.



HYDERABAD: Students solving first paper of class 10th in examination centre at Hayat Girls Higher Secondary School, Cantt.

TBA Pabbi elects new cabinet F.P. Report

PABBI: Tehsil Bar Association (TBA) Pabbi elected Tariq Mahmood as president and Sharaf u Din General Secretary respectively for 2025, on Tuesday.

The Chief Election Commissioner Asif Zia Advocate along with two-member Rub Nawaz Khattak Advocate and Misbah Ullah Advocate, issued a notification of successful candidates. The new cabinet includes Vice President Muhammad Fazal Awan, Finance Secretary Najm uz Zaman, Joint Secretary Waheed Gul and Information Secretary Ali Raza.

The Executive Body members elected unopposed include Shazia Mir Aftab, Haroon Rashid, Malik Noor Muhammad and Syed Usman Shah. The elected cabinet gained support from Pakistan Muslim League (N), Peoples Lawyers Forum, National Lawyers Forum.

Advisor to President of Pakistan and former Provincial President of PPP Sardar Ali Khan, Muhammad Ilyas, President of PPP Tehsil Pabbi and Mian Imtiaz Ali Shah congratulated the newly elected cabinet.

TB awareness seminar held Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: A seminar was held at Qazi Hussain Ahmad Medical Complex Nowshera Medical College in collaboration with the Association of Community Development (ACD) to mark World Tuberculosis (TB) Day, on Tuesday.

The seminar was addressed by Dean of Nowshera Medical College Professor Dr. Anwar Khan Wazir and Medical Director Professor Dr. Sardar Sohail Afsar. The speakers emphasized the alarming situation in Pakistan, which ranks fifth in TB cases globally, with approximately 668,000 cases reported annually.

The renowned experts including Dr. Mir Alam Durrani, Dr. Nausheen Sahibzada, Dr. Abuzar, and Dr. Niaz Ali, shared their views on TB awareness and management. The seminar saw significant participation from healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, and medical students from Nowshera District Health Office and other institutions.

Tehsil chairman visits WSSCM F.P. Report

MARDAN: Chairman Tehsil Council Katlang Riaz Khan paid a visit to Water and Sanitation Services Company Mardan (WSSCM) and inspected various sections of the company, on Tuesday.

General Manager Muhammad Khalil Akbar briefed him on company's operations and sanitation services provided to the citizens of Mardan. He also met with the Chairman Board of Directors (BoD) WSSCM Engineer Adil Nawaz and praised the initiatives and efforts been made by the company regarding the cleanliness and beautification of Mardan.

PML-N holds thanksgiving event

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Lower Dir chapter arranged a function to observe, a "Yum-e-Tashakur" (Thanksgiving Day) at a local hotel in to celebrate the federal government's performance over the past one year, reduction in electricity tariffs, and its efforts in steering the country away from default.

The event was attended by the PML-N workers from different areas, along with senior party leaders at both the provincial and national levels. Those who addressed the gathering included Central Additional Secretary Information and former Senator Zahid Khan, Provincial Vice President Malik Muhammad Ayub Khan, Malakand Division President and former Provincial Minister Malik Jehan Zeb Khan, Lower Dir President Malik Farooq Iqbal Yousafzai, General Secretary Advocate Sardar Javed Tajik, former MPA candidate and Central Government Coordinator Malik Nauman Yousafzai, and others.

Speaking on the occasion, the former senator Zahid Khan stated that the PML-N-led central government had won the hearts of the people by reducing electricity prices. He noted that the party took over at a time when the country was on the brink of economic collapse due to the poor governance of the previous PTI government. "Despite political losses, we prioritized national interest and stability," he said. Zahid Khan also shared that during a recent meeting, PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif expressed optimism that, God willing, the country would emerge from its current crises and set on the path of progress and prosperity within the next two years. He emphasized that political and economic stability would also lead to peace in the country.

He reiterated his stance against military interference in politics but acknowledged

the army's vital role in ensuring national security. "Had the Pakistan Army not been there, the consequences would have been dire," he remarked. He urged the opposition to rise above personal egos and contribute to national development, stating, "There can be politics only if the country and state survive." He further announced that Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would soon visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PML-N leadership vowed to transform Lower Dir into a political stronghold of the party and assured that development funds would be brought in through the central government to address the long-standing deprivations of the district. They called upon the public to extend their full support to the PML-N.

Traffic police performance: Lower Dir Traffic Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Sher Hassan Khan said that the traffic police are making all-out efforts to maintain a smooth traffic flow despite limited infrastructure, but success hinges on public cooperation and respect for traffic rules.

Speaking to media at the Timergara Press Club alongside Traffic In-charge Aziz Khan as part of a public awareness campaign, DSP Sher Hassan highlighted that Timergara acts as a junction for five districts — Lower and Upper Dir, Lower and Upper Chitral, and Bajaur. However, he said, the city roads remain too narrow and inadequate to cater to the ever-growing volume of traffic.

Despite the constraints, the traffic police are actively working to manage congestion. The DSP urged drivers to adhere to traffic regulations and maintain lane discipline. He also appealed to the public and shopkeepers not to park vehicles along roadsides but to use designated parking areas instead, emphasizing that such actions reflect the behavior of civilized citizens.

Khyber Bar Association elects 2025 cabinet

Amjad Ali Afridi

KHYBER: Khyber Bar Association (KBA) elected Muhammad Ibrar Afridi as president Sajjad Hussain Shinwari as General Secretary respectively, on Tuesday.

KBA cabinet include as Gul Jahan as joint secretary, finance Secretary Muhammad Afaq Afridi, and press secretary Iram Burhan, a trailblazing female lawyer. Notably, Iram Burhan's election marks a milestone as the first woman to hold a cabinet



position in the Khyber Bar Association. In her speech, she expressed gratitude to the lawyers' community for their trust and support.

The newly elected offi-

cials have pledged to work for the welfare of the lawyers' community and provide accessible justice to the people of their region.

AJK SCBA urges appointment of CEC

F.P. Report

MIRPUR: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir Supreme Court Bar Association (AJK SCBA) Tuesday called upon the AJK government to immediately initiate the constitutional process for the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), fearing that any further delay might risks undermining the integrity of the democratic process ahead of the General Elections 2026 in the state.

In a statement issued here, the AJK SCBA President, Javid Najam-us-Saqib Advocate emphasized that nearly three months have passed since the retirement of the former CEC, and yet no meaningful consultation had begun between the AJK Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, as man-dated by Article 50 of the AJK Interim Constitution.

"Under Article 50, it is a

constitutional obligation that the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to consult and agree upon a nominee, who is then formally recommended by the President of AJK to the Chairman of the Kashmir Council for final advice," Saqib added. A deviation from this process is not only a legal lapse but a blow to the democratic framework enshrined in our Constitution."

Saqib observed "There is no provision in the AJK Constitution that allows any such federal committee to interfere in the appointment of the CEC. The matter is purely a state subject and must be treated as such."

The AJK SCBA further appealed to all constitutional stakeholders to recognize the urgency of the situation, stressing that the Election Commission must be fully constituted and functional well in time for the upcoming elections. "The rule of

law, institutional integrity, and respect for constitutional provisions must guide every action taken in this regard," Saqib concluded.

"Failure to do so may result in legal and political complications that will only damage public trust in democratic institutions," he added. "Under Article 50, it is a constitutional obligation that the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to consult and agree upon a nominee, who is then formally recommended by the President of AJK to the Chairman of the Kashmir Council for final advice," Saqib added.

"Any deviation from this process is not only a legal lapse but a blow to the democratic framework enshrined in our Constitution," Saqib observed "There is no provision in the AJK Constitution that allows any such federal committee to interfere in the appointment of the CEC."



KYIV: Explosions were heard overnight and a dark plume of smoke rose up from the city in Ukraine.

Rising rivers threaten US South and Midwest

FRANKFORT, Kentucky (AP): Rivers rose and flooding worsened across the sodden US South and Midwest, threatening communities already badly damaged by days of heavy rain and wind that killed at least 18 people. Even as the rain moved out of some of the hardest hit areas in Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky, water levels crept up in some communities, swirling into homes and businesses and submerging roads.

In Frankfort, Kentucky, rescue crews checking up on residents in the state capital traversed inundated streets in inflatable boats. Workers erected sandbag ramparts to protect homes and businesses and turned off utilities as the swollen Kentucky River kept rising. "As long as I've been alive - and I'm 52 - this is the worst I've ever seen it," said Wendy Quire, the general manager at the Brown Barrel restaurant in downtown Frankfort. The river's depth had risen above 47 feet and was expected to crest above 49 feet to a potentially record-setting level, according to Frankfort Mayor Layne Wilkerson. The city's flood wall system is designed to withstand 51 feet of water. Forecasters said that flooding could persist as torrential rains lingered over several states. Tornado watches were in effect through much of the day in parts of Alabama,

Georgia and Florida. "This flooding is an act of God," said Kevin Gordon, a front desk clerk at the Ashbrook Hotel in downtown Frankfort. The hotel was open and offering discounted stays to affected locals, but Gordon said it could eventually be forced to close.

The 18 reported deaths since the storms began included 10 in Tennessee. A 9-year-old boy in Kentucky was caught up in floodwaters while walking to catch his school bus. A 5-year-old boy in Arkansas died after a tree fell on his family's home and trapped him, police said. A 16-year-old volunteer Missouri firefighter died in a crash while seeking to rescue people caught in the storm. The National Weather Service said dozens of locations in multiple states were expected to reach a "major flood stage," with extensive flooding of structures, roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure possible. In north-central Kentucky, emergency officials ordered a mandatory evacuation for Falmouth and Butler, towns near the bend of the rising Licking River. Thirty years ago, the river reached a record 50 feet (15 meters), resulting in five deaths and 1,000 homes destroyed.

The storms come after the Trump administration cut jobs at NWS forecast offices, leaving half of them with vacancy rates of about 20%, or dou-

ble the level of a decade ago. A north-western Tennessee town of about 200 people that flooded after a levee failure in February was almost entirely underwater after the Obion River overflowed. Domanic Scott went to check on his father in Rives, Tennessee, after not hearing from him in a house where floodwater had reached the doorsteps. "It's the first house we've ever paid off. The insurance companies around here won't give flood insurance to anyone who lives in Rives because we're too close to the river and the levees. So if we lose it, we're kind of screwed without a house," Scott said. For others that fled to higher ground, grabbing the essentials also meant taking a closer look at the liquor cabinet.

In Kentucky, with water rising up to his windowsills, Frankfort resident Bill Jones fled his home in a boat, which he loaded with several boxes filled with bottles of bourbon. Memphis had received 14 inches (35 centimeters) of rain, the National Weather Service said. West Memphis, Arkansas, received 10 inches (25 centimeters). The rain and fierce winds moved further east, felling trees in Alabama and Georgia. Forecasters attributed the violent weather to warm temperatures, an unstable atmosphere, strong winds and abundant moisture streaming from the Gulf.

Sahel alliance recalls ambassadors from Algeria

DAKAR (AP): A military alliance between Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger withdrew their respective ambassadors from Algeria in response to the downing of a Malian drone last week, the group said. The Alliance of Sahel States, which goes by its French acronym AES, blamed Algeria on social media for the drone's downing and condemned it as an "irresponsible act" that violated international law.

The act was "contrary to historical relations and fraternal relations between the peoples of the AES Confederation and the Algerian people," the group said. Malian Prime Minister Gen. Abdoulaye Maiga, in a statement on the Malian Foreign Ministry's social media, denied claims by the Algerian government that the drone had violated Algeria's airspace by over 2 kilometers (1.2 miles). He claimed that "this action proves, if proof were needed, that the Algerian regime sponsors international ter-

rorism."

Mali in the statement also summoned the Algerian ambassador, withdrew from a 15-year-old regional military group that includes fellow AES member Niger, and will file a complaint with "international bodies" about the incident. The development comes as tensions are on the rise between Algeria and its southern neighbors, including Mali. After coming into power, the juntas in the three AES countries left the Economic Community of West African States, the nearly 50-year-old regional bloc known as ECOWAS, and created their own security partnership, the Alliance of Sahel States, in September last year.

Some analysts described it as an attempt to legitimize their military governments amid coup-related sanctions and strained relations with neighbors. Rida Lyammouri, a Sahel expert at the Morocco-based Policy Center for the New South, said the latest war of words was unlikely

to escalate beyond that. He doubted the Malian government's ability to conduct a thorough investigation because the crash "took place in an area it doesn't control, and what remains of the drone has been recovered by groups opposed to the government." "That being said things are unlikely to escalate beyond the communication war. Mali, and other AES members would not engage militarily against Algeria, and vice versa. This will most likely only further existing diplomatic tensions at the moment," continued Lyammouri.

Algeria once served as a key mediator during more than a decade of conflict between Mali's government and Tuareg rebels. But the two countries have grown apart since a military junta staged coups in 2020 and 2021, putting military personnel in charge of Mali's key institutions. Algeria has denounced the direction that Mali's new government has taken and its expanded efforts to quash rebellion in

historically volatile parts of northern Mali. Afraid of the conflict spilling over the border, Algerian officials have denounced Mali's use of Russian mercenaries and armed drones near Tin Zaouatine, a border town in the north where the drone was found.

The Malian government did not recover the drone and videos seen on social media, posted by northern rebels, show them in possession of the remains of a Turkish made Akinci drone manufactured by Baykar downed in Tin Zaouatine. Mali purchased at least two from the Turkish company last year and has used them against armed separatists as well as fighters linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group. Algeria has one of Africa's largest militaries and has long considered itself a regional power but military leaders in neighboring Mali and Niger have distanced themselves as they've championed autonomy and sought new alliances, including with Russia.

Heavy floods in DR Congo leave dozens dead

DR CONGO: Heavy rains have triggered severe flooding from a key river in the Democratic Republic of the Congo capital Kinshasa, killing some 30 people and destroying homes and roads. Provincial Health Minister Patricien Gongo provided the death toll but stressed it was "provisional". Most of the fatalities in the deluge, he added, were caused by collapsing walls.

The Ndjili River, which cuts through the teeming city of nearly 17 million people, burst its banks, submerging the main national road. Motorists were left stranded for hours, with some spending the entire night in their cars. "On the way home from the airport last night to welcome a friend, we spent the night in the car because there was no safe place to park," Patricia Mikonga, a Kinshasa resident, told Reuters news agency.

Many neighbourhoods were plunged into darkness, while others suffered water shortages. Kinshasa Governor Daniel Bumba Lubaki said water infrastructure had been damaged but assured residents that supply would be restored within days. Speaking on state television, he blamed illegal housing for some of the deaths and warned that people living in unplanned settlements could face eviction. Raphael Tshimanga Muamba, a hydrologist, said human activity had worsened the river's condition over time. "These are anthropogenic actions where rivers are degraded; their dimensions no longer represent their initial capacity to contain floods," he told Reuters. The flooding comes as the country faces mounting instability with conflict in the eastern part of the country.

Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have ramped up attacks there since the start of the year, with more than 7,000 people killed and millions displaced in recent months. — Aljazeera

Child dies of measles in Texas

TEXAS (BBC): A second child has died from measles as an outbreak of the highly contagious virus continues to grow in western Texas. The school-aged child was not vaccinated, had no underlying health conditions and was in hospital suffering complications from measles. Aaron Davis, the vice-president of UMC Health System, told the BBC.

US Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr, who has faced a backlash over his handling of the outbreak, visited Texas in the wake of the death, which is the third overall in recent weeks. The southern US state has reported more than 480 cases of measles so far this year, a jump from 420 earlier in the week. The outbreak has extended to neighbouring states. "This unfortunate event underscores the importance of vaccination," Mr Davis said in a statement. "Measles is a highly contagious disease that can lead to serious complications, particularly for those who are unvaccinated."

The child - an eight-year-old girl - died. The BBC contacted the state health department and the US Department of Health and Human Services for comment. Neither agency listed the death in their case counts. In a statement posted on social media, Kennedy confirmed the girl's death. "My intention was to come down here quietly to console the families and to be with the community in their moment of grief," he said in the statement. He also said he was engaging with officials there to "support Texas health officials and to learn how our HHS agencies can better partner with them to control the measles outbreak". Kennedy said he was deploying a team - as he did in March - to help distribute vaccines, medications and other supplies, among other support services. "The most effective way to prevent the spread of measles is the MMR vaccine," Kennedy wrote, referring to the measles, mumps and rubella jab.

Zelensky slams US lack of response to Putin truce rejection

KYIV (AFP): Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky lamented the lack of a US response to Russia's refusal to agree "a full, unconditional ceasefire" as two people were killed in Moscow's latest aerial bombardment. Russia mounted a "massive" missile and drone attack on Ukraine that also wounded seven people, Zelensky said, warning that Moscow was stepping up its aerial attacks.

Ukraine has agreed to an unconditional truce in the more than three-year-long war proposed by the United States but Russian President Vladimir Putin has refused to do so. "We are waiting for the United States to respond -- so far there has been no response," said Zelensky. Russia claimed the capture of a village in Ukraine's Sumy region in a rare cross-border advance, but Ukraine branded that as "disinformation".

Earlier, Russia "launched a massive nationwide attack on Ukraine using ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones", said Ukraine's first deputy prime minister Yulia Svyrydenko. Zelensky said "the number of Russian air attacks is increasing", which he said proved that "the pressure on Russia is still insufficient". In Kyiv, explosions were heard in the night and a smoke rose up from the city. One person was killed and three people were wounded, the head of the city's military administration, Tymur Tkachenko, wrote on social media. Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko said that "the body of a man killed in an

enemy attack was discovered in Darnytsia district." A missile strike partially destroyed a building housing state foreign-language broadcasters, the Russian-language Freedom television channel reported, saying that its newsroom had been destroyed. Emergency services said that fires broke out in non-residential buildings in Kyiv. In a nearby region, a man was burned when an attack sparked a house fire, the head of the military administration said. Russia attacked Ukraine with 23 cruise and ballistic missiles and 109 drones during the night, the Ukrainian air force said.

The air force said it shot down 13 of the missiles and 40 drones while 54 others caused no damage. In the southern Kherson region, a drone killed a 59-year-old man, while in the northeastern Kharkiv region, near the border with Russia, two people were wounded in an aerial bomb attack, regional officials said. In the western region of Khmelnytsky, authorities said air defences destroyed a missile but falling fragments damaged a house and wounded a woman. Over the past week, Russia has launched more than 1,460 guided aerial bombs, nearly 670 attack drones, and over 30 missiles of various types on Ukraine, Zelensky said. Russia's defence ministry said troops "liberated" the village of Basivka, close to the border with Russia's Kursk region. Ukraine quickly rejected the report.

"The enemy continues its disinformation campaign regarding the seizure of settlements in Sumy

region or the breakthrough of the border." Andriy Demchenko, spokesman for the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine, told AFP. French President Emmanuel Macron echoed Zelensky's calls for a stronger response to Russia. "A ceasefire is needed as soon as possible. And strong action if Russia continues to try to buy time and refuse peace," Macron said on X. Russia continues "to murder children and civilians", he added. The latest attacks came two days after a missile attack on the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rig killed 18 people including nine children. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, denounced Russia's "reckless disregard" for human life in using "an explosive weapon with wide area effects".

Russia said it had struck a central artillery base and enterprises involved in producing drones. It accused Ukraine of striking its energy infrastructure including a gas distribution facility in the Voronezh region. US President Donald Trump is pushing the two sides to agree a partial ceasefire, but has so far failed to broker an accord acceptable to both sides. The United States is also seeking better ties with Russia and Kremlin envoy Kirill Dmitriev in an interview with state television said that the next US-Russian contacts could be "next week", Russian news agencies reported. Dmitriev last week became the most senior Russian official to visit Washington since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine will send team to US next week for talks

KYIV (AP): Ukraine will send a team to Washington next week to begin negotiations on a new draft of a deal that would give the US access to Ukraine's valuable mineral resources, Economy Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko told The Associated Press.

"The new draft agreement from the US shows that the intention to create a fund or jointly invest remains," Svyrydenko said, during a trip to northern Ukraine. The delegation from Kyiv will include representatives from the Ministries of Economy, Foreign Affairs, Justice and Finance. The long-running negotiations over a mineral deal have already strained relations between Kyiv and Washington. The two sides had been preparing in February to sign a framework agreement but the plan was derailed following a contentious meeting in the Oval Office between US President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

After some Ukrainian lawmakers leaked the new draft, critics slammed it as little more than an attempt to strip Kyiv of control over its own natural resources and infrastructure. According to the leaked

document, the new draft includes not only rare-earth minerals but gas and oil. Ukraine holds significant deposits of more than 20 minerals deemed strategically critical by the US, including titanium, which is used to make aircraft wings, lithium, key to several battery technologies, and uranium, used in nuclear power.

Despite the disruption following the Oval Office meeting, Ukrainian officials showed interest in signing the framework deal at any time, seeing it as an important step to win the favor of President Donald Trump and shore up US backing in the war against Russia's full-scale invasion. After weeks of silence on the status of the deal, the US sent a new draft to Kyiv, which goes further than the original framework.

It's unclear why the US chose to bypass the signing of the framework deal and instead moved forward with a more comprehensive draft agreement, which would likely require ratification by Ukraine's parliament. However, Ukrainian officials have been cautious about commenting on the contents of the draft, stressing that it currently reflects only one side's position. "What we have now is a

document that reflects the position of the US Treasury legal team," said Svyrydenko. "This is not a final version, it's not a joint position." She said that Ukraine's task now is to assemble a technical team for negotiations, define its red lines and core principles, and send a delegation to Washington for technical talks as early as next week.

"It's clear that the full parameters of this agreement can't be discussed online," Svyrydenko said. "We need to sit down with the teams and continue the conversation in person." Legal, investment, and financial advisers are being selected, she said. "This marks a new stage in relations with the United States - one that requires expertise across multiple areas," she said. "Ultimately, everything will be decided through the course of negotiations." Svyrydenko declined to elaborate publicly on Ukraine's official evaluation of the new draft, but noted that there is now a more detailed document outlining the fund's creation. And while the initial draft focused primarily on the intention to establish the fund, Svyrydenko said the latest version lays out how American advisers envision its structure and operation.

How to rescue people in Italy's avalanche

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy (AP): Zen, a 5-year-old border collie, circled friskily around a mound of snow as he picked up a scent, his quick movements signaling to his handler that someone was buried deep below. Zen has been a rescue dog for three years, and on this day, he was setting an example for 20 others dogs being certified for avalanche rescue in the heart of the Italian Dolomites, where the breathtaking jagged peaks have long enchanted writers, painters and outdoor enthusiasts alike.

The role of dogs in Italian alpine rescues is becoming more important as the number of people caught by avalanches increases - up by 50% over the past 25 years. Climate change has made heavy, wet snow more common in midelevations between 1,500-2,500 meters (5,000-8,000 feet) where

most excursionists venture, which makes avalanche survival less likely by compressing air pockets that would allow a trapped alpine or off-piste skier to breathe.

A trained avalanche rescue dog's nose can locate someone buried deep in the snow more accurately than any transponder, making their role fundamental in reaching victims "in the shortest possible time," said Adriano Favre, who ran the canine training camp in the mountains above Cortina D'Ampezzo, a chic ski resort and a venue of the 2026 Winter Olympic Games. After picking up the scent, Zen energetically emerged with a sign of life - a rope tug toy - from the snow den masquerading, for the purposes of the training exercise, as an avalanche. Shortly after, his handler digs a volunteer victim out

of the snow, and showers Zen with praise and affection.

"All of our dogs need to have an intense relationship with the handler. If not, we can't read what he is trying to tell us," said Zen's handler, Paolo Sbisa, who has raised him from puppyhood. "Once the relationship is built, they will do anything to make us happy." Nine days earlier, on a nearby pass just 3 miles (2 kilometers) away as the crow flies, Zen's mission was deadly serious.

Three backcountry skiers were buried by an avalanche on Giau Pass at 2,300 meters - normally a route for beginners amid scenic rugged rockfaces near a mountain road that turned deadly the day after a heavy snowfall. Zen and his handler were on the first helicopter leaving base 10 minutes away.

Vietnam seeks US tariff delay as economic growth slows in first quarter

HANOI (AFP): Vietnam has asked for a last-minute delay to colossal tariffs imposed by Washington as government figures showed that its economy grew at a slightly slower pace in the first quarter. The Southeast Asian manufacturing powerhouse counted the United States as its biggest export market in the first three months of the year but its key customer has now hit it with a thumping 46 percent tariff.

The move is part of a furious new global trade blitz announced by US President Donald Trump that has sent markets around the world into a tailspin. However, top leader To Lam has asked Trump for a delay of at least 45 days to the new 46 percent tariff, according to a copy of a formal letter seen by AFP. In the letter, Lam said he had appointed Deputy Prime Minister Ho Duc Phoc to serve as the pri-

mary contact with the US side on the issue, "with the aim of reaching an agreement as soon as possible".

He also said he hoped to meet Trump in Washington at the end of May to finalise the matter. Trump said he had had "a very productive" call with Lam, who he said wanted to make a deal on tariffs. Gross domestic product in Vietnam during the first quarter grew 6.93 percent year-on-year, down slightly from the 7.55 expansion in the final quarter of last year, Vietnam's General Statistics Office said. Despite the challenge presented by US levies, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh said a target of "at least eight percent" growth this year remains unchanged, the government's official news portal said.

To achieve its goal, Vietnam's Ministry of Finance has determined that the economy will need

to grow between 8.2 and 8.4 percent in the remaining quarters, the government said. The US tariffs threaten to "significantly damage" Vietnam's current growth model, which relies heavily on exports to the United States, said Sayaka Shiba, senior country risk analyst at research firm BMI. She said that, in the worst-case scenario, Vietnam could suffer a three-percent hit to GDP this year. Trump has claimed the Communist country charges the United States a 90 percent tariff, a figure based on Vietnam's trade surplus with the United States, worth \$123.5 billion last year. Experts believe the new tariffs will hit hardest in sectors such as seafood, garments, footwear, wood, electronics and smartphones.

Major US corporations with manufacturing operations in Vietnam, including Nike and Adidas, are likely

to see orders decrease and reductions in revenue, potentially leading to factory downsizing and job losses, Pham Van Dai, a lecturer in economics at Fulbright University Vietnam, told AFP. Business groups have also called on the Trump administration to delay the imposition of reciprocal tariffs. The American Chamber of Commerce in Hanoi and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that they sent a joint letter to the US commerce secretary expressing "deep concern" over the policy and urging a delay. Vietnam's exports rose 10.6 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, official data showed, increasing significantly from 7.9 percent growth in the final quarter of 2024. Industrial production was up 7.8 percent year-on-year, slowing from an 11.5 percent expansion in the previous quarter.

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Global unity can triumph over trade tyranny

EUROPEAN Union trade ministers meeting in Luxembourg on Monday struggled to reach an agreement on how to respond firmly and effectively to the so-called reciprocal tariffs of the United States that will hit a significant part of their exports.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic have tried to cut a deal with the US administration by offering zero-for-zero tariffs between the EU and the US for cars and industrial goods.

But that offer was rejected outright by the US president, who insisted that the EU should buy \$350 billion in US energy to close the trade deficit.

The EU has been preparing countermeasures. But the trade ministers seem to have only agreed on imposing tariffs of up to 25 percent on the broad range of US exports in response to the US levies on steel and aluminum, with EU states to vote on the plan on Wednesday.

However, due to the different interests of member states, there have been no agreements on how to respond to the US tariffs on EU cars and the blanket tariffs on the bloc. And while the US tariffs have been described in the EU as "unjustified", "bullying" and "coercive", there is little appetite among member states to apply the Anti-Coercion Instrument that was drawn up to respond to the coercive US trade policy.

Given the gloomy economic prospects facing the bloc, it is perhaps understandable that there is a fear of making things worse. The latest Conference Board Economic Forecast for the Eurozone is just 0.9 percent growth in 2025 and 1.2 percent in 2026. But the EU and its member states should remember that they have a much bigger stake in defending free trade, the global trading system, and the authority and rules of the World Trade Organization, all of which are being decimated by the US.

The US administration justifies its protectionist policies and tariff attacks by alleging unfair trade practices by its trading partners, claiming the aim of the tariffs is to address trade imbalances, protect domestic industries, and gain negotiating leverage. However, these measures are primarily intended to maintain the US' privileged position amid the rise of the Global South, rather than promoting fair trade practices. Apart from trade, the US has withdrawn from the World Health Organization and Paris Climate Agreement and other international organizations and treaties, all in pursuit of self-gain. The EU and the rest of the world bear the responsibility to sustain and improve the global system that the US seems intent on destroying.

It's good that Sefcovic mentioned that the US accounts for just 13 percent of the global goods trade and the EU's priority, along with the rest of the WTO members, is to protect the remaining 87 percent and make sure that the global trade system prevails for the rest of the world. He described his recent trip to China as "aimed at fostering cooperation to rebalance our trade and investment relationship with tangible results".

The fact that China is a major trade partner for more than 140 countries and regions and is the world's second-largest economy that contributes to 30 percent of global growth means that the EU, and other economies, should work together with it to uphold free trade and multilateralism, and fight against the US trade bullying and economic coercion.

China promotes mutually beneficial economic relations and has urged the US administration to abandon its unilateral and protectionist tactics. But in light of the US leader doubling down on his tariff extortion, China is calling for a coordinated response to counteract the economic coercion.

It is already working with countries such as Japan and the Republic of Korea to deepen economic cooperation to safeguard regional stability and counterbalance the US' trade pressure.

China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations can also take concrete measures to enhance their economic ties and strengthen regional trade agreements. By diversifying supply chains, promoting intra-ASEAN trade, and exploring alternative markets, they can reduce their reliance on the US market and buffer against industry chain disruptions.

The EU too can strengthen its cooperation with China using their yet to be ratified Comprehensive Agreement on Investment as the foundation. A coordinated global effort grounded in cooperation, multilateralism, and fairness is the most effective way to counter the trade war initiated by a power-crazed US administration fixated on world domination, damn the consequences. By fostering open, inclusive, and balanced economic globalization, nations can work together to promote equitable development and shared prosperity for all, which is the ultimate aim of building a global community with a shared future.

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Israel's war on Gaza poised for dangerous new phase

Yossi Mekelberg

SINCE Israel suddenly and unilaterally ended the ceasefire with Hamas in Gaza on March 18, more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed there — and this tragic figure is constantly rising. Schools and medical centers have also not been spared by the bombardments and, as a consequence, the familiar scenes of displaced Palestinians, most of whom have already been displaced multiple times, have also returned.

Israel's decision to go back to war, and with such intensity, raises the questions: why now and for what purpose? The answer to both has more to do with Israel's domestic politics and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's unrelenting quest for survival in power than his country's security or strategic interests.

From the outset of the ceasefire deal back in January, which was largely due to the encouragement of then-US President-elect Donald Trump, there were deep concerns that the three-phase agreement would not last beyond the first phase unless the mediators continued to pressurize the two sides. In Israel's case, it was mainly Washington that could do the persuading.

Despite some setbacks and hiccups during the six weeks of the first phase, both sides fulfilled their main commitments, even if they did not always act in the spirit of defusing tensions and building trust.

The fighting stopped, which saved many lives, humanitarian aid was allowed into Gaza, 33 of the Israeli and foreign hostages held in Gaza returned home in exchange for the release of nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners

detained in Israeli jails, and many of the displaced in Gaza returned to what survived of their homes in the north of the Strip.

A successful conclusion of the first phase could not guarantee moving on to the second one, or even starting serious negotiations over it, without which the release of the remaining 59 hostages still in Gaza could not be guaranteed and the resumption of hostilities was just a matter of time.

On the Israeli side, there has never been a genuine yearning to end the war. In fact, the exact opposite is the case. Its government set as its top priority the complete elimination of Hamas before it would agree to end the war. And the fact that this Islamist Palestinian movement is still playing a part in Palestinian society and politics clearly demonstrates that this aim — set by the Israeli government after the deadly attack of Oct. 7, 2023 — is unrealistic.

Moreover, should the remaining hostages be released by an agreement, this would also contradict the government's claim that only military pressure could achieve such a result.

Hamas might well want an end to the war, but it also knows that this would not stop Israel from going after those who were involved in the Oct. 7 attack, and this time Hamas would lack the advantage of holding hostages.

There are also signs of growing anger among Palestinians who consider the group to be as responsible as Israel for the current suffering. So, this might be the moment for Palestinian society to hold it to account, as is also the case with Israeli society with regard to its own govern-

ment.

For a short while, the ceasefire held, despite the completion of the first phase without agreement on the second. Nevertheless, the fragility of the country's domestic politics, together with Washington's objectionable idea of emptying the Gaza Strip of its Palestinian residents, has emboldened the far right in Israel, including those in the governing coalition.

They pressured Netanyahu to go back to war so they could realize their war crime fantasy of permanently occupying a Gaza without Palestinians and building Jewish settlements there. Meanwhile, Netanyahu's cynicism in abusing his position to remain in power indefinitely reaches a new low with every passing week, as does his recklessness regarding human lives, whether Palestinian or Israeli.

Resuming the war has been a lifeline for the stability of Netanyahu's governing coalition. When he initially agreed to the ceasefire deal, the religious ultranationalist faction in government, led by Itamar Ben-Gvir and the Otzma Yehudit party, left the government, leaving it with a razor-thin majority in the Knesset.

Meanwhile, the religious ultranationalist party of Bezalel Smotrich, Religious Zionism, put Netanyahu on notice, only agreeing to stay in government on condition that the second phase never materializes. By resuming the bombardment of Gaza, Netanyahu was immediately rewarded by the return of Otzma Yehudit to the government, while Religious Zionism's threat was not

tested. The great tragedy, of course, is that keeping Netanyahu in power and pulling all possible tricks to make a mockery of his corruption trial and of the rule of law generally resulted, in the first night of Israel's return to war, in more than 400 Palestinians killed. The numbers have kept rising since, with a reported 322 children now killed.

If, by now, we are no longer shocked by Netanyahu and his coalition of right wingers' complete disregard for Palestinian lives, most Israelis cannot get their head around his utter indifference to the lives of his own people, and in this case the hostages too. Netanyahu and his political partners are insulting the intelligence of the Israeli public and everyone else by claiming that military pressure will bring back the hostages.

If you want the truth, all you need to do is listen to Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz, who stated last week that Tel Aviv was looking for a major expansion of the military operation in Gaza in order to seize large areas of land that would be "incorporated into Israel's security zones."

In his statement, Katz said the operation would also involve a "large-scale evacuation of Gaza's population from combat zones."

Unless there is an intervention, first and foremost by Washington, there is a real risk that the war in Gaza will enter a new phase in which Israel makes the lives of the residents there utterly impossible, believing that it can achieve the twin objectives of victory over Hamas and the expulsion of Palestinians. However, the most likely outcome of such an approach is a never-ending and costly war.

How US has squandered its soft power

Osama Al-Sharif

FOR decades, as a triumphant Second World War power and the wealthiest among nations, the US created a semblance of equilibrium between its soft and hard powers to extend its global influence. Its soft power, manifested through its cultural and financial prowess, was used to create and preserve alliances, especially during the Cold War. It reverted to hard power, its military, only when direct threats to its national security or the security of its closest allies appeared imminent.

America's soft power was unrivaled in a polarized world. After President John Kennedy created the US Agency for International Development in 1961, American support for multifaceted humanitarian, developmental and cultural programs in the developing world saved millions of lives. More importantly, it brought about political gains that helped America secure its ranking as the world's No. 1 superpower.

Kennedy, defending the creation of USAID, said in 1962: "The people who are opposed to aid should realize that this is a very powerful source of strength for us."

It permits us to exert influence for the maintenance of freedom. If we were not so heavily involved, our voice would not speak with such vigor."

In recent years, USAID's budget ranged between \$40 billion and \$60 billion annually, less than 1 percent of the US' annual budget. However, its influence over and support of US foreign policy has been tremendous.

USAID has been

involved in many projects across the developing world, supporting water, health, education and environmental projects and pushing for democratic, economic and political reforms.

But America's hard power was not absent from this reality. The US has used its mighty military globally. It has supported despots, removed democratically elected governments and engaged in costly wars that have failed to serve America's national security interests. These wars have come at a hefty cost to the US taxpayer.

As a result of President Donald Trump's second-term decisions, the concept of America's soft power is now disintegrating. USAID has been canceled. Its budget has been slashed and few of its programs have been kept. No one really knows if the agency will survive. Hundreds of projects across the globe have been terminated overnight. The fallout has been dramatic.

The consequences of the end of USAID and other aid programs are yet to be known.

The administration's policies now affect educational exchanges and scholarships, cultural diplomacy programs, international broadcasting and media outreach, economic aid and development programs, diplomatic efforts and public diplomacy initiatives.

Some pundits believe that, despite America's soft power initiatives, it has failed to be recognized as a world leader and a superpower in a unipolar world, while failing to provide a model for budding liberal

democracies.

Despite its soft power, the US waged criminal wars on Iraq and Afghanistan and has supported an apartheid regime in Israel. America's post-9/11 wars resulted in the deaths of millions. The "regime change" mantra of the neoconservatives only succeeded in destabilizing most of the Middle East without resolving any of its problems, which linger to this day.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration has circumvented America's soft power by eliminating USAID while triggering a global trade war. Both will undermine America's closest and most vulnerable allies.

By imposing tariffs on some of America's closest partners while suspending US aid, the White House is wasting the country's geopolitical influence. The discussion over the tariffs is ongoing. No one knows how this latest move will affect world trade, globalization and America's influence worldwide.

Today, it is clear that many of America's allies will suffer from its aid cuts and tariffs. Such a major departure from the established US foreign policy approach will change the dynamics of global relations. The loss of direct US aid means that many countries will alter their policies as they seek alternatives.

If it happens, a trade war will polarize the world even further, giving new superpowers like China the opportunity to fill the gap.

But more importantly, America's withdrawal from the international stage

means that, as globalization falters, new regional economic coalitions will pick up the mantle and try to replace the existing economic world order. That means economic coalitions like BRICS and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations will try to fill the vacuum left by the US as a political, military and economic leader.

No one really knows how the US gambit will turn out. The attempt to force the world into adopting a new trade deal looks desperate, as financial markets continue to slide. Geopolitically, the US is wasting its soft power and is about to lose it completely. Trump's goal of restoring America as a main global industrial hub appears elusive.

Overall, the White House is giving up America's soft power, hoping to save the US economy. Few have discussed the meager amount the US has invested to maintain such control. The cost of the US relinquishing its leading role as a supporter of humanitarian and developmental projects worldwide will be tremendous.

No other country can today replace America's funding of hundreds of projects aimed at containing global disease, stabilizing nascent democratic regimes and supporting developmental projects across the planet.

America's loss of its soft power will certainly ignite new global geopolitical crises.

The US is not a perfect model to be idolized, but the fact that it has helped millions of people fight disease and other challenges means that its withdrawal will leave a troubled world.

Trump's refusal to blink on tariffs raises the risks of an ugly endgame

Stephen Collinson

PRESIDENT Donald Trump doesn't look like he's going to blink.

Chaos and fear unleashed by his "Liberation Day" trade war has only made him more adamant about his lifelong conviction that the world's greatest economy is a victim of cheating rivals bent on ripping it off. Trump did say Monday he's open to trade talks with powers like Japan and Israel. The prospect of nascent negotiations meant there was no repeat of gargantuan losses of last week on US markets. But he also threatened to raise cumulative tariffs on China to over 100% — a move that could lead to massive price increases for US shoppers for iPhones, computers and toys. He also implied that the America's erstwhile friends in the European Union were such implacable foes that there can never be a fair deal.

Trump's attitude seemed to dash the hopes of some observers — including some Republican senators — that he's simply trying to create leverage to get better trade conditions for the US. And judging by his comments during an Oval Office press availability, foreign trade negotiators will bang their heads against a brick wall if they seek traditional pacts that allow each side to claim they emerged victorious.

"We can make a really fair deal ... a good deal for the United States, not a good deal for others," Trump said, explaining his approach. "This is America first." The president's refusal to bend means that the risks that his policies could trigger a loss of global economic confidence and raging inflation will grow. That may even include the "economic nuclear winter" that hedge fund boss Bill Ackman invoked Sunday.

Perhaps at some point, the economic and political consequences will hit such a critical mass that they force him to change course. But that equation is a daunting one, since it would become all about how much pain Americans can bear.

So far, however, a president who believes he enjoys almost absolute power and who has torn off the constraints of his first term is not looking for an off-ramp. And his zeal for confrontation and sense of mission may also have implications beyond the economy and for other policy areas — such as his expansionist designs on Greenland and Canada, his mass migrant deportations and cultural warfare. "Nobody but me would do this," Trump told reporters. "You know, it's nice to serve a nice easy term, but we have an opportunity to change the fabric of our country. We have an opportunity to reset the table on trade." It's hard to work out what is next because there's a massive contradiction at the center of Trump's policy.

He insists he's trying to restore the late 19th-century glory of America's manufacturing base — a project that would require protectionism for years to come and even permanent tariffs. But he and top aides also say they are open to negotiations on trade deals — a process that would by definition fall short of the complete overhaul of the global trading system the president is after.

"Both can be true. There can be permanent tariffs and there can also be negotiations because there are things that we need beyond tariffs," Trump said during an Oval Office appearance with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

That dynamic seems to offer little for potential US negotiating partners.

Hopes of swift resolution to the trade crisis may also founder on the absolute conviction of Trump's beliefs on trade — one of the few consistent ideological principles of his life as a businessman and politician. His ideas appear to make sense only according to his own internal logic and conflict with accepted economic theory, the advice of experts or even reality. The complexity of any trade talks US partners may face was also laid bare in Trump's meeting with Netanyahu.

The Israeli prime minister brought with him a proposal to eliminate Israel's trade deficit with the United States — after America's sworn friend was hit by a surprising 17% duties last week. But when asked whether he'd cancel the tariff in return, Trump revealed his view that even allies are taking from

the United States. "Maybe not, maybe not. Don't forget, we help Israel a lot. You know, we give Israel \$4 billion a year. That's a lot. My congratulations, by the way," he told his visitor.

Asked to respond to the European Union's offer to zero out tariffs on cars and industrial goods with the United States, Trump implied that almost any concession would not be enough. "The EU has been very tough over the years. It was — I always say it was formed to really do damage to the United States in trade," he said. Taken at face value, Trump's strategy is designed to respond to the hollowing out of US industrial heartlands by the flight of low-cost jobs overseas. He's not the first president to try this, and there were signs in the Biden administration that manufacturing was rebounding.

There's no disputing the damage done to some Americans by globalization, which left millions of working Americans lacking purpose and good livelihoods and caused social dislocation.

But is Trump's vision for the return of factory towns and large-scale industrial manufacturing realistic? He tried to explain how it would work on Monday.

"You've got to build a thing called a factory, you have to build your energy, you have to do a lot of things," he said. But such a complex project would take a decade or more — certainly more than the few years left in his term. There's no guarantee company bosses will agree to make such massive investments because of the possibility that the next administration would dismantle tariffs. And factories require huge initial outlays that take years to pay for themselves. Experts also point out that the modern US economy is increasingly rooted in services and high-tech development. It's hard to see many Americans lining up for low-wage jobs in heavy industry or textile sweat shops. And if they did, it's unlikely that the US firms could produce goods as cheaply as competitors abroad.

The policies needed to enact such a vision could bring immediate vulnerabilities for the economy. That's why some Wall Street finance houses are raising their warnings of a recession. Goldman Sachs, for instance, increased its probability assessment of such an outcome from 35% to 45% on Monday. Lael Brainard, a former vice chair of the Federal Reserve, told CNN's Jake Tapper that Trump had created the possibility of a "self-inflicted recession." "The consequences of this path are already visible," said Brainard, a former senior Clinton administration official. "We are seeing Americans with their 401(k) accounts very severely damaged by the last few days, and it won't be long before they are going to stores or shopping online and seeing tariff surcharges could be 20% ... on an iPhone or a washing machine."

There are some signs that Trump is not immune to the laws of political gravity. A handful of Republican senators have signed up for a bill that would pull back trade authority from the president to Congress in a rare break with their party leader. But Senate GOP Majority Leader John Thune said Monday he wouldn't bring up the measure since it had no chance of passage in the Republican House. And the White House has already threatened a veto in any case. House Speaker Mike Johnson signaled on daylight with the president, telling CNN's Manu Raju, "I think you've got to give the president the latitude, the runway to do what it is he was elected to do and that is get this economy going again and get our trade properly balanced with other countries."

But the president's willingness to pursue this course has many economists deeply worried. "If President Trump carries through on this, this is economic malpractice on a grand scale — something we haven't seen in half a century," Greg Mankiw, who chaired the Council of Economic Advisers for President George W. Bush, told Tapper. "I don't know what the endgame is going to be," Mankiw continued, "but if he persists in this, the outcome is going to be very ugly."

— CNN

Wall Street will regret helping the world burn

If a financial adviser advises you to cash in some of your 401(k) to cover living expenses, fire said financial adviser immediately and leave them the harshest possible Google review. Yet in this panicky retreat from the climate fight, Wall Street is doing just that, stealing from its own future wealth in exchange for short-term cash and comfort.

By deciding en masse to abandon climate ambition and embrace the fossil fuels destroying the environment, financial firms will make it more difficult to limit that destruction and the economic and financial reckoning it will bring.

Several recent studies have suggested that letting the planet heat to 3 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial averages — the path we're now following — could slash global gross domestic product by a third or more. That's more than \$30 trillion — the equivalent of wiping out the whole American economy. Unchecked climate change is "a recipe for permanent recession, meaning continuously shrinking economies, failing businesses and significantly increased unemployment," U.N. Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Steill said in a recent speech. Banks will always find ways to eat, of course. But when the pie is 33% smaller, everybody ends up hungry.

In a way, you can't blame the banks. Even before U.S. President Donald "Drill Baby Drill" Trump returned to the White House, other Republican politicians bankrolled by and doing the bidding of fossil-fuel firms were trying to retaliate against banks for trying to help save the planet. Attorneys general in 19 red states launched investigations of every member of the Net Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), a global coalition of firms pledging to align their businesses with the goal of eliminating greenhouse-gas emissions by 2050. Texas barred several banks and green-tinted money managers such as BlackRock from doing business in the state.

Under such pressure and apparently not seeing enough profit in defending green policies, banks

have taken Trump's re-election as a signal to drop the net-zero act and reopen their vaults to polluters. Bloomberg News's Alastair Marsh reported this week. Goldman Sachs Group fled the NZBA in December and every other major U.S. bank followed soon after, along with several in Australia, Canada and Japan. In February, Wells Fargo publicly abandoned its goal of zeroing out emissions in its

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In a way, you can't blame the banks. Even before U.S. President Donald "Drill Baby Drill" Trump returned to the White House, other Republican politicians bankrolled by and doing the bidding of fossil-fuel firms were trying to retaliate against banks for trying to help save the planet. Attorneys general in 19 red states launched investigations of every member of the Net Zero Banking Alliance (NZBA), a global coalition of firms pledging to align their businesses with the goal of eliminating greenhouse-gas emissions by 2050. Texas barred several banks and green-tinted money managers such as BlackRock from doing business in the state. Under such pressure and apparently not seeing enough profit in defending green policies, banks have taken Trump's re-election as a signal to drop the net-zero act and reopen their vaults to polluters. Bloomberg News's Alastair Marsh reported this week. Goldman Sachs Group fled the NZBA in December and every other major U.S. bank followed soon after, along with several in Australia, Canada and Japan. In February, Wells Fargo publicly abandoned its goal of zeroing out emissions in its financing portfolio by 2050. It probably won't be the last. Most banks, including the ones leaving the NZBA, still have their own clean-energy transition plans and they've promised to keep helping customers who want green financing. But if you follow the money, almost none of them are doing nearly enough. In order to cap global heating at 1.5 C, energy financing should favor green projects over dirty ones by a ratio of 4-to-1, according to BloombergNEF. In 2023, the latest data available, the ratio was a pitiful 0.89-to-1. Most U.S. and Canadian banks, which have a lot of built-in fossil-fuel business, lag far behind even that woeful benchmark. In the past year, banks injected \$730 billion into fossil fuels via loans, compared with \$690 billion for the transition, according to Bloomberg News. In the nuclear winter of the Trump administration, that ratio will undoubtedly shrink. One quote in Bloomberg's reporting on this trend is particularly revealing. "The world isn't on a path for net zero by 2050, and so any bank or asset manager that's being told to align lending or investment practices to that kind of pathway is aligning with a fictitious world," Aniket Shah, head of sustainability and transition strategy at Jefferies Financial Group, told Marsh. (Jefferies, coincidentally, was one bank Texas found sufficiently loyal to fossil fuels; it became the state's top municipal-bond manager in 2023.) This is a bit like my wife saying, "My husband's not sticking to his diet, so I might as well buy him more donuts." Also, the donut shop gives her a cut of the profit on every dozen.

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financing portfolio by 2050. It probably won't be the last.

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profit on every dozen. Just as healthier, it is still physically possible — if just barely — for the world to achieve net zero and avoid the most catastrophic heating. It isn't a matter of engineering but of political will and financial means.

Banks are a key element in the "financial means" part of that and they keep choosing to finance oil, gas and coal instead. They have pumped \$6.9 trillion into

dies alone, including real taxes on carbon, would more than cover the \$5 trillion or so annually that BloombergNEF has estimated we will need to hit net zero by 2050.

While we wait for that miracle to happen, the world keeps getting hotter. The expensive natural disasters fueled by a chaotic climate are multiplying, threatening to blow a \$2 trillion hole in the U.S. housing market and create a nightmare for banks. And the transition to cleaner energy,

Africa must shun Trump's push to resurrect coal

PRESIDENT Donald Trump's administration has recently taken to urging African leaders to burn more planet-heating fossil fuels, and in particular coal, the dirtiest of all of them. Simultaneously, it scrapped USAID funding, which had been helping millions of the poorest people in Africa survive amid expanding climate breakdown.

Those thinking of aligning with Trump's agenda would do well to remember that the droughts, floods, and storms which have destroyed the lives and livelihoods of Africans across the continent have been supercharged by US energy policy. The US alone has produced about a quarter of all historic carbon dioxide emissions since the Industrial Revolution, which are now responsible for accelerated global warming.

Not only would a coal-based development pathway for Africa heap more misery onto its citizens who are already living on the front lines of the climate crisis, but it would also be economically suicidal. The economic impact of the climate emergency is already taking a terrible toll on Africa, and a 2022 report by the charity Christian Aid showed that under the current climate trajectory, African countries could suffer a reduction in gross domestic product growth of 64 percent by 2100.

There is also no need for Africa to shackle itself to the outdated fossil fuel infrastructure of coal when the continent is blessed with a spectacular potential for developing clean renewable energy.

The US fossil fuel advocates would be happy to see Africa trail along in the footsteps of the Global North, rather than see the continent leapfrogging the dirty energy era in the same way it leapfrogged landline telephone technology and adopted mobile phones en masse. But Africans should know better.

No other continent has more untapped wind and solar power than Africa, and this remains the key to its long-term prosperity. From the sun-drenched deserts of North Africa to the wind-swept plains of East Africa, the continent has the natural resources to become a global leader in clean energy. Countries such as Morocco, Kenya and South Africa are already making signifi-

Mohamed Adow

cant strides in renewable energy development, with projects that harness solar, wind, geothermal, and hydropower.

Investing in renewable energy offers numerous benefits. It can improve energy access for millions of people, create jobs, and boost economic growth. Renewable energy projects are often more scalable and adaptable to local needs, making them ideal for rural electrification and community-based initiatives.

By contrast, coal has wrought a terrible cost to Africans. It is often touted as a cheap and reliable energy source, but this ignores the hidden costs of environmental degradation, health impacts, and the overall economic harm of climate breakdown. Moreover, the global shift towards clean energy means that investments in coal are increasingly risky and likely to become stranded assets.

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African countries must resist the lobbying efforts of Trump's fossil fuel backers and instead focus on building a sustainable energy future.

This requires a multifaceted approach, including investment in renewable energy infrastructure, strengthening governance and policy frameworks, and fostering international cooperation.

Investing in clean energy infrastructure is crucial. This includes not only large-scale projects like solar parks and wind farms but also decentralized systems that can bring electricity to off-grid communities.

Many countries across Africa are already leading the way with community-focused solar systems and microgrids, and these initiatives demonstrate how renewable energy can be both ambitious and pragmatic, addressing energy access challenges while reducing reliance on imported

fuels. Strengthening governance and policy frameworks is equally important. African governments must prioritise climate adaptation and resilience in their urban planning and development processes.

This involves integrating climate considerations into all new projects and ensuring that resources are allocated where they are most needed.

Effective governance structures can enable the implementation of climate adaptation strategies and ensure that investments in renewable energy are sustainable and equitable.

International cooperation and support are also vital. The global clean energy transition holds new promise for Africa's economic and social development. Countries representing more than 70 percent of global CO2 emissions have committed to reaching net zero emissions by mid-century.

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ry, including several African nations. These commitments can help attract climate finance and technology, enabling African countries to achieve their energy-related development goals on time and in full.

Africa's path to sustainable economic development lies in embracing renewable, clean energy. The continent has the natural resources and innovative spirit to become a global leader in renewables, improving energy access, creating jobs, and reversing the climate crisis.

By resisting the fossil fuel industry's attempts to perpetuate coal use, African countries can build a resilient and prosperous future for their people.

Clean energy can be Africa's greatest success story. For that to happen, African leaders must not take advice from a US president who admits he only cares about "America First".

How do states protect their sovereignty in today's interconnected world?

SOVEREIGNTY, traditionally defined as the authority of a state to manage its affairs free from external interference, has been a cornerstone of international relations since the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. Historically, it signified a nation's ability to assert control over its territory and populace, resisting foreign domination through diplomacy or force.

However, in today's interconnected world, sovereignty has taken on new dimensions. To preserve it in the 21st century, states must go beyond political independence and address economic strength, scientific innovation, social security equality, legal equality and political rights. These elements collectively form the modern framework of sovereignty, ensuring a nation's autonomy in an era of global complexity.

In its conventional form, sovereignty was a straightforward concept: the right of a state to govern itself without external meddling. This autonomy was often defended through military might, secure borders and a unified national identity. The focus was both outward (keeping foreign powers at bay) and inward (maintaining order within defined territories). For centuries, this model held firm, with sovereignty measured by a state's

capacity to resist colonisation, occupation or coercive influence.

Yet, the rise of globalisation, technological interdependence and shifting power dynamics has rendered this traditional understanding incomplete. External interference now manifests in different forms: economic pressure, technological dominance and social destabilisation.

To remain truly sovereign, nations must expand their focus to include new pillars that protect their independence in a rapidly evolving landscape. Economic independence is a fundamental dimension of modern sovereignty. A nation overly reliant on foreign goods, services or financial aid risks losing control over its destiny. Economic vulnerabilities — whether through debt to international lenders or dependence on a single export market — can translate into political leverage for external actors. For instance, countries bound by stringent loan conditions from global institutions often sacrifice policy autonomy to meet external demands.

Achieving economic sovereignty requires diversification, investment in domestic industries and strategic resource management. It's not about rejecting global trade, which is an especially hot topic these days, but ensuring that participation in it strengthens rather than

weakens national control. Efforts like India's push for self-reliance in manufacturing or the Gulf states' diversification away from oil illustrate how economic sovereignty reinforces a nation's

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ability to chart its own course.

In an age defined by technological breakthroughs, scientific sovereignty has become a critical measure of a state's independence. Nations that depend on foreign technology — be it for communication, defence or health care — cede a degree of control to those who produce it. The ability to innovate domestically, from developing advanced AI to producing cutting-edge medical

Mudhafar Al-Jbori

treatments, is now a marker of sovereign power.

Sovereignty in scientific and information technologies demands robust education systems,

security equality — ensuring that all citizens have access to essentials like health care, education and economic opportunity — fortifies a nation against

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research funding and intellectual property protection. Countries like Japan, Germany, China and the UAE, with their strong emphasis on technological advancement, exemplify how scientific self-reliance enhances national security and global influence. In contrast, states unable to keep pace risk becoming pawns in a world where knowledge is power.

Internal stability is as vital to sovereignty as external defences. Social

ereignty. By contrast, stark disparities can erode public trust, threatening the legitimacy that underpins a state's authority.

Equality in front of the law is another essential dimension of modern sov-

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ereignty. A legal system that favours certain groups — whether based on wealth, status or ethnicity — undermines a nation's moral and practical authority. When justice is perceived as unequal, citizens may turn to external entities for redress, or foreign powers may exploit these weaknesses to justify intervention.

Legal equality reinforces sovereignty by ensuring that the rule of law is a unifying force,

not a divisive one. States that uphold impartial justice, such as those with strong constitutional protections, maintain greater internal legitimacy and external credibility. This equality guards against the erosion of sovereignty from within, preserving the state's ability to govern effectively.

Finally, equality in political rights is indispensable to contemporary sovereignty. A state where all citizens have an equitable voice in governance — through various means of representation and participation — stands stronger against external pressures. The disenfranchised may become susceptible to foreign influence, or the state itself may lose its claim to represent its people.

Inclusivity, as seen in nations with broad suffrage and transparent elections, ensures that sovereignty reflects the will of the populace, not just an elite.

Even in non-democratic systems, equitable political access can bolster legitimacy, reducing the risk of external actors exploiting internal grievances. Political rights equality thus anchors sovereignty in the collective agency of a nation's people.

Modern sovereignty exists in a delicate balance between global interdependence and national independence. Challenges like climate change, pandemics and cyber threats

require co-operation, yet this collaboration must not compromise autonomy. The solution lies in building capacities — economic, scientific, social, legal and political — that allow states to engage internationally without becoming subservient.

Regional blocs like the EU show how shared sovereignty can enhance individual state power, provided it aligns with national interests. Similarly, international law and trade agreements can bolster sovereignty if they empower rather than constrain. The goal is not isolation but strategic self-reliance.

Sovereignty in the 21st century is no longer a simple matter of territorial control or political independence. It is a multifaceted endeavour that demands economic resilience, scientific innovation, social security equality, legal impartiality and political inclusivity. These dimensions collectively ensure that a nation can govern itself free from undue external influence while meeting the needs of its people.

In an era where power operates through interconnected systems — economic, technological and social — states that adapt to these new realities will preserve their sovereignty. Those that fail to evolve, however, may find their independence hollowed out, leaving them sovereign in name but not in substance.

PSX turns bullish, gains 622 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 622.95 points, a positive change of 0.54 percent, closing at 115,532.43 points as compared to 114,909.49 points on the last trading day.

A total of 530,694,779 shares were traded during the day as compared to 710,788,421 shares the previous trading day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs33.676 billion against Rs43.023 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 454 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 273 of them recorded gains and 127 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 54 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Energycico PK with 121,664,697 shares at Rs8.40 per share, Bank Al-Falah with 32,603,056 shares at Rs75.30 per share and K-Electric Limited 19,040,828 shares at Rs4.28 per share.

Bata Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs133.29 per share closing at Rs1,662.05 whereas runner-up was Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited with Rs108.02 rise in its share price to close at Rs1,188.20.

Services Industries Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs77.50 per share price, closing at Rs992.63, whereas the runner-up was Khyber Textile Mills Limited with Rs45.21 decline in its per share price to Rs437.92.

Rupee sheds 16 paise against US Dollar

The Rupee on Tuesday depreciated by 16 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs280.72 against the previous day's closing of Rs280.56.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs280.60 and Rs282.10, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs2.38 to close at Rs306.83 against the last day's closing of Rs309.21, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen came down by 02 paise and closed at Rs1.90, whereas a decrease of Rs4.32 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs357.95 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs362.27.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 04 and 05 paise to close at Rs76.42 and Rs74.78, respectively.

Gold prices decrease by Rs2,000 to Rs318,000 per tola

The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs2,000 and was traded at Rs318,000 on Tuesday as compared to its sale at Rs320,000 on previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association reported.

The prices of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs4,715 to Rs272,633 from Rs274,348 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold also went down by Rs1,572 to Rs249,922 from Rs251,494 respectively.

The prices of per tola silver declined by Rs50 to Rs3,170 whereas that of ten gram silver went down by Rs43 to Rs2,717.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$28 to \$3,010 from \$3,038 whereas that of silver went down by \$0.71to \$30.30 from \$29.59, the Association reported.

Haroon Akhtar reviews budget proposals in meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Tuesday chaired a high level meeting to review budget proposals for the industrial sector for the upcoming fiscal year.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary of the Ministry of Industries and Production Saif Anjum, representatives from the Engineering Board (EDB), and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), said a news release.



LAHORE: A vendor sorting tomatoes for packing in wooden boxes at vegetable market.

Governor to open Pakistan Financial Literacy Week

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Jameel Ahmad will inaugurate Pakistan Financial Literacy Week, 2025 on Monday, 14th April, 2025, in a prestigious ceremony at Karachi. The weeklong activities will be conducted from April 14th to April 18th, 2025 on country wide basis. The theme for this year is "Financial Inclusion with collaboration and innovation. Deputy Governors, Executive Directors, International Dignitaries of World Bank, Alliance for Financial Inclusion, Asian Development Bank, commercial Banks' Presidents and Lead Focal Persons of NFLP, Distinguished Guests from Government Departments, Fintech, PSX, SECP, PBA and many other dignitaries from financial sector as well as academia

and chamber of commerce will be present in the ceremony. High performance banks in the areas of financial inclusion and innovation will be given awards in recognition of their efforts.

Pakistan, like many other developing economies, faces challenges in financial inclusion, and financial literacy plays a key role in bridging this gap. The level of Financial Literacy in Pakistan is 26% as compared to global average of 33%.

Recognizing the significance of financial literacy, the State Bank of Pakistan has consistently worked towards enhancing financial literacy across all segments of society. Pakistan Financial Literacy Week serves as a flagship initiative to promote awareness, engagement, and action. This year, our theme "Financial Inclusion through

Collaboration and Innovation"-highlights the importance of collective efforts and technological advancements in expanding financial access and inclusion.

This will be a high impactful weeklong event, bringing together policy-makers, financial institutions, educators, and the public to emphasize the need for financial education. Throughout the week, SBP along with other financial institutions, will be conducting more than 260 financial literacy camps, 350 School and university outreach programs and more than 400 Interactive workshops and seminars / awareness sessions for women, Youth and Special persons. These activities will take place all over Pakistan, covering 101 districts. Another special initiative in this regard is "Financial Literacy

Walk" which will take place in major cities of Pakistan including AJK and Gilgit Baltistan, delivering the message of importance of financial literacy to everyone. We are engaging more than 100 partner institutes, 60 universities and colleges and almost all commercial Banks for this week. Further, SBP has collaborated with SECP and Pakistan Stock Exchange for this purpose and both institutions are also conducting more than 100 programs for Financial Literacy under the theme on a country wide basis.

These activities will empower individuals with the knowledge and tools needed to make sound financial decisions, contribute to economic growth, and embrace the desired level of financial literacy in the country.

Court Notice

In the Court of Muhammad Imtiaz Civil Judge- III, Bannu. Suit No. 20/6 Institution 13-01-2025 Next date of hearing 14-04-2025 Case Title. Rakhmatullah Khan etc. V/S Shah Riaz Khan etc. Notice to, Shaid ayaz khan son Sher Ayaz Khan R/o kotka shair ali khail Mamash khail Tehsil & District Bannu Presently Abroad in the above case titled the service of above defendant (s) is not possible through ordinary means, therefore, you defendant (s) is / are informed through this publication that on 14-04-2025 at 8.00 AM. You have to appear before this court either personally or through attorney or through counsel to pursue the suit noted above, otherwise, Ex-parte proceeding will be initiated against you.

COURT NOTICE

In The Court of Ms Mashal Latif Civil Judge-IV Kohat Suit no.192/1 Date of hearing.14-04-2025 Titled:- Haji Khan Muhammad Vs Muhammad Sohail (etc) Notice against:-(2) Imran Son of Faqir Hussain R/o Near Railway Phatak Togh Bala Tehsil and District Kohat presently R/o (now in Abroad)(Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Defendant in which date of hearing 14-04-2025 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 14-04-2025 /otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law.order Issued on.27-703-2025 (Court of CJ-IV Kohat)

COURT NOTICE

In The Court of Ms Faryal Khan Khalil Civil Judge III Kohat Suit no.248/1 Date of hearing.10-04-2025 Titled:-Imtiaz Mehmood (etc) Vs Bashir Bangash Notice against:-Bashir Bangash Son of Banaras Khan r/o office mosooma Trading as the Mall of Kohat The Realtor 360 Noor,Arcade Commercial Marketing R/o Sector.9.KDA Kohat present Nasrat Khel District Kohat Presently R/o(now in Abroad Dubai UAE)(Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Defendant in which date of hearing 10-04-72025 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 10-04-2025?otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law.order Issued on.14-703-2025 (Court of CJ-III Kohat)

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is Published Through This Notice That I Mr.Muhammad Amir Khan Son of Faqir Muhammad Khan Resident of Near Police Station KDA House no.61.Sector.IV. Phase.1. KDA Kohat is The Owner of Plot no.24,Size.8 Marla Sector.Iris.Phase.DHA.Valley Street no.57.Category.General DHA Islamabad/Rawalpindi He has Requested that the Original allotment certificate of The Said Plot Has Been Lost Some Where and now Issuance of Duplicate certificate is Desired The Plot is not Mortgaged There has Been Appointed no Attorney.and not Sold to Anybody if any Bank /Institution / Firm or Person Has any Objections He /She Should Contact The Housing Officer DHA Islamabad/Rawalpindi Within15 Days of Publication of This Notice. in Writing with Proof otherwise Duplicate certificate Will be Issued and no objection will be Accepted.(From:-Director DHA Islamabad/Rawalpindi.

Senior trade leader extends Eid greetings

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the joyous occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, senior trade leader and social personality Ghulam Bilal Javid extended heartfelt Eid greetings via telephone to former Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahab Ali Shah, Mayor of Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali, Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Mehsud, AIG Muhammad Ali Baba Khel, CCPO Qasim Ali Khan, SSP Operations Masood Ahmad Bangash, SSP Traffic Rasheed Khan, as well as to various federal and provincial ministers,

MNAs, and MPAs. On this occasion, Ghulam Bilal Javid praised the bureaucracy of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, calling it fearless, bold, and sincere, stating that "Alhamdulillah, thanks to the tireless dedication and hard work of our dutiful officers, Eid in Peshawar passed in a peaceful and secure environment without any unfortunate incident. It is their efforts that still make Peshawar truly worthy of being called the City of Flowers."

He further stated that "In today's age, having all key officers just one phone call away is a great blessing. Whether it's addressing public welfare issues,

resolving traders' concerns, or working toward the city's development, quick communication with them is highly commendable. Sometimes we get emotional while fighting for traders' issues, but our officers always respond with patience, wisdom, and a spirit of public service - a true mark of their professional excellence."

Ghulam Bilal Javid concluded by appreciating the services of all MNAs, MPAs, ministers, the former Governor of KP, the Mayor of Peshawar, and the provincial bureaucracy, stating that he salutes their courage, sincerity, and dedication.

Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to Afghanistan witnessed an increase of 84.25 percent during the first eight months of the fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$592,840 million during July-February (2024-25) against exports of US \$321.754 million during July-February (2023-24), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Afghanistan also surged by 2.90 percent from \$34.960 billion in February 2024, against the exports of \$35.977 million

in February 2025. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Afghanistan decreased by 31.54 percent during February 2025 as compared to the exports of \$52.555 million in January 2025, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 7.18 percent in the first eight months, from US \$20.357 billion to US \$21.820 billion, the SBP data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from Afghanistan into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$18.209 million against US \$5.477 million last year, showing an increase of 232.46 per-

cent in July-February (2024-25). On a year-on-year basis, the imports for Afghanistan witnessed an increase of 870.40 percent from US \$0.310 million in February 2024, against the imports of US \$3.008 million in February 2025.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports from Afghanistan into the country also witnessed a decrease of 42.24 percent during February 2025, as compared to the imports of US \$5.208 million during January 2025, according to the data.

The overall imports into the country witnessed an increase of 11.37 per cent, from \$34.410 billion to US \$38.325 billion, according to the data.

Nikkei stock index closes with 4th-largest point gain

TOKYO (APP): The Nikkei stock index snapped a three-day losing streak on Tuesday with its fourth-largest point gain in history, soaring 6%, amid hopes for progress in talks between Japan and the United States over US tariffs.

The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average ended up 1,876.00 points, or 6.03 percent, from Monday at 33,012.58. The broader Topix index finished 143.36 points, or 6.26 percent, higher at 2,432.02.

All industry sectors advanced on the top-tier Prime Market, with gainers led by nonferrous metal, insurance, and bank issues.

The US dollar mostly hovered around the mid-147 yen zone in Tokyo, as traders lacked incentives to further buy the US currency with no actual shift seen by the administration of President Donald Trump

over its aggressive tariff policies, dealers said.

On the stock market, the benchmark Nikkei index rebounded from its third-largest point drop on record the previous day, as sentiment improved after Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba agreed with Trump during phone talks late Monday that the two countries will further hold talks on new tariffs targeting Japan.

He said that durum wheat—commonly referred to as pasta or macaroni wheat—is globally valued for its use in semolina flour, a key ingredient in pasta, baked goods, and other food products.

With rising global demand for pasta and wheat-based foods, the cultivation of Chenab Pasta-24 in Pakistan is expected to open new industrial, economic, and export opportunities, while strengthening domestic value chains in food processing, he added.

He said that Chenab Pasta-24 has been recommended for cultivation in both irrigated and rain-fed areas, enhancing its accessibility to farmers across diverse agro-climatic zones.

Its resilience to extreme weather conditions makes it a promising solution for farmers facing the challenges of climate change, water scarcity, and unpredictable growing conditions, he added.

He said that this variety is a part of the university's broader mission to promote climate-smart agriculture. It is expected to play a pivotal role in improving farm income, reducing wheat

Punjab Seed Council approves new durum wheat variety

FAISALABAD (APP): In a major stride for agricultural innovation, the Punjab Seed Council (PSC) has officially approved "Chenab Pasta-24," a new drought and heat-tolerant Durum wheat variety developed by Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, Vice Chancellor University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

Public Relation Officer (PRO) UAF Ahmad Sheharyar said here on Tuesday that this development marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's ongoing efforts to combat climate change and ensure national food security.

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imports, and contributing to Pakistan's self-sufficiency in high-quality wheat production.

He said that the UAF community including faculty, researchers, and students has expressed great pride in this achievement, considering it a landmark success that will inspire future innovation in crop development.

The university has so far registered over 50 improved lines of various crops, fruits, and vegetables, demonstrating its leading role in agricultural research, sustainability, and food security, he added.

Indonesia's stock exchange said trading would be further suspended if the market fell 15 percent, and trading would be halted for the day if the market dropped 20 percent "to ensure orderly, fair and efficient securities trading".

The stock exchange also said if an individual share fell by 15 percent, any sell orders below that price would be turned down.

Indonesia stocks plunge on Trump tariffs

JAKARTA (AFP/APP): Indonesian stocks tanked more than seven percent on Tuesday after a week-long public holiday break, with trading briefly suspended at the open as uncertainty over United States (US) President Donald Trump's global tariffs roils markets.

United States President Donald Trump upended the world economy last week with sweeping tariffs that have raised fears of an

international recession and triggered criticism even from within his own Republican Party.

The benchmark Jakarta Composite Index fell 9.19 percent at the open, down 598.56 points to 5,912.06 as markets in Southeast Asia's biggest economy reopened following a closure since March 28 because of public holidays.

It was their lowest level since June 2021, coming a

day after global stock markets and oil prices collapsed further on a black Monday.

The sharp fall in Jakarta triggered a 30-minute trading suspension, a stock exchange spokesperson said in a statement.

When trading resumed, the market stabilised slightly to a drop of 7.82 percent as of 11 am (0400 GMT), just above the 6,000 mark.

Ahead of the opening,

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Thailand stocks fall

BANGKOK (AFP/APP): Thailand stocks fell more than four percent at the opening Tuesday, after escaping the turmoil that hit global markets a day earlier because of a national holiday.

The Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) on Monday banned short-selling on most stocks and limited price falls ahead of an expected slump brought about by US President Donald Trump's global trade blitz. The SET index opened nearly 50 points down from Friday's close of 1,125.21, compared with recent highs of around 1,400 before Trump was inaugurated in January.

Thailand has been hit with tariffs of 36 percent on exports to the United States -- its biggest market, with a trade surplus of around \$45 billion.

The SET on Monday banned short-selling of all but market-maker stocks until April 11, while the trading band for most have also been halved -- going from 30 percent to 15 percent.



In brief

Pakistan team returns from New Zealand

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan cricket team arrived in Lahore late at night after concluding a tour of New Zealand. All the coaching staff and other officials also arrived at Allama Iqbal International Airport (AIIA), Lahore, along with the team. The players who returned to Pakistan include Imamul Haq, Salman Ali Agha, Mohammad Ali, Usman Khan, Abdullah Shafiq, Faheem Ashraf, and Irfan Khan Niazi. Coach Aaqib Javed and Azhar Mehmood also arrived with the players. The national cricket team won only one match during their tour to New Zealand. The national cricket team suffered humiliating defeat in four T20 International matches against New Zealand. The cricket team miserably failed to win a single match during the One-Day International cricket match during their tour to New Zealand. Star batsman Mohammad Rizwan and former captain of the national cricket team Babar Azam were also part of the squad.

Ihsanullah's picture in Zalmi kit goes viral

LAHORE (INP): Pacer Ihsanullah sparked speculations about a move to Peshawar Zalmi after a picture went viral showing him sporting the franchise's jersey ahead of the PSL 10. Ihsanullah, who burst into the cricket world after bagging 22 wickets for Multan Sultans in the 2023 edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), made his T20 debut for Pakistan in March 2023. However, the right-arm pacer was ruled out of cricket due to an elbow injury he sustained during his ODI debut against New Zealand in April 2023. While he made a return to competitive cricket in 2024 in the Champions T20 Cup, Multan Sultans did not pick him in the PSL 10 draft held earlier this year. Resultantly, Ihsanullah announced his retirement from the PSL, however, he reversed it just hours later. Ihsanullah also apologised to the Multan Sultans for his statement, saying he would be available for the side whenever they call him. The right-arm pacer, however, has now sparked speculations about his move to the Peshawar Zalmi ahead of the PSL 10. A photo, which quickly went viral, showed Ihsanullah wearing the franchise's jersey. While the PSL franchise has not released an official statement about the viral photo, reports said that Ihsanullah joined the Peshawar Zalmi training camp. It is worth noting here that the franchise decided to reserve their replacement for a Gold category pick in place of Nahid Rana in last month's replacement draft for the PSL 10.

Scotland routed 6-1 by Germany

BERLIN (Agencies): Soft Scotland conceded six second-half goals in a 25-minute period as ruthless Germany came from behind to deliver a second devastating defeat in four days in Group A1 of the Nations League. Captain Caroline Weir nonchalantly slotted the visitors ahead five minutes before the break in Wolfsburg, following an impressive first-half showing, but it soon turned sour. A rejuvenated, and perhaps angered Germany, burst out in the second half and showed exactly why they are ranked third in the world. Selina Cerci hauled the hosts level with what proved to be the first of her hat-trick, nodding home with ease from a corner.

Pakistan Cricket team to face Ireland in Lahore tomorrow



LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan women's cricket team will play against Ireland to qualify for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore. The match will start at 9am. Pakistan's women's cricket team will be led by Fatima Sana. The Pakistan women's cricket team will play their second qualifier match against Scotland at LCCA Ground on April 11, 2025. Pakistan will play their third cricket match against the West Indies in Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore, on April 14, 2025. The fourth match of the qualifier round will be played between Pakistan and Thailand at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. The fifth and last match will be played between

Pakistan and Bangladesh at the LCCA ground, Lahore. **Pakistan women's cricket team eyes top two spots in WC qualifiers:** **Coach Wasim:** Pakistan Women's Cricket Team Head Coach Mohammad Wasim has expressed satisfaction over the team's preparations for the upcoming ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifiers, stating that he is hopeful of securing a place among the top two to qualify for the World Cup. Speaking to the media, Wasim said the warm-up matches proved beneficial and allowed the team management to finalise combinations for the qualifiers. "We are content with how the team is shaping up. Victory always boosts confidence, and we want the

players to carry this momentum into the qualifiers," he stated. Mohammad Wasim added that the 50-over format suits the current squad and that stability in the batting lineup is becoming more visible. "Our bowlers, both pacers and spinners, are in rhythm. Bowling has always been our strength, and now our batters are also showing a good response," he said confidently. He further emphasised that while teams like the West Indies and Bangladesh pose strong challenges, the Pakistan team is aiming for consistency throughout the tournament. "We expect positive results in the World Cup qualifiers," the coach concluded.

Match officials for HBL PSL X announced

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced the match officials for HBL Pakistan Super League X, scheduled to take place across four venues – Karachi, Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi from 11 April to 18 May. A total of 13 umpires and seven match referees will be involved in 30 matches, while the match officials for the Qualifier, two eliminators and final, will be announced in due course. **Elite Panel of ICC Umpires** – Ahsan Raza, Paul Reiffel and Kumar Dharmasena are among the 13 umpires officiating in the six-team tournament. Also included are Alex Wharf and Chris Brown. **From Pakistan**, Aleem Dar, Asif Yaqoob, Faisal Khan Afridi, Rashid Riaz Waqar are part of the PCB International Panel of Umpires. Abdul Moqeet, Nasir Hussain, Tariq Rasheed and Zulfiqar Jan – part of PCB Elite Panel of Umpires will also be officiating matches during this edition of the HBL PSL. Among the match referees, ICC Elite Panel of Match Referee Ranjan Madugalle will officiate matches alongside his fellow Sri Lankan Roshan Mahanama. Also serving as match referees are Ali Naqvi and Muhammad Javed Malik – both from the PCB International Panel of Match Referees.

Army, Rangers to be deployed for PSL X security

LAHORE (INP): The federal government has approved the deployment of Army and Rangers personnel to ensure foolproof security for Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season 10 matches scheduled in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Multan. The approval came after the Punjab Home Department formally requested the federal Ministry of Interior for assistance, which has now been granted. According to the Punjab Home Department, military and paramilitary support was sought to assist the police in providing top-level security. One wing of Rangers and two companies of the Pakistan Army will be deployed in each of the three cities. The request highlighted that PSL is a high-profile event featuring international players and match officials, making enhanced security essential for the safety of both local and foreign participants. Comprehensive security measures will be implemented during matches, team accommodations, and travel in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Multan. Special Services Group (SSG) commandos and Army Aviation helicopters have also been requested for added security support. The security deployment will remain in effect from April 6 to May 19.

Zverev knocked out early in Monte Carlo by Berrettini



MONTE CARLO (AFP): Top seed Alexander Zverev crashed out in his opening match of the Monte Carlo Masters on Tuesday after losing 2-6, 6-3, 7-5 to Italy's Matteo Berrettini. World number two Zverev has struggled for any kind of form since his defeat by Jannik Sinner in the Australian Open final at the end of January, winning just six of 12 matches. "It's been the worst period since my injury (the) last few months," said Zverev who has suffered a string of early exits of late, including at Indian Wells. "I played a great first set, and once I got broken in the second set I play ten levels down. My ball is much slower. I stop hitting the ball. "The same story the last few months. Nothing changes. So it's me who lost the match, once again. "I thought my level was terrible, but that's just my opinion." Zverev won the first set against former Wimbledon runner-up Berrettini but a break of serve in the sixth game of the second set allowed the Italian to level the match. Berrettini broke at 3-all in the final set before blowing a chance to close out victory on his own serve, but he broke again for a 6-5 lead after an astonishing 48-shot rally. The 34th-ranked Berrettini made no mistake with his second opportunity though, advancing to a last-16 meeting with Lorenzo Musetti or Jiri Lehecka. "The game plan was the same but I changed my attitude and the way I was believing in my strokes," Berrettini said. "I told myself to be more aggressive and if I am going to lose this match, I am going to do the right things and luckily it worked." "Comfortable on clay" Berrettini has won 17 of his past 18 matches on clay. Last season, he captured clay-court titles in Marrakesh, Gstaad and Kitzbuehel. However, he hasn't played at the French Open since 2021 due to injuries. "I have missed the biggest tournament on clay for the past three years and that was tough and now I want to enjoy it. I feel really comfortable on clay," said the former world number six. For Zverev, last year's Roland Garros runner-up, it was another disappointing outcome on clay after quarter-final exits in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro.

His next tournament will be on home soil in Munich. Dane Holger Rune, the 10th seed, retired due to illness against Portugal's Nuno Borges. Rune, the Monte Carlo runner-up in 2023, called for the doctor after losing the opening set before shaking hands with his opponent while trailing 6-2, 3-0. Three-time champion Stefanos Tsitsipas begins his title defence against Australia's Jordan Thompson later on Tuesday, while Novak Djokovic -- the winner in 2013 and 2015 -- and Carlos Alcaraz start their campaigns on Wednesday. Hampered by a broken hand, Frenchman Ugo Humbert also made an early exit, eliminated in the first round by Australian Alexei Popyrin 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4. The 26-year-old Humbert, who had fallen to world No. 20 after a difficult US swing in which he won only one match, revealed he suffered a broken little finger after playing with a bandaged right hand. "I fell and hit my hand against a bedside table. I heard a 'crack' and I broke the bone," he had explained on Saturday before facing Gael Monfils at the UTS in Nimes. While Humbert failed to join Monfils, Richard Gasquet, and Alexandre Muller in the second round, French number one Arthur Fils asserted his seeded status by defeating Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 6-2. Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov, a two-time Monte Carlo semi-finalist, defeated Chilean Nicolas Jarry 6-3, 6-4, on his seventh match point.

McIlroy risks more Masters heartache for chance at epic win



AUGUSTA (AFP): Rory McIlroy will put his heart on the line once more at the Masters, hoping resilience from past agonies pays off with a green jacket and a career Grand Slam. The four-time major winner from Northern Ireland arrived at Augusta National this week after wins at Pebble Beach and The Players Championship, the first time he has won twice in a year before the Masters. The world number two, who said his sore elbow feels well after treatment last week, is again tuning out talk about winning the only major to elude him. "It's just narratives. It's noise. It's just trying to block out that noise as much as possible," McIlroy said. "There's a lot of anticipation and buildup coming into this tournament each and every year, but I just have to keep my head down and focus on my job." After two prior trips to Augusta for practice rounds, that means watching "Bridgerton" with his wife and reading "The Reckoning" by John Grisham rather than dwelling on how he blew a four-stroke lead on Sunday at the 2011 Masters or settled for being a major runner-up each of the past three years -- including a last-hole loss to Bryson DeChambeau at last year's US Open. "Over the course of my career I think I've showed quite a lot of resilience from setbacks, and I feel like I've done the same again, especially post-June last year and the golf that I've played since then, and it's something that I'm really proud of," McIlroy said. "You have setbacks and you have disappointments, but as long as you can learn from them and move forward and try to put those learnings into practice I feel like is very important. "You sort of just learn to roll with the punches, the good times, the bad times, knowing if you do the right work and you practice the right way, that those disappointments will turn into good times again pretty soon." McIlroy, 35, hasn't won a major since 2014 and admits at times he has not fully thrown himself at the challenge, unwilling to risk the heartbreak of defeat for the possible joy of victory. "It's a self-preservation mechanism," McIlroy said. "It's just more of a thing where you're trying to not put 100% of yourself out there because of that. "At a certain point in someone's life, someone doesn't want to fall in love because they don't want to get their heart broken... we hold back sometimes because of the fear of getting hurt, whether that's a conscious decision or subconscious decision, and I think I was doing that on the golf course a little bit for a few years. "Once you go through those heartbreaks, as I call them, or disappointments, you get to a place where you remember how it feels and you wake up the next day and you're like life goes on, it's not as bad as I thought it was going to be. "It's going through those times, especially in recent memory, where the last few years I've had chances to win some of the biggest golf tournaments in the world and it hasn't quite happened. "But life moves on. You dust yourself off and you go again. I think that's why I've become a little more comfortable in laying everything out there and being somewhat vulnerable at times." "Chase that feeling"

McIlroy said he changed his major attitude after the 2019 season. From 2015-2019 he had two major top-10s each year with one runner-up at 2018 British Open. From 2020-2024, his 11 major top-10 efforts included second at the 2022 Masters and 2023 and 2024 US Opens. "I made a commitment to myself to sort of earmark these a little bit more and to give a little bit more of myself in these weeks," he said. "That was just sitting down and reflecting at the end of 2019 thinking I need to approach these a little bit differently again." Now, McIlroy says, he can focus on how he feels while golfing. "If I can chase that feeling and make that the important thing, then hopefully the golf will take care of itself," McIlroy said.

Saim Ayub declared fit for PSL 10 as Zalmi gear up

LAHORE (INP): Peshawar Zalmi have received a major boost ahead of HBL PSL 10 as star opener Saim Ayub has been declared fit to play. After recovering from an ankle injury sustained during the South Africa Test series, Ayub completed a month-long rehabilitation in London and is now ready to join the squad alongside Mohammad Haris. Ayub had missed key international fixtures, including the ICC Champions Trophy and the New Zealand tour, but returns just in time for the tournament starting April 11, with Zalmi playing their first match against Quetta Gladiators on April 12 in Rawalpindi. Meanwhile, Afghan power-hitter Najibullah Zadran has also joined the Yellow Storm squad as the team intensifies training ahead of the league's start. The 10th edition of the HBL PSL runs from April 11 to May 18, with matches across Lahore, Karachi, Multan, and Rawalpindi, and a total of 34 matches scheduled.

Brook steps up as Captain while reducing franchise involvement

LONDON (AFP): Harry Brook has said he plans to reduce his involvement on the global franchise Twenty20 cricket circuit while he balances his new role as England white-ball captain with the burdens of being an all-format international.

The 26-year-old Yorkshire batsman, a rising star of the global game, was announced as the successor to former skipper Jos Buttler on Monday, with Brook given the task of reviving England's fortunes in both one-day international and Twenty20 cricket following lacklustre displays at recent global events.

Brook, however, is also a mainstay of England's batting line-up in red-ball cricket. England have 11 Tests between now and the end of the Ashes in early January and Brook may also have to feature in 12 ODIs and 15 T20s to prepare for next year's T20 World Cup, scheduled to begin in February.

He forfeited a £590,000 (\$754,000) deal with Delhi Capitals in the ongoing Indian Premier League in order to be free and fresh to play for England, having also pulled out of last year's IPL following the death of



his grandmother. Brook may now be ineligible for IPL selection until 2027 because of new tournament rules, but he insisted Tuesday he has no regrets. "There's a lot of cricket coming up," he told the England and Wales Cricket Board's website in his first interview as limited-overs skipper. "Having this period after deciding to pull out of the IPL was the right decision for me."

He added: "I'm not sure how much franchise cricket I'll be playing in the near future but my priority is definitely playing for England and trying to play as much cricket for England as I can."

Brook, the favourite to step up from his position as Buttler's deputy after England's woeful

Champions Trophy campaign in Pakistan in February, will begin his reign with the first of three ODIs against the West Indies on at Edgbaston on May 29.

He stressed he was on the "same page" with England coach Brendon McCullum, now in charge of the limited-overs teams as well as the Test side, about how to approach white-ball cricket.

"I just want us to play with aggression and be 100 percent committed to competing in whatever game we have coming up," Brook said. "There's plenty of major tournaments coming up and we've got to keep that at the back of the mind but we've got to take one game at a time and be aggressive and competitive."

11th JA Zaman Golf C'ship tees off with groundbreaking participation

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The 11th edition of the JA Zaman Memorial Open Golf Championship teed off at Lahore Gymkhana Golf Club on April 6, 2025.

It is organized by the Zaman family in loving memory of their patriarch, Mr. J.A. Zaman, the tournament has become a cornerstone of Pakistan's golfing calendar. The Zaman family, known for its commitment to excellence and advancement of golf in the country, has once again set a new benchmark in promoting inclusivity, competition, and player development. The tournament started with future stars of Pakistan golf. This category is run in partnership with Ace Junior Golf League (AJGL), Pakistan's first premier league for children of all ages.

The senior amateurs launched their campaigns on day 2 on the lush fairways of Gymkhana in which Brig Masood Qureshi from Rawalpindi posted a staggering 74 Gross, 3 under his handicap followed by Ahmed Zafar Hayat with 75

Gross, Sardar Murad with 77 Gross and Col. Asif Mehdi with 78 Gross. With such closely matched scores, the stage is set for an intense showdown in the second round among these elite senior amateur contenders.

This year's edition promises heightened competition in professional category with total purse of PKR 9.0 million at stake over 72 holes, and elite amateurs including lady amateurs to compete across 54 holes, with results contributing to the World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR).

Perhaps the most groundbreaking feature of this year's championship is the bold new format introduced for women golfers. For the first time, lady golfers are competing on 6000+ yards course. A total of 27 registered and 21 participants opted to play the championship course setup, recommended for WAGR events. It is highly important that the players prepare themselves for international golfing stage through such events.

One of the standout moments of this year's championship is the enthusiastic participation of juniors from the Ace Junior Golf League (AJGL), which continues to nurture some of the brightest young talents in the country. Among them, Maria Waqar, only 11 years old, is making headlines as she competes in her first-ever WAGR (World Amateur Golf Ranking) event, bravely taking on the challenge of 54 holes over three days, a feat rarely attempted in the country, at such a young age.

Equally inspiring is Zoay Qureshi, also 11, who returns for her second WAGR tournament, showing remarkable dedication and poise well beyond her years. Joining them are Meerab Rizwan and Areeba Rizwan from Rawalpindi Golf Club, both stepping up to test their mettle on this prestigious platform.

These young golfers, all products of AJGL's developmental efforts, share a common vision, to sharpen their skills,

reduce their handicaps, and evolve into disciplined, competitive golfers capable of representing Pakistan on the international stage. Their presence at the 11th J.A. Zaman Championship is not only a testament to their courage and commitment but also a sign of a bright future for golf in the country.

This powerful gesture of competitiveness and determination marks a turning point for women's golf in the country. With the backing of visionary organizers, the J.A. Zaman Championship is proving to be a progressive platform, encouraging women to step forward with confidence and grit.

Mr. Hamid Zaman, the driving force behind the championship, expressed his optimism for the future of the tournament, saying: "We are proud to see such enthusiastic participation, especially from our lady golfers. This year is a leap forward, and we believe next year's competition can be made even more competitive and inclusive."



In brief

Police arrest three for forcing girls into harlotry

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Dhamial Police on Tuesday arrested a couple and their son who forced girls into harlotry by promising them work as housemaids. According to the Rawalpindi Police spokesman, a victim girl filed a complaint with the Dhamial Police Station that the accused Amir Abbas brought her from Kot Addo to work as maid at his house. She alleged the accused raped her and intimidated into harlotry after making a video of the abusive act. She claimed the accused also brought her cousin to his house on the pretext of work, raped her and then forced her also into harlotry. Amir Abbas's wife Samina, son Zaman and a woman named Farzana were also his partners in crime, she added. The Dhamial Police registered a case on the plaintiff's request and arrested the accused Amir Abbas, his wife and son. The police got conducted the medical examination of the victim girl. Superintendent of Police Muhammad Nabil Khokhar directed the Dhamial Police to prepare the case against the accused with solid evidence so that they should be punished by the court.

IESCO issues power suspension notice

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 AM to 13:00 PM, Islamabad Circle4, Iqbal Town Feeder, Rawalpindi City Circle, Shamas Colony Feeder, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Mehboob Shaheed, Park View, Pindi Board, Jail Park.1, Car Chowk, Ex Lawyer, AOWHS, Fazal Ahmed Shaheed Feeders, Attock Circle, Sajjad Shaheed, Laniwala, Tanaza Dam, Wahdat Colony, Ghuri, Nawazish Shaheed, Sher Shah Suri, SSD/Army Brigade, Comsat University Feeders, GSO Circle from 07:00 AM to 12:00 PM, KRL Hospital, C-2, Sukh Chain, Centroas Hotel, Mezan Bank, Pak Land feeders and surrounding areas.

IRSA releases 64,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 64,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 76,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1410.32 feet which was 8.32 feet higher than dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,600 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1092.30 feet, which was 42.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 24,000 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 29,500, 31,600, 21,900 and 6,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 18,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 6,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: UN Special Rapporteur Professor Nicolas Levrat in a meeting with Federal Minister for Law and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, to discuss Pakistan's Efforts to promote minority rights and interfaith harmony. —APP Photo

Schools upgradation across Punjab province underway: Danyal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has decided to transform government schools into quality schools to provide high and modern education to the children of the underprivileged, on which work is underway rapidly to upgrade schools across the province.

Federal Parliamentary Secretary Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry expressed these views while addressing the annual prize distribution ceremony at DAV College Road, Rawalpindi. He said that upgradation of schools across the province includes new furniture fulfilment of shortage of staff and teachers and to equip them with modern laboratories.

Danyal lauded the efforts being rendered in this regard by CEO Rawalpindi and his team. District Chief Education Officer (CEO) Amanullah Khan Chheena in his address said that success in the field of education is the guarantee of the development of nations.

"The number of education-friendly measures taken during the current government is unparalleled in the

past", he said. A meeting of field officers of the education department was also held separately at Girls College No. 2, Murree Road, in which ADEO, DOE, DDOE, as well as male and female principals of various schools in the city and Tehsil participated.

A detailed review was taken in the meeting regarding the effectiveness of the field visit system, responsibilities of officers and performance standards. During the meeting, Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry was also informed about the "missing facilities" for which funds were assured to be provided to resolve them and the teachers were thanked for their suggestions.

DEO Ketch directed all officers that DDEOs of each tehsil should assign visit areas to their respective ADEOs and LCs and submit the visit plan of each month to the DEO and DDEO offices on time. It was informed in the meeting that visit reports should be submitted by the 15th of every month, while reporting of teacher absence or other issues in schools should be done on a daily basis. Under the PSDP

scheme, the condition of schools will be reviewed weekly.

Earlier, books were distributed among the students who had taken admission in the schools, while Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry formally launched the tree plantation campaign by planting saplings in DAV College Road and Girls High School No. 2, Murree Road. With regard to Clean and Green Punjab, the school contributed to the tree plantation campaign with the help of 50 saplings. The students actively planted saplings and vowed that they would also protect these saplings because planting trees is an ongoing charity.

The ceremony was attended by CEO Education Amanullah Khan Chheena, Vice President of PML-N Dr. Maqbool Ahmed Khan, District Education Officer Secondary Dr. Gul Ahmed, District Education Officer Dr. Muhammad Azhar, District Education Officer Elementary (Per Mile) Dr. Hajra Shaheen and Principal Khalid Rasheed. Councillors Haider Ali, Rana Nadeem Zafar and Malik Shahzad Mahmood and others also attended the ceremony.

Integration of technology in healthcare top priority: Shaza Fatima

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday said that proving high-quality and timely medical services through modern technology is a priority for the Ministry of IT.

She made these remarks during a meeting with Federal Minister for Health Dr. Mustafa Kamal, where both ministers discussed strengthening cooperation between the Ministries of IT and Health. Their focus was on leveraging digital technologies to improve public

healthcare delivery.

"The integration of health and technology will lay the foundation for Pakistan's digital future," Shaza Fatima said. A central point of discussion was the implementation of the "One Patient, One ID" initiative, which aimed to create a unified digital identity system for patients across healthcare facilities in Pakistan. Both ministers reaffirmed their commitment to realizing the Prime Minister's vision of accessible and affordable healthcare for every citizen.

Shaza Fatima informed

that work on this digital identification system is already in progress in Islamabad. A pilot project at PIMS Hospital has achieved six major milestones, with nine digital service modules now fully functional and more expected to go live soon.

The ministers agreed that the collaboration between the IT and Health ministries marks a significant step towards a digital transformation in the public health sector. Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal stressed the need to provide door-to-door

access to doctors and medicines, highlighting telemedicine as a critical tool to bridge healthcare gaps in remote and underserved areas.

Shaza added that the joint initiatives will help ensure affordable, transparent, and efficient healthcare delivery. "Digital health solutions will make life easier for citizens and bring meaningful improvements to our healthcare system," she said, adding that the synergy between health and technology will accelerate Pakistan's path to national development.

He highlighted that

The Rs.2.0 billion (approx) worth project will enhance smooth traveling for the commuters as an 'ad on' project leading to the Rawalpindi Ring Road project, which separately will be having 5 flyovers.

In a brief interaction with APP on Tuesday, Almas Sabeeh, Assistant Commissioner (Cantt) informed that the Khawaja Corporation flyover was to be opened on Chand Raat

(last night before Eid ul Fitr), but due to some certain reasons it got delayed. "A few weeks delay occurred due to some issues like rains etc., and now, we are expecting to open it in the same (April) month", said the AC Cantt. He informed that the contractors were paid the construction cost accordingly, leaving no payments issues. However the problems arise related to the acquired land are being resolved.

It is pertinent to mention that the flyover is physically connected with Adyala Road reconstruction and re-carpeting project of Rs.1.93 billion worth, from Khawaja Corporation to Gorakhpur. The road plays an important linking role for frequent commuters on Adyala Road cov-

ering a massive population. The Khawaja Corporation flyover is about 1,900 feet long and 52 feet wide, along with two 22-foot long service roads on both sides.

Initially, June 2025 was set as the deadline for its completion by the government, later on, CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed the concerned quarters for expeditious work to complete it sooner. "We have utilized all the best possible resources to complete the flyover by April 2025", said Almas Sabeeh AC Cantt.

The Assistant Commissioner also reiterated that the District Government was intensely engaged in various initiatives of the government under the vision of CM Punjab.

Rubina reviews preparations for Benazir Kafaalat tranche

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, along with BISP Secretary Amer Ali Ahmad, chaired a high-level meeting at the BISP Headquarters on Monday to assess preparations for the upcoming tranche of the Benazir Kafaalat programme.

The meeting brought together Director Generals (DGs) from BISP Headquarters, Zonal DGs, and regional Directors from across the country to ensure a seamless, transparent, and well-coordinated disbursement process for beneficiaries. Speaking during the meeting, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the need for a beneficiary-centric approach and announced that she would personally conduct surprise visits to various regions to monitor arrangements at payment campsites.

She directed Zonal DGs and Directors to ensure that comprehensive facilitation measures are in place to prevent any inconvenience to beneficiaries. Underscoring the importance of teamwork and accountability, the Chairperson called for the protection of BISP staff rights, ensured the mandatory presence of bank agents at all campsites, and urged quick resolution of any arising issues.

She also stressed proactive engagement with all stakeholders to ensure uninterrupted operations during the disbursement phase. Secretary Amer Ali Ahmad instructed officials to submit daily monitoring reports, adhere strictly to standard operating procedures (SOPs), and share detailed inspection plans. He particularly emphasized the availability of essential facilities at payment sites, including clean drinking water for beneficiaries.

DG Cash Transfers, Mr. Inam ur Rehman Malik, presented a comprehensive briefing on the overall readiness for the upcoming tranche. Zonal DGs also shared updates on their regional preparations and discussed localized challenges and their proposed solutions. The meeting concluded with a reaffirmed commitment to delivering social support to deserving families with dignity, efficiency, and transparency.

Motorway Police action against pedestrian violations, register 12 FIRs

ISLAMABAD (APP): In an effort to improve safety on the country's highways, the Motorway Police have registered twelve First Information Reports (FIRs) against individuals violating pedestrian crossing rules.

Motorway Police spokesman Syed Imran Ahmad talking to APP said that these FIRs were registered vide Section 290/291 Pakistan Panel Code (PPC). The spokesman further said that security of highways and motorways is top most priority of Motorway Police.

Syed Imran Ahmad emphasized that maintaining safety on highways is a top priority for the force. He explained that crossing roads improperly has often led to fatal accidents and injuries, urging pedestrians to use footbridges for their own safety.

He went on saying that sometime negligence or carelessness of few seconds turned into a tragedy in one's life. He hoped that road users will following prescribed rules and regulations while crossing motorways.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistan, Salik Hussain is being briefed during the inauguration ceremony of Electricity supply service to Workers Welfare Fund Labour Complex Zone-V Islamabad.

KABUL (Pajhwok): One person has been killed and seven others injured in two separate traffic accidents in central Parwan province. The first incident occurred on late Monday night in the Ghorband Dara area when two cars collided. Seven individuals were injured and immediately taken to the hospital for treatment. The second accident took place in the Rubat area, where a motorbike overturned, resulting in the death of the motorcyclist.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Shawwal 10 1446 — Wednesday, April 09, 2025

ASADABAD (Pajhwok): A teenage boy has died and three others were injured in an avalanche in eastern Nuristan province of Afghanistan, an official said on Tuesday. Fraidon Samim, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News that the incident occurred in the Pronez mountainous area, where the boys had gone to collect plants on Monday. Samim said that one teenager lost his life, while three others were injured.

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

KABUL (Amu TV): More than 100 Afghan nationals have been released from prisons in neighbor country and returned to Afghanistan, the Taliban-run Ministry of Refugees said in a statement on Tuesday. The group of 101 individuals reportedly spent two to five days in detention before being deported to Afghanistan, according to the ministry.

The development comes

amid neighbor country's ongoing crackdown on Afghan migrants, as the country intensifies the second phase of its mass deportation campaign. Over the past week, dozens of Afghan nationals have reportedly been arrested. Taliban authorities condemned the treatment of Afghan detainees, accusing neighbor country's police of confiscating migrants' belongings during deportations.

In its statement, the refugee ministry described the alleged seizures as "inhumane, un-Islamic, and in violation of international law."

The Neighbor country officials have previously linked the presence of Afghan migrants to rising security threats an outlawed militant group. Migrants, observers say, are increasingly caught in the crossfire of the two governments' escalating tensions.

KABUL (Pajhwok): The Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi has stressed the importance of strengthening ties between Kabul and Tehran, particularly in facilitating the return of Afghan refugees from Iran.

In a post on X, the Iranian embassy wrote that Araqchi made these remarks during a meeting with the Iranian Ambassador in Kabul, Alireza Bikdeli.

Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad stated: "The individuals in question have shared their investment plan for establishing a private industrial park worth \$12 million over an area of 1,000 acres in Deh Sabz district of Kabul with the ministry leadership and stressed that the activation

of this park will enable hundreds of industrialists to operate and create jobs for thousands."

Meanwhile, officials in the private sector said investing in the establishment of industrial parks that meet global standards will be influential in the development of domestic production and job creation for citizens in the country.

Mir Zaman Popal, acting head of finance and administration of the

chamber of commerce and investment, said: "The government must provide facilities such as electricity, sewage systems, and land in industrial parks, while investors are responsible for making significant investments in various sectors in accordance with international standards."

Abdul Jabbar Safi, the head of the Afghanistan industrialists' Association, said: "We are making a joint investment that will amount to \$12 million. This

industrial township will be built on 1,000 acres of land, and its roads and sidewalks will meet international standards." This comes after the leader of the Islamic Emirate issued an order to allocate land in all provinces for the establishment of industrial parks aimed at economic development and industrial growth in Afghanistan. Relevant institutions are currently working on implementing this directive.

HERAT (TOLOnews): Theater art in Herat, with a 105-year history, has witnessed many ups and downs. However, according to artists, the current state of this ancient art form is bleak.

Economic challenges and lack of support have cast a shadow over the lives of theater artists in Herat.

"We receive no financial support because neither our traders help the artists nor does the government provide support," Gholam Farooq Sarkhush, a theater artist, told TOLOnews.

"The biggest pain and suffering Herat's artists endure is economic hardship, which has affected all our dear artists," said Amir Irfan, another theater artist in Herat.

The only theater hall in Herat was demolished near-

ly a decade ago by the municipality for reconstruction purposes.

The absence of this hall has led to the fragmentation of theater artists and caused many to give up their artistic activities.

Recently, the Herat municipality has resumed the construction of this theater hall.

"When I started, there were about 14 theater artists. I started my journey 17 years ago, beginning with theater. Now only 4 of those 17 remain," said Aziz Ahmad Haidari, a theater artist.

The number of official employees at Herat's theater department has decreased from ten to five.

According to Herat's department of Information and Culture, about four years ago, nearly 500 the-

ater artists were active in the province. However, most of them have left the country or abandoned theater altogether.

Abdul Karim Mohammadyar, Director of Theater at the Directorate of Information and Culture in Herat, said: "During the changes, some migrated, others changed professions, and a few are still in contact with us. The number of theater staff has now decreased to five."

Theater in Herat began more than a century ago.

This art has experienced many highs and lows due to the country's political transformations.

According to some artists, in recent years, theater has once again declined, and they are concerned about the future of this art in the country.

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): Local officials in western Herat province say water

KHOSI CITY (Pajhwok): Residents of Tani district in southeastern Khost province have started cultivating almond orchards in the district's mountainous parts, a move they say supports environmental conservation besides generating sustainable income and constructive engagement for the local community.

According to local gardeners, more than 20 almond orchards have been established so far, with approximately 20,000 saplings planted across the highlands. Their key objective is to restore forest cover and create productive opportunities for communities in the region.

Provincial officials have expressed strong support for the purpose, highlighting that Khost's climate,

particularly in certain districts, is well-suited almond cultivation. They also pledged to back such community-led initiatives.

Naeemullah Zaland, a resident of Dakhio area in Tani district, told Pajhwok Afghan News: "We have planted over 20,000 saplings in these orchards, and the entire community is hopeful about this year's harvest. This initiative is a joint effort of local elders and youth to transform barren hillsides into productive farmland. You will see it yourself—these trees are in full bloom and expected to produce a good yield."

Another resident, Ghazni Gharibmal, said these orchards helped revive deforested areas while also creating jobs and meaningful engagement for locals.

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mond on
“These lands had been unused. Our elders decided to utilise them by planting almond trees. Now, people have employment, and the area looks far more vibrant and scenic.”
Imran Khyal, another villager, highlighted the wider economic potential of the project, saying it could benefit not only Tani district but the whole of Khost province.
He added: “Anyone with idle land should consider turning it into orchards, almond, walnut, or any suitable trees. These efforts are showing very promising results in Khost.”
Local authorities welcomed the initiative and promised comprehensive support to ensure its sustainability and success.
Agriculture, Irrigation

ng chards

and Livestock Director Sher Mohammad Zabih told Pajhwok: "Several districts in the province, especially Karboza, Tani and Nader Shah Kot, have ideal climatic conditions for almond cultivation due to their low humidity. If farmers and relevant institutions collaborate, Khost could witness significant economic growth through agriculture."

While primarily viewed as a livelihood project, the orchard initiative is also praised as a practical environmental intervention. By encouraging afforestation and expanding green cover, it holds the potential to both enhance living standards and contribute to the broader development of the agricultural sector in the region.

KABUL (Pajhwok). The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has welcomed recent remarks of Uzbekistan's president who underlined interaction with the IEA to prevent Afghanistan's isolation on international level.

During a meeting with parliament members yesterday, Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasized that it was important not to forget Afghanistan.

"It is very important to prevent from the isolation of Afghanistan on international level," Mirziyoyev

He also considered compromise and negotiations with the current authorities of the IEA as essential.

In a audio clip, IEA deputy spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat welcomed the remarks of the president of Uzbekistan.

Fitrat said: "We commend and welcome the positive remarks of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev about Afghanistan; it reflects his country's positive position on Afghanistan."

He added political, eco-

Before this, Uzbekistan emphasised that Afghanistan's development was impossible without constructive engagement with neighbouring countries, including Uzbekistan.

PARWAN (BNA): The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing has announced the commencement of a topographic survey aimed at establishing a dedicated town for forced returnees in Parwan.

the event about expanding health services to remote areas, equitable distribution of health services, improving quality with modern technology, access to services through new health centers, controlling drug

prices, and strengthening public health systems. The Deputy Minister emphasized that standardizing health services, evaluating health needs, addressing the health status of migrants, and paying spe-

cial attention to the health of mothers and children are among the initiatives the leadership of the Ministry of Public Health is working on, with ongoing efforts in this direction.

Dr. Wahdat Alkozai, the

General Director of Therapeutic Medicine at the Ministry of Public Health, along with representatives from UNICEF and WHO, delivered comprehensive speeches regarding World Health Day.

KABUL (BNA): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has once again demonstrated its commitment to healthcare by referring 24 patients suffering from congenital heart defects to six hospitals in Kabul for treatment.

The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) is covering all treatment and surgery costs for these patients, ensuring that financial barriers do not hinder access to essential healthcare services.

This latest referral underscores the ongoing challenges faced by many in the country regarding access to specialized medical care, and highlights the critical role of the Afghan Red Crescent Society in addressing these needs.

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhawk): The Pesta Mazar area in the Marmal district of northern Balkh province has recently emerged as a popular recreational spot, attracting hundreds of visitors daily with the arrival of spring.

Located about 20 kilometers from Mazar-i-Sharif, the provincial capital, Pesta Mazar is known for its picturesque green hills, towering mountains, and fresh air, making it a favorite destination for both locals and tourists from other provinces.

Visitors are delighted to experience the scenic beauty of the area, a stark contrast to the past when wars and insecurity had made it difficult for people to access such recreational spaces. Now, with peace prevailing, residents can enjoy sightseeing and recreation without fear.

Saifuddin, a Balkh resident visiting with friends, expressed his happiness at being able to enjoy the area in a peaceful environment.

"It's great to have this opportunity to spend time with family and friends in

such beautiful surroundings," he said.

However, despite the growing popularity of Pesta Mazar, some tourists from other provinces have raised concerns about the lack of basic amenities.

Sakhi-ur-Rahman, who traveled from Khost province, highlighted issues such as the absence of clean water, mosques, restaurants, and unpaved roads.

"The local government should address these issues to improve the experience for visitors," he urged.

Izatullah Habib, a tourist

from Kandahar province, echoed similar concerns. He emphasized the importance of providing essential facilities and also encouraged visitors to maintain the cleanliness of the area.

Local authorities in Balkh have acknowledged the need to improve infrastructure at these recreational sites.

Ataullah Zaid, the governor's spokesman, told Pajhwok Afghan News that Balkh has several recreational spots that attract significant numbers of visitors each spring.

The Information and Culture Department of Balkh added that during the recent Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, around 12,000 people, including foreign tourists, visited various areas of the province.

In addition to Pesta Mazar, other popular recreational destinations in Balkh, such as the Shadiyan Desert, Qosh Tapa Canal, Amu River, and Khwaja Sikandar, have also seen an influx of visitors, contributing to the region's growing reputation as a tourist hub.

MQM killed thousands of innocent people in past

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has stated that the MQM has launched a campaign against the Sindh government with the intention of leveling baseless allegations. He emphasized the need to respond to the accusations made by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. He also criticized the politics of hatred being promoted in the name of dumper accidents.

He highlighted that Karachi is a major metropolitan city, with a population greater than that of many countries. In 2024, the Sindh Police successfully resolved 76 cases of robbery involving murder. Additionally, 236 suspects were arrested for injuring citizens during robberies, and progress was made in 1,999 street crime cases.

Success was also achieved in 170 cases of home robberies. In total, the Sindh Police solved 2,805 cases in 2024. They arrested 116 individuals involved in murder cases and 95 suspects linked to street crimes. Furthermore, 33 individuals involved in murder were killed in police encounters, along with 36 accused of injuring citizens during robberies, 78 involved in street crimes, and 19 robbers involved in home robberies. In total, 181 robbers were killed by the Sindh Police in 2024.

Reacting to the press conference held by MQM leaders, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that 635 robbers involved in various cases have been killed in 2025. He emphasized that the Sindh Police is performing its duties regularly and that street crime is on the decline. He added that while unrest is a common issue in major cities around the world, the police are making consistent efforts to control the situation.

"Despite this, MQM and those who have historically played a major role in creating unrest are now accusing us of the same," he said. "You have killed thousands of innocent people in the past, destroyed the lives of countless mothers, and orphaned thousands of children." He further stated that during the rule of Pervez Musharraf, when MQM was in power, police officers who took part in operations in Karachi were deliberately targeted and martyred - an accusation that was also leveled against the Muttahida Qaumi Movement.

Sharjeel Inam Memon noted that a new faction of MQM has emerged in Karachi, and they too are engaging in the politics of hatred, attempting to incite conflict among citizens. "They have no political agenda, which is why they are trying to justify recent accidents and create unrest," he said.



He also referenced statements made by Farooq Sattar, in which he allegedly called for dumpers to be set on fire. "Some vehicles were indeed set ablaze, and the culprits were arrested," he added.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that Karachi is known as an economic hub, and the Sindh government will not allow the city to fall victim to unrest under any circumstances. He asserted that the government will not bow to political blackmail or allow those attempting to disturb the peace of the city or the country to succeed in their conspiracies.

He extended his congratulations to the nation on the Minerals Conference being held in Islamabad, calling it a positive and welcome development. He emphasized the importance of foreign investment in Pakistan, noting that as the economic situation begins to improve, certain individuals-true to their political habits-are attempting to create unrest and chaos. "We will not allow this to happen under any circumstances," he declared.

Sharjeel Inam Memon further stated, "I consider Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui a patriot and a good Pakistani. However, I do not wish to repeat the statements made by Mustafa Kamal about him in the past. If anyone is curious, they can find and watch what Mustafa Kamal has said about Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on YouTube."

He stated that development work in Karachi has only been carried out during the rule of the Pakistan People's Party-and it is still ongoing. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) boycotted the local government elections because they saw their defeat clearly ahead. MQM lacked the courage to contest the elections. "Who told MQM to boycott the local government elections? They backed out due to fear of defeat," he said. "Even today, that fear remains. But whenever local government elections are held again, you will have to participate. Development is taking place day and night across Sindh, including Karachi."

Sharjeel Inam Memon highlighted key development projects completed under the PPP government, including the Omar Sharif Underpass, Zia Mohyeddin Underpass, Palestine Underpass, Meena Bazaar Underpass, Johar Chowrangi, Fisherman Chowrangi, Munawar Chowrangi, Korangi Causeway, several overhead bridges, and road rehabilitation projects.

He also mentioned major infrastructure initiatives such as the Karachi-Thatta Dual Carriageway, rehabilitation of Shahrah-e-Faisal, Manzil Pump Flyover, Drug Road Flyover, Mehran Hotel Underpass, Sadequain Underpass, Rana Liaquat Ali Flyover, Tariq Road Underpass, New Hub River Canal, Shahrah-e-Bhutto, and the link road connecting Super Highway with National Highway.

He further added that the Thar Coal Project, which was also launched under the PPP government, is now supplying electricity to the entire country.

He said that the Sindh government is providing the best healthcare facilities in Pakistan. Free cancer treatment is being provided through CyberKnife technology-something not available anywhere else in the world. He added that if MQM wants to raise any issues, it should do so through the people. "If they believe they have a public mandate, then let them come forward. We are ready for elections in every constituency. I am willing to resign from my seat. The MQM leaders who held today's press conference should also resign and contest elections again. Only then will it be clear who truly holds the people's mandate," he said. "We have the people's support. In every election, the PPP has secured more seats than before, thanks to our public service."

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon also stated that MQM should refrain from indulging in the politics of violence. "We will not allow them to disrupt the lives of the people through chaos. Peaceful rallies are their democratic right, but we must all work together to strengthen Pakistan. The PPP is committed to putting the country on the path of development, and we want all political parties, including MQM, to walk with us in this effort."

He further added that MQM is losing public support and, as an alternative, has resorted to the politics of hatred in hopes of regaining some influence. "Chairman Bilawal Bhutto also emphasized during his speech in Larkana that all provinces must stay united and confront Pakistan's challenges together."



GAZA STRIP: A Palestinian girl struggling as she and others try to get donated food at a distribution center in Beit Lahiya.

Eight more Khwarij killed

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Movement of a group of khwarij, trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces in general area Hassan Khel, North Waziristan District.

Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. After an intense exchange of fire, eight Khwarij were sent to hell, while four khwarij got injured. Pakistan has consistently been asking Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Interim Afghan Government is expected to fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by Khwarij for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan.

Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Kharij found in the area as security forces of Pakistan are determined and remain committed to secure its borders and wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

Germany halts UN refugee programme

BERLIN: Germany has suspended the admission of refugees through a United Nations programme, according to a document seen by the Reuters news agency, as a new conservative-led coalition government prepares to take office.

Reuters reported on Tuesday that the Federal Ministry of the Interior had made the decision as negotiations between the centre-right CDU and the SPD continue, with both sides likely to agree on a tougher migration and asylum policy. The German dpa news agency also reported that the Interior Ministry and the UNHCR had confirmed news of the suspension.

Migration has been a contentious issue in Germany, the third largest refugee-hosting country in the world, with 2.5 million refugees, including more than one million refugees from Ukraine. But a growing number of German voters want the country to accept fewer migrants. Immigration and asylum were hotly discussed before February's German elections in which the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) doubled its vote share after several violent attacks blamed on refugees or asylum seekers. — Aljazeera

SC orders trial courts to conclude May 9 cases

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has directed trial courts to conclude all May 9 related cases within four months. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Yahya Afridi issued the order during a hearing concerning the cancellation of bail for several accused in the May 9 events.

During the proceedings, a defense lawyer questioned the feasibility of completing the trials within the given time-frame, stating, "We are facing 35 cases; it is not possible to conclude all trials in such a short period."

In response, Chief Justice Afridi remarked that during his tenure as Chief Justice of the Peshawar High Court, the Mashal Khan murder case in Mardan was concluded within three months. "Anti-terrorism courts are capable of delivering timely performance," he said. It is worth noting that just a day earlier, the Supreme Court had also instructed trial courts to conclude cases within three months.

Only those reforms yield results that have ownership of stakeholders: Emphasizing the role of bar in the administration of justice, the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), who is also the Chairman of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC), has asserted that only those reforms yield results that have ownership of stakeholders.

The CJP asserted this while chairing a consultative session held here at the Supreme Court. The consultative session was arranged as part of the CJP's efforts to engage stakeholders for improved justice service delivery. The Chief Justice stated that the consultative session was one of the series of meetings being held with the stakeholders to get feedback on the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the NJPMC.

The session was attended by the Attorney General for Pakistan, Director General of the Federal Judicial Academy, Hayat Ali Shah, and Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat, Secretary Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan. Besides, senior lawyers of the Supreme Court including Khawaja Haris, Fazal-e-Haq Abbassi, Kamran Murtaza, Faisal Siddiqui, Munir Paracha, and Ahmad Farooq Khattak, Vice Chairman, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council also attended the session.

The session was intended to seek participants' views on the reforms specifically and inexpensive justice, litigants' facilitation and an integrated policy approach to realigning justice system of the country. The participants were briefed on the proposed agenda of the NJPMC which included Institutional Response on Cases of Enforced Disappearances, Commercial Litigation Corridor (CLC), Double-Docket Court Regime, Institutionalization of Court-Annexed Mediation, and Establishment of Model Criminal Trial Courts.

The participants were also briefed on the Performance Evaluation of District Judiciary, Standardization of Recruitment Mechanism for District Judiciary, District Judiciary Policy Forum (DJPF), Parity in Terms and Conditions of Service of District Judiciary, Access to overseas Exposure Opportunities, and Professional development programs. In-depth discussions were held and the participants shared their insights, expertise and suggestions. They expressed their gratitude to the CJP for providing them an opportunity to contribute towards improved and efficient dispensation of justice. The Chief Justice while appreciating the input of the participants remarked that meaningful progress could only be achieved through such collaboration.

Iran says deal can be reached if US shows goodwill

TEHRAN (AFP): Iran's top diplomat said on Tuesday he believed a new nuclear deal could be agreed with the United States provided Tehran's longtime foe shows sufficient goodwill in talks to begin in Oman on Saturday. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Iran's principal aim remained the lifting of sweeping US sanctions. Their reimposition by President Donald Trump in 2018 has dealt a heavy blow to the Iranian economy. Trump made the surprise announcement that his administration would open talks with Iran during a White House meeting on Monday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose country is an arch foe of Tehran.

Trump said the talks would be "direct" but Araghchi insisted his negotiations with US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff on Saturday would be "indirect". "We will not accept any other form of negotiation," Araghchi told official media. "The format of the negotia-

tions... is not the most important thing in my view. What really counts is the effectiveness or otherwise of the talks. "If the other side shows enough of the necessary willingness, a deal can be found... The ball is in America's court." Speaking Monday in the Oval Office, Trump said he was hopeful of reaching a deal with Tehran, but warned that the Islamic republic would be in "great danger" if the talks failed. "We're dealing with the Iranians, we have a very big meeting on Saturday and we're dealing with them directly," Trump told reporters.

Trump's announcement came after Iran dismissed direct negotiations on a new deal to curb the country's nuclear activities, calling the idea pointless. The US president pulled out of the last deal in 2018, during his first presidency, and there has been widespread speculation that Israel, possibly with US help, might attack Iranian facilities if no new agreement is reached. Trump issued a stern warning to Tehran,

however. "I think if the talks aren't successful with Iran, I think Iran's going to be in great danger, and I hate to say it, great danger, because they can't have a nuclear weapon," he said. In an interview with US network NBC late last month, Trump went further. "If they don't make a deal, there will be bombing," he said. China and Russia held consultations with Iran in Moscow on Tuesday, after which the Kremlin welcomed the planned talks.

Key Iranian ally Russia welcomed the prospect of negotiations for a new nuclear accord to replace the deal with major powers that was unilaterally abandoned by Trump in 2018. "We know that certain contacts — direct and indirect — are planned in Oman. And, of course, this can only be welcomed because it can lead to de-escalation of tensions around Iran," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, adding that Moscow "absolutely" supported the initiative.

PTI seeks more time from ECP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Barrister Gohar on Tuesday sought more time for arguments from the Election commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the intra-party election case. A five-member bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja, resumed hearing the long-standing case. Both Barrister Gohar and petitioner Akbar S. Babar appeared before the bench.

When asked by the CEC why arguments were not being presented as scheduled, Barrister Gohar responded that he had submitted details of the Lahore High Court's (LHC) directives and requested more time to prepare his arguments, citing the absence of key documents. CEC Raja reminded him that while the High Court had restricted the ECP from issuing a verdict, it had not barred the proceedings themselves. He warned Gohar to come fully prepared for the next hearing. The ECP has now adjourned the hearing until April 22, 2025.

3,669 more illegal Afghans repatriated

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The repatriation of Afghan nationals residing illegally in Pakistan continued, as 3,669 more were repatriated through the Torkham border crossing on Tuesday.

Official documents of immigration said, since the launch of the repatriation drive on April 1, a total of 11,371 Afghan nationals have repatriated so far this month. The process involves legal procedures before illegal Afghans are sent back through the Torkham border. Immigration sources said that on Tuesday, 2,242 illegal Afghan residents voluntarily reported to the Landi Kotal transit camp. After completing the required documentation and legal steps, they repatriated through the border crossing.

In addition, 1,427 individuals arrested in various cities across the country were directly transferred to the Torkham border for repatriation. Since April 1, a total of 11,371 undocu-

mented Afghan nationals have repatriated to their homeland. Furthermore, from September 17, 2023, to March 2025, approximately 469,159 Afghans belonging to 70,494 families have returned to Afghanistan via the Torkham crossing.

Meanwhile, Punjab police's Special Branch and Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) have compiled a detailed record of Afghan women residing across ten cities of the province, including their age groups, locations, and legal status.

According to the report, 6,308 Afghan citizen cardholder women are currently residing in Punjab, mainly in Lahore and other urban centres. In addition, 1,828 Afghan women are living in Punjab as dependents without possessing citizen cards. The highest number of undocumented Afghan women is found in Rawalpindi, where 720 women are reportedly staying without legal papers.

The data comes amid an

ongoing crackdown on illegal Afghan residents after the government's deadline for Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders to leave the country expired earlier this month. It is worth mentioning that as reported on April 5 by 24NewsHD TV channel, over 67,800 Afghan nationals have gone into hiding across Punjab to avoid deportation.

Among them, 37,577 are missing from Rawalpindi, 7,341 from Lahore, 12,438 from Gujranwala, and 8,318 from Sargodha. Law enforcement agencies have launched search operations in several cities. Over 1,000 Afghans have already been repatriated via the Torkham border, and 1,339 more are scheduled to be sent back today.

In the capital, Islamabad, hundreds of Afghans have been rounded up from informal settlements and shifted to the Haji Camp, while over 190 Afghans in Rawalpindi have been moved to holding centres.

PM invites foreign investors

(Continued from Page 1)

Pakistan as reliable, effective economic corridor for regional transit trade critical to economic development: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said it was essential to establish Pakistan as a reliable and effective economic corridor for transit trade in the region to ensure development of the national economy.

The prime minister in a meeting with Robert Maersk, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the global shipping company A. P. Moller - Maersk, welcomed the global shipping company's investment of \$2 billion in the country, a PM Office news release said. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed to form a technical working group to expedite the process of forming a partnership agreement in the maritime sector with the global shipping company. He also directed the authorities concerned to ensure that the memorandums signed with A. P. Moller - Maersk in the previous year should be transformed into agreements as soon as possible.

The prime minister directed the working group to submit recommendations within a month and added that it was high time to remove all barriers and bring the maritime sector at par with global competitive standards. He

said: "The investment in Pakistan by A. P. Moller Maersk will bring about a large-scale positive change in Pakistan's maritime sector. Allah Almighty has blessed Pakistan with vast maritime resources, and by taking advantage of the potential of this sector, we are trying to use these resources for the betterment of the country."

He underlined that in the recent global scenario, Pakistan's importance as a corridor for trade and transportation in the region has increased. The prime minister invited A.P. Moller - Maersk to explore more investment opportunities in Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Robert Maersk said the clients of A.P. Moller - Maersk all over the world have expressed interest in investment and business opportunities in Pakistan. "A.P. Moller - Maersk's first ship arrived in 1924, and today our relations with Pakistan in the region are stronger than ever. Pakistan plays a key role in the region as an economic corridor for trade with Central Asian countries, which is extremely important for our company," he said.

He expressed his interest in investing in Pakistan's seaports and men-

tioned that the company was trying to establish a unique hub for sea trade in the region by equipping Pakistan's ports with the latest logistics system and latest technology. Robert Maersk praised the government's economic policies and called them attractive for investment.

The meeting was attended by Keith Svendsen, CEO of the global shipping company, Danish Ambassador Jakob Linulf, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, Advisor to the Prime Minister Syed Tauqir Shah, Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi, and senior officers of relevant institutions.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan reaffirm commitment to strengthen bilateral trade ties: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with the Azerbaijani Minister of Economy Mikayil Jabbarov, along with his delegation, where the two sides agreed to further strengthen cooperation in sectors such as minerals and mining, oil exploration, renewable energy, information technology, infrastructure development for regional connectivity,

defense, hospitality and tourism, and human resource development.

The meeting focused on enhancing Pakistan-Azerbaijan cooperation and discussed increasing investment across various sectors. The prime minister warmly welcomed the Azerbaijani delegation and conveyed a message of goodwill for the President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev.

During the meeting, both sides PM Shehbaz Sharif, while referencing his recent visit to Azerbaijan, stated that Pakistan and Azerbaijan enjoy long-standing brotherly relations based on shared faith, culture, mutual respect, and fraternity. Reviewing the progress on the Memorandums of Understanding and bilateral agreements signed during his visit, the prime minister invited Azerbaijan to take advantage of the vast investment opportunities available in Pakistan in the fields of oil exploration, mining, renewable energy, and regional infrastructure development.

He also lauded the Azerbaijani team's excellent work on beautification efforts in Islamabad following the declaration of Islamabad and Baku as twin cities. The prime minister, while mentioning the expected visit of the

President of Azerbaijan, expressed satisfaction at the mutual interest and high-level efforts to enhance bilateral trade to the target of \$2 billion.

The Azerbaijani minister thanked Pakistan for the warm hospitality extended to his delegation and expressed Azerbaijan's keen interest in enhancing cooperation and trade across various sectors. He expressed satisfaction with the progress made in renewable energy projects, the White Oil Pipeline, SOCAR's (State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic) investment in Pakistan, and Azerbaijan's interest in infrastructure development within Pakistan.

The meeting also reviewed updates on the Azerbaijani delegation's engagements in Pakistan, collaboration in multiple sectors, promotion of trade, the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the White Oil Pipeline, establishment of one-window facilitation centers for improved governance, and Azerbaijan's potential investment in Pakistan's motorways for regional connectivity. The meeting was attended by Azerbaijani Minister of Economy Mikayil Jabbarov, Azerbaijani Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov, Deputy Minister of

Economy Samad Bashirli, Deputy Minister of Energy Kamal Abbasov, and other senior Azerbaijani officials. From the Pakistani side, Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Advisor to the Prime Minister Syed Tauqir Shah, Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed, and Lieutenant General Sarfraz Ahmed, National Coordinator of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), along with other senior officials, were present.

Pakistan, Turkiye agree to enhance cooperation in energy sector: Pakistan and Turkiye agreed to enhance cooperation in the energy sector, especially in the area of renewable energy. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was talking to a 9-member delegation led by Turkiye's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Alparslan Bayraktar here at the PM House.

"We are proud of the centuries-old brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkiye," the prime minister added. He noted that the recent visit of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Pakistan will further enhance economic relations between the two countries.