



Afghanistan asked to hand over plotters of Bisham attack

- Interior minister, Naqvi chief say TTP used Afghan soil to target Chinese engineers; 11 suspects taken into custody so far
- Say alleged bomber was an Afghan national, had support from 'facilitators inside Pakistan'
- Islamabad will take 'unilateral steps' if lack of cooperation persists, Naqvi warns Kabul

By Abdul Motiz Malik

KARACHI: The leadership of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), based in Afghanistan, and hostile foreign intelligence agencies were behind the March 26 suicide attack on Chinese engineers in Bisham, the country's security chief said on Sunday.

At a press conference in Lahore, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the attack, in which five Chinese engineers and their Pakistani driver were killed, was planned in Afghanistan and executed with the help of handlers and facilitators based in Pakistan.

He added that the attack was "completely operated" from Afghanistan and planned to specifically target Chinese personnel in Pakistan.

"TTP leadership planned this attack as a flagship project, and enemy intelligence agencies paid them heavily for the attack," the minister said, without giving more details.

The minister demanded the Afghan interim government arrest three alleged terrorists named Bakhtiar Shah, Qari Abdullah and Khan Lala, along

with TTP chief Noor Wali Mehsud, its Malakand Commander Ammarullah and the entire leadership of the outlawed group.

"We want good ties with Afghanistan, but for that it is important they arrest these terrorists, prosecute them or hand them to us."

The revelations are expected to further strain bilateral ties between the two neighbours, as Islamabad has repeatedly pressed Kabul to set against TTP terrorists based in Afghanistan.

Despite repeated requests, the interim Afghan government has not taken measures to prevent militants from launching attacks from these safe havens.

The issue became more pronounced after the TTP escalated violent activities following the collapse of peace talks brokered by the Afghan Taliban in late 2022.

"Pakistan has raised this issue with the interim government of Afghanistan and stressed that they should act against the terrorists operating there, but so far, we have not received any good results," Mr Naqvi said.

He said terrorists were "exploiting the weakness of the interim

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ISLAMABAD: A PPP delegation, comprising Senator Sherry Rehman, Sindh Chief Minister Murrat Ali Shah, Syed Naveed Qamar and ex-speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf, calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.—Courtesy PM Office

PPP seeks 'more than due' share in standing committees

- Wants to 'accommodate its supporters' as chairmen
- PM urged to allocate funds for flood-hit Sindh
- Qatar, Kuwait emirs accept invitations to visit Pakistan

By Syed Irfan Iftakhar and Irfan Ayub

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI: The PPP, a key ally of the PM-led coalition government in Centre, has demanded a bigger share of the pie of parliamentary committees and more federal money for Sindh, a party source told Dawn.

The party — which agreed to support the federal government in the National Assembly and Senate without seeking any ministerial — insisted on chairing more committees in the two houses than its

due share as per its seats. The fresh demands were made by senior PPP leadership during a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday.

The PM "has assured us to look into all proposals", claimed the PPP source privy to the discussions.

The source added that as per the number of its seats, PPP would get to chair 11 standing committees, "but it wants 12".

Currently, the party has 24 seats in the upper house of parliament, as per the information available on the Senate's website.

"We are not sure about

the exact numbers in the National Assembly but there too, the PPP expects more," the source said.

The reason, as explained by the source, was that PPP wanted to "accommodate" its own political partners who "support it in different ways".

More money for Sindh

The PPP delegation also demanded that "special funds" be allocated in the next federal budget for Sindh's flood-affected areas.

Several rehabilitation projects, approved in the last budget, couldn't be executed after the caretaker

administration took charge in August 2023, the source said, adding that rising inflation has made it challenging for the provincial government to handle the situation without the Centre's support.

The PPP delegation, which comprised Raja Pervez Ashraf, Sindh Chief Minister Murrat Ali Shah, Sherry Rehman and Syed Naveed Qamar, also conveyed its reservations over the proposed amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), according to a

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Two martyred in army action near Peshawar

By Umar Farooq

PESHAWAR: Two security officials embraced martyrdom during an intelligence-led operation (IRO) against terrorists in the Hassan Khel area on Sunday, the military said.

The intense gun battle that took place at a location 40km south of the provincial capital also left five terrorists dead and three others injured.

The military's media wing said the IRO was planned following intelligence about the reported presence of terrorists in the area.

A statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) read that security forces effectively engaged the terrorists during the operation and gunned down five of them, adding that three others were injured during the struggle. "During the course of the operation, troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location. Five terrorists were killed and three terrorists got injured," it said.

The ISPR said that 25-year-old Captain Hussain Jhangho from Rahim Yar Khan district

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Met Office warns of another sweltering week

Temperatures remain above 50 degree-marks in Sindh; Karachi to experience over 40 degrees this week

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE/KARACHI: With parts of Sindh and Punjab firmly in the grip of a heatwave, Mohenjodaro and Larkana become the hottest places in Pakistan, with the mercury climbing to around 53 degrees Celsius at the seat of the Indus Valley Civilization.

Jacobabad recorded 52 degrees, the Met Office said, adding that

the weather conditions would prevail in the area for another five to six days.

Over the weekend, Thana was the only area in Sindh to register a temperature below 40 degrees.

The poor souls who cannot afford to sit idle, even in a heatwave Page 3

On Sunday, the Met Office predicted that heatwave conditions would likely to prevail in the plain over the next 24 hours. However, hot and humid weather is forecast for coastal areas.

Meanwhile, Karachi is also set to witness a sweltering week ahead,

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Talat Hussain's last bow

By Peerzada Salman

ONE of the most distinguished thespians of his generation, Talat Hussain breathed his last on Sunday morning. He was 83. He is survived by his wife, three children, and legions of fans who followed him throughout his storied career as a proponent of the dramatic arts, par excellence.

Often described by his admirers as the "Pakistani Laurence Olivier", Mr Hussain's measured delivery and masterful use of the pregnant pause etched his performances into the minds of viewers.

Roles such as the character of Aijab, which he played in Hameed Kashmiri's TV series, *Kashif*, highlighted his versatility as an actor on the small screen.

A master of voice modulation, he was also a familiar sight on PTV during the month of Moharram, rendering the *Ishtiq* as



TALAT Hussain

only he could, capable of bringing the audience to elation or tears with the power of his delivery.

Early life

Mr Hussain was born in Delhi, undivided India, on Sept 18, 1940. After the partition of the subcontinent, his family opted to cross the border and settle in Karachi where his mother, Shauzia, joined Radio Pakistan as a broadcaster.

A decade or so later, Hussain — who obtained his bachelor of arts degree from Iqbalia College — had developed a penchant for performing arts, and in the early 1960s received an opportunity to play a relatively significant part in the film *Chinghis Khan Khan*.

A couple of years later, he joined Radio Pakistan as a voice-over artist and in 1962, after the advent of television in the country, began acting in TV plays — *Ajmanan* being one of his initial television jobs as an actor.

In no time, he became a reputed artist. After playing important roles in a few films, in 1973 he had his first international project, a Turkish movie titled *Islahiyatçı Özgür Fedakari*.

His thirst for learning more about the art form took him to the UK in 1972 where he enrolled himself in the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts. In

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ON OTHER PAGES



Malik Riaz complains of 'pressure'

Malik Riaz of Berlin Town has claimed he is being pressured for 'political motives' but asserted that he will not bow before anyone. In a message on X on Sunday, the property tycoon while expressing his helplessness said he had been pushed to the wall and was facing constant losses in his business. Page 3

Plus... BUSINESS & FINANCE

There is a general perception that all is rosy in the automobile sector; that the industry is driving down a prosperous road made of gold. This is only one side of the story, come hear ours:

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Debt servicing cost surging by over 64pc, reveals report

Finance ministry holds high interest rate responsible for situation; utilisation of uplift funds struggles at Rs158bn

By Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's debt servicing cost is rising by more than 64 per cent this year, massively outpacing the revenue growth of 30pc and bringing the spending on development to a halt.

In its Mid-Year Budget Review Report for FY2023-24, the ministry of finance (MoF) placed the blame for this grim situation on the record high interest rates put in place under the dictates of IMF.

"The main challenge was rising market payments in the wake of a high policy rate environment," it said, adding that the "interest expense stood at around Rs4.24 trillion in first six months (July-Dec 2023) compared to Rs2.57 tr for the same period a year ago, showing an increase of 65pc. The interest payments this year grew at much greater speed than anticipated by the ministry of finance at Rs7.3tr — almost 59pc of budget estimates for the full year.

As a consequence, close to 80pc of local and international borrowing was consumed by interest payments, instead of flowing to productive sectors and areas having positive impact on public lives.

"A major chunk of current expenditure was for meeting interest payments (55.3pc of total current expenditure) during the July-December period. Of the Rs4.22tr, Rs3.71tr was spent on account of domestic interest payments and Rs502bn on external interest payments.

No wonder then, the utilisation of development funds struggled at Rs158bn (just 16.4pc) in half of the year against its annual allocation of Rs959bn.

"Under the government's fiscal commitment, 50pc of development budget should be disbursed to relevant agencies at the rate of 20pc in first quarter and 30pc in second quarter of the year.

The MoF's mid-year report, however, revealed that development spending in six months could not even get close to its target 1-month target. The MoF said that 80pc of the interest payments went to domestic debt. The federal fiscal deficit increased to Rs2.497tr, or 2.5pc of GDP, this half year compared to 2.1pc of GDP (or Rs1.76tr) of the same period last year.

Provinces' contribution
However, provinces contributed higher cash surplus this year at Rs289bn compared to Rs101bn last year. Still, the overall deficit remained stubborn at 2.5pc of GDP against 2pc last year.

The primary account — the revenue minus expenditure, except interest — remained surplus on the higher side at 1.7pc of GDP (Rs1.8tr) when compared to Rs99bn or 1.1pc of GDP.

The mid-year review said that 77pc financing of federal fiscal deficit was arranged through domestic sources. During the July-Dec period, overall receipts improved by 63pc on the back of impressive increase in both tax (30pc) and non-tax (117pc) revenues.

In absolute terms, net revenue receipts reached Rs4.61tr as compared to Rs2.46tr in last fiscal year's corresponding period.

The MoF claimed that it vigorously pursued austerity measures approved by the federal cabinet. Non-essential expenditures like import of durable goods and vehicles, and creation of new posts were kept under check. Strict scrutiny and vigilance on expenditures since the beginning of the current financial year helped better expenditure management thereby contributing to improved fiscal discipline.

Despite record interest payment, the government was successful in controlling other expenditures as evidenced by an overall primary surplus of Rs1.82tr, it reported.

Revenue jumps 30pc
During the July-Dec FY2023-24 period, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) collected Rs4.469tr, showing an increase of 30.3pc compared to last year's Rs3.43tr.

The real windfall bonus, however, came from non-tax revenues (NTR), particularly the central bank's profit on account of high interest rates and petroleum levy.

The NTR collection remained well above target, with 66.8pc of the annual target achieved in the first half, meaning a 117pc increase was witnessed compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Expenditure on running of civil government and defence spending was at 42pc of their respective budget allocation. The MoF said the government did not extend any supplementary grants during the half-year period and uniform wage requirements were addressed through re-appropriations and technical supplementary grants.

The ministry claimed that procedure for the release of uplift funds was simplified to expedite the development work.



QUETTA: To escape summer heat, people enjoy a refreshing boat ride in Harra Lake, in the stunning landscape of Urah Valley, on Sunday.—PTI

Governor pledges talks with all stakeholders on defamation bill

Ahsan Iqbal claims govt has no intent to 'suffocate media'

By Arjad Mahmood

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider on Sunday pledged further consultation with all stakeholders on the Defamation Bill 2024, assuring a delegation of various journalist bodies that the bill will be signed only after the consultation.

"Though the government should have taken onboard all the stakeholders before introducing the new law, I'll invite all parties to the Defamation Bill for developing a consensus on it before signing the bill into law," the governor told a delegation of the Joint Action Committee (JAC) comprising different journalist organisations at Governor House.

The delegation consisted of Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors, Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists secretary and former CPNE president Kazim Khan, Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors Usman, and representatives of

Broadcasters Pakistan, and All Pakistan Newspapers Society.

PPP Central Punjab general secretary Syed Hassan Mustafa, former minister Makhdoom Maryam Mehmood, and information secretary Khudadad Saad Chishti were also present on this occasion.

The Punjab Assembly had passed the Defamation Bill, 2024, last Monday, inviting nationwide protests by journalists.

The bill proposes a special tribunal to try the accused involved in drafting, publishing and/or airing 'fake news'. The tribunal shall decide the case within six months and may impose a fine up to Rs1 million.

The delegation informed the governor about the concerns regarding the Defamation Bill. They said the bill was an "attempt to suppress freedom of expression".

Responding to these concerns, Governor Haider said that mutual consultation was very important on all matters and all stakeholders would gather at Governor House within the next few days for a consultation on the controversial clauses of the bill.

Mr Mustafa told the delegation that the PPP stood with the journalist community on the issue and did not support the current

bill in this situation.

The party had distanced itself from the bill after journalists began to protest against the government. PPP leaders claimed that its MPs were not present in the house when the bill was passed by the Punjab Assembly.

However, the assembly record belied the claim.

'Media suffocation'
Meanwhile, PML-N stalwart and Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal has claimed the government is not inclined towards suffocating the media, asserting that there are no such attempts from their side, adds AFP.

Talking to a private news channel, the federal minister said that while social media platforms offered vast benefits, it also carried risks, notably in spreading misinformation that could sow chaos in society.

He said government's aim to mitigate these risks and ensure that social media was used responsibly.

He further noted the importance of consulting stakeholders to formulate laws aimed at addressing the challenges posed by social media. He stressed that such laws must be in the interest of all to safeguard the country from the risks associated with misinformation.

Gandapur briefs Imran on SIFC meeting

By Muhammad Asghar

RAWALPINDI: A day after he attended an SIFC meeting during which he talked to the army chief "twice", Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur met PTI founding chairman Imran Khan in the Adiala jail on Sunday.

The meeting between the chief minister and the former prime minister, held in Adiala's conference room, lasted about 40 minutes, sources claimed.

It may be noted that visitors are not allowed to see prisoners on Sunday being the public holiday. However, the chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was allowed to visit his incarcerated leader.

Mr Gandapur informed Mr Khan about the proceedings of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The party situation and national political situation also came under discussion, sources said.

After the meeting, which is being considered a positive move, CM Gandapur left for Islamabad.

It may be recalled that after the SIFC meeting on Saturday the chief minister had said that the resources of the province should continue to benefit both its residents and the country.

He had accused the federal government of his government's cooperation for the country's sake.

Mr Gandapur said the SIFC proceedings were conducted in a cordial manner and that he also "talked to the COAS twice" during the meeting.

Won't bow to political pressure, Malik Riaz says in cryptic tweet

By Syed Imran Raza

ISLAMABAD: Bahria Town Chairman Malik Riaz on Sunday claimed that he was being pressurised for "political motives", but asserted that he would not bow before anyone.

In a message on X, formerly Twitter, the real estate tycoon said he had been pushed to the wall and was facing constant losses in his business.

But he did not mention who was pressuring him, and for what.

The real estate tycoon is known for his links with political parties, the media, as well as the civil and mili-

tary establishment, and has been considered 'untouchable' in the past.

Dawn contacted a number of political experts and politicians, but nearly everyone was reluctant to comment on his 'wall tale', saying he had not disclosed who he was holding responsible for his woes, and the reason why he was being pressurised.

However, it is widely believed that Malik Riaz was referring to Al Qadir Trust/University case, which was filed by NAB against PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi. They were the main accused in the 1190 million corruption case. The case alleges that while PM, Imran Khan and his

spouse obtained land spread over hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd to legalise Rs60 billion, which was identified and returned to the country by the UK authorities.

On Jan 9, an accountability court froze the properties of five co-accused in the case, including Malik Riaz and his son Ahmed Ali Riaz, who were declared proclaimed offenders for failing to join investigations.

At present, the real estate tycoon is believed to be out of the country.

In his message on X, Malik Riaz said: "All my life, Allah has always guided me to stand by my principle of not taking any political side or being

used by one party against the other. For over a year now, I've been under immense pressure to compromise, but I'll never allow anyone to use me as a pawn for political motives."

This, he claimed, had been a recurring pattern of victimisation against him and his business for introducing state-of-the-art projects in Pakistan.

"From 1996 till today, I've been 'punished' for contributing towards the progress of the country. I have faced such pressures in the past with absolute grit and strength. Even today, in a personal capacity, less say with utmost certainty, 'over my dead body'", he added.

"Despite my ailing condition and distress, I'm standing firm in the face of this adversity, bearing financial losses daily and being pushed to the wall completely, but will not surrender to any pressure tactics. Allah will guide and help me through this tough phase with dignity," he said.

Reacting to the tycoon's statement, former president and PTI leader Arif Alvi asserted that the pressure cooker will "burst one of these days".

"And who will suffer the damage? Not those who have ensured escape routes to foreign countries, but us loyal Pakistanis who have decided to live and die in our country," he said.

The poor souls who cannot afford to sit idle, even in a heatwave

Sindh's labourers and daily-wage workers, who must toil in the heat to earn food for their families, have no choice but to brave oppressive conditions

By M.S. Kishore, Zulfiqar Memon and Imtiaz Dharani



MOTORCYCLISTS (left) use a piece of wet cloth to cover their head as they ride on a hot day in Jacobabad, while, labourers pave a road with asphalt



"If I want to escape this unbearable heat, then who would feed my children?"

His plight is echoed by Arif, a push-cart vendor selling rice and 150-year-old yeast Jirahh Bagh. "I am learning in this heat, but I have no other source of income," he laments, relating that he makes a mere Rs400 a day, which has to go a long way if he has to feed his family.

While there are many who can afford to put their life on hold and wait out the heat of the day, people like Arif and Arif have no such luxury.

Akhtar, who drives a donkey cart delivering vegetables to juice shops,

responds sarcastically when approached for comment. "Are you asking me about my life, which becoming more miserable by the day? It is very difficult to feed my 10 children and other family members with just this donkey cart."

In his own words, his focus is to earn a livelihood for his family, come rain or shine. "I am ignorant of it. If I tried to engage the wealthy boss, who else would come to my aid?"

This becomes 'a furnace'
Life in the desert is no easier. In Tharparkar, the relentless sun has turned the sandy Thar desert into a furnace, leaving locals with little shade and no respite.

Here too, labourers like 45-year-old Chandanlal from Islamabad have to brave the oppressive sun to eke out a living.

"No matter how hot it is, we have to work in order to feed our children," he says, wiping the sweat from his brow.

To provide some relief to the heat-stricken residents, the district government has set up cold water stalls at different points in the area. Tents have also been erected to provide shade and shelter from the scorching sun.

Madan, a vegetable vendor at

Mithi's Kashmiri Chowk, echoes the sentiments of many in Thar. "The sun is abundant, but labour has to be done. I wish the sun would have mercy on us and rain would fall on the sandy desert of Thar so that the weather would be pleasant."

It is a similar story for Saduro, a labourer working in Nawabshah. Each day in his life is a fight for survival, and his work is a never-ending battle against the elements.

Being a construction worker, he has no way to escape the heat of the scorching sun, whether it is 48 degrees or pouring with rain. He

tells Dawn he begins at daybreak, rising from a makeshift bed to face another grueling day on the construction site, where he has been working for the past two months.

"My body sometimes aches from the previous day's labour, and my skin burns due to constant exposure to sunlight. But I know that I must earn for my family."

Saduro never went to school and started working as a labourer at the age of 18.

Working under the scorching sun is very challenging, he says, relating how sometimes his colleagues and he feel faint. But the thought of his family and three children pushes him to bear it all.

"Sometimes I have to carry heavy weights, like bags of soil or bricks, and climb multiple floors. All of this is under the open sky, as there is no structure around to provide shade."

At times, he says, the labourers will run the water motor and take a shower to beat the heat.

He relates how he and his fellows have suffered heatstroke multiple times, but have to suffice with a shawl — the local term for a glucose drip — to regain their energy before going back to work.

One gets the feeling that it's not just a physical, but an emotional one as well, trapped in a cycle of poverty and hardship, people like Saduro have little hope of escaping — both the heat and their circums

stances.

Protesters begin march against border closure

Locals protesting for a month to press authorities for reopening of crossing point

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Hundreds of people protesting against the closure of a crossing point between Pakistan and Iran in Mashhad area of Balochistan division in Balochistan, started a long march towards the provincial capital.

The protesters, including traders, had been staging a sit-in for the last one month in the border town Mashhad demanding the opening of Pak-Iran Mass Road border crossing used by local people for buying food items and other essential commodities.

The closure has created shortage of food items and other items of daily use. Besides, locals said the border trade was their livelihood which has also been impacted.

Hundreds of protesters, after ending the month-long sit-in, started the long march on Saturday and reached Yakmach area of Chagai district on Monday where locals welcomed them.

The participants of the long march expressed their gratitude to the people of Yakmach, saying, "We are grateful to the people of Yakmach for their humanitarian gesture and for standing with us during this difficult time."

The people of Yakmach announced their full support for the participants of the long march, stating that for the past 28 days, people of Mashhad had been staging a sit-in for their basic necessities of life but due to the lack of any action by the government, they have been forced to launch the protest long march towards Quetta.

"We fully support this long march and stand shoulder to shoulder with our oppressed Baluch brothers," they said.

After staying in Yakmach overnight, the participants of the long march will depart for Baluchistan on Monday morning.

Tribal leader Mir Jinnat Khan Beki, participating in the long march, spoke to journalists by phone from the area and said that despite staging the sit-in for 28 days, the government officials paid no heed and did nothing to resolve the issue.

"Despite staging several protests and strikes, the government did nothing and now we are compelled to march towards Quetta to highlight our demands. Upon reaching Quetta, we will hold a sit-in in front of the provincial assembly building," Mr Beki said.

Muzamil, the central leader of Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam and Member of the Provincial Assembly, Haji Mir Zahid Ali Beki, on Sunday said the local political leadership and members of civil society of Mashhad have been protesting against the closure of the Pak-Iran Mass Road for the last one month.

The MPA said the border crossing's closure has created a serious shortage of food items and other essential commodities in the area and people are facing severe difficulties in buying essential food items.

The MPA said he has informed top officials of the province, including the chief minister chief secretary, IG and home secretary about the problems locals had been facing due to border closure.

He said he could not leave his people alone in this difficult time as any cost and held out an assurance to keep knocking on every door to reopen the Mass Road border crossing.

He said that the local people of Mashhad were asking for the border opening to feed their families and they are willing to comply with all government regulations including payment of taxes.

He said the provincial government and other authorities concerned should immediately request the Mass Road border to end food items' shortage in the area faced by the thousands of people of Mashhad.

Talat Hussain's last bow

Continued from Page 1

England, he worked in TV series and radio plays including *It Ain't Half Hot* and *Over the Moon* and *Cover Coat*.

A rising star

After returning to Karachi, Mr Hussain appeared in several TV serials and series. At the time, he was, arguably, the most recognizable face and voice of the Pakistani TV industry. His performance in the series *Bashrah*, *Pachhagan* and *Hussain* were liked immensely both by the viewers and critics.

It didn't take him long to work in some more international ventures: the Indian film *Saman Ki Barish* in 1989 (co-starring Rekha and Jeetendra), British television series *Shogun* (1989) and the British-Pakistani film *Jinnah* (1998) being three of them.

In *Jinnah*, he played the part of a soft-hearted migrant in love with Pakistan and its founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He also won an award for his supporting role in the Norwegian movie *Deepen* (2007).

He was also bestowed with a *Faith of Performance* award.

Teacher, writer

Mr Hussain loved to work on stage and acted in a number of dramas. This was one of the reasons he joined the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPS) as a teacher.

He also led the Arts Council of Pakistan's theatre department, too, as its director.

Talking to *Dawn*, the council's president Ahmed Shah, with whom Mr Hussain had a close association, said the late actor had served the council in the capacity of its vice-president, and as a member of its governing body on several occasions.

In a statement, NAPS said that he had joined the academy from the very beginning, in 2004, and remained associated with it until his ailing health prevented him from actively working. It also announced three days of mourning.

Mr Hussain had a deep interest in literature. As a young artist, he used to frequently visit eminent scholar and poet Qasim Jinnah's place, which was a hub for Karachi's literary luminaries.

Recalling a memory of the late Talat Hussain, veteran actor Javed Sheikh told *Dawn*: "When I joined Radio Pakistan he was my senior. We worked together on radio, TV and film on many projects."

"I remember we were doing a play for TV called *Das Rong* (50 minutes) based on an Agatha Christie story. I



TALAT Hussain relives his days as a drama artist at the Radio Pakistan studio, on M.A. Jinnah Road in Karachi. —Ariq Mahmood / White Star

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He was also bestowed with a *Faith of Performance* award.

Teacher, writer

Mr Hussain loved to work on stage and acted in a number of dramas. This was one of the reasons he joined the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPS) as a teacher.

He also led the Arts Council of Pakistan's theatre department, too, as its director.

Talking to *Dawn*, the council's president Ahmed Shah, with whom Mr Hussain had a close association, said the late actor had served the council in the capacity of its vice-president, and as a member of its governing body on several occasions.

In a statement, NAPS said that he had joined the academy from the very beginning, in 2004, and remained associated with it until his ailing health prevented him from actively working. It also announced three days of mourning.

Mr Hussain had a deep interest in literature. As a young artist, he used to frequently visit eminent scholar and poet Qasim Jinnah's place, which was a hub for Karachi's literary luminaries.

Recalling a memory of the late Talat Hussain, veteran actor Javed Sheikh told *Dawn*: "When I joined Radio Pakistan he was my senior. We worked together on radio, TV and film on many projects."

"I remember we were doing a play for TV called *Das Rong* (50 minutes) based on an Agatha Christie story. I

Army chief calls Raisi true friend of Pakistan

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Syed Asim Munir has condoned the demise of President Ehsanul Raisi and other Iranian officials.

In a telephonic call with the Chief of General Staff of Iranian Armed Forces, Maj Gen Mohammed Daqhest, the COAS extended deep condolences over the unfortunate helicopter crash on May 19 in which President Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and other officials lost their lives.

The COAS expressed that the late president and late foreign minister were exceptional leaders and true friends of Pakistan, an Inter-Services Public Relations news release said.

He highlighted that the loss of both the leaders and others was truly tragic and irreparable.

The army chief on behalf of all ranks of Pakistan Army extended prayers for the departed souls and well wishes for the bereaved families. He said Pakistan has historic, cultural and brotherly ties with Iran, and the armed forces of Pakistan and Iran have always stood together.

General Daqhest thanked the COAS for sharing the grief, and vowed to continue the cooperation between the two militaries. —APP

Three killed for 'honour' in Jhal Magsi

By Ali Jan Mangi

GERA MURAD JAMALI: Three people were killed in an exchange of fire in the Jhal Magsi area of Balochistan division, on Sunday.

Levies officials said that Shamsher Magsi opened fire after seeing his relative woman with a man in Sarhani village of Jhal Magsi district, killing her and injuring the man. However, the injured man returned fire, killing the shooter, later, the injured man succumbed to his injuries.

Levies officials reached the area after receiving information and shifted the bodies of the victims to hospital. "It is an honour killing incident in which the suspect also lost his life," a senior Levies official told *Dawn*, adding that the bodies of the victims were later handed over to their families.

Levies man gunned down in Duki

QUETTA: A Levies man was gunned down by unidentified attackers in the Duki area of Balochistan on Sunday, police officials said.

The victim, along with his three friends, had gone to the Mandiyak area, a tourist spot, for a picnic when unknown men opened fire.

He was killed on the spot, and his body was shifted to the district hospital by the police. The victim has been identified as Shamsaulah.

One of the victim's friends told the police that the three men were praying at the time of the attack.

"Shamsaulah received one bullet which proved fatal," senior police officer Jaff Ahmed Mann said, adding the two friends have been taken into custody for questioning, while one escaped. —Saleem Shahid

Met Office warns of sweltering week

Continued from Page 1

with the temperature expected to surpass the 40-degree mark.

"The mercury is likely to increase to 40°C or above in Karachi due to a change in wind direction on May 29 and May 30," said chief meteorologist Dr Saeed Sarwar, adding that the temperature would drop slightly in the night and central parts of Sindh after May 27.

In South Punjab, the city of Khairpur in the Rahim Yar Khan district recorded a maximum temperature of 50.2°C.

Several other cities in the province also experienced temperatures well above 40°C, according to a statement from the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

Bahawalpur saw 48°C, Sargodha

witnessed 46°C, while Lahore the mercury climbed to 43°C on Sunday, with similar weather set to continue through the week.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the weather is likely to remain dry and hot in most districts of the province.

Here, Dara Ismail Khan witnessed the highest temperature, with 44°C recorded on Sunday. Bannu also stood at 41°C.

"Severe heat is likely in the southern districts of the province," a Met Office official told the Associated Press of Pakistan.

"The daytime temperature is likely to be 2 to 5 degrees Celsius above normal in southern districts," the official said.

The official also indicated the possibility of thunderstorms in Upper Dir, Swat, Mastohra and Kohistan.

Emphasising the importance of avoiding unnecessary heat exposure, Ministry of Climate Change spokesperson Muhammad Saleem Sheikh told APP that the situation could be more problematic and serious for children, the elderly and those with weak immune systems.

The official emphasised that while anyone could be affected by heatwaves, people at greatest risk were those at work or at school. He advised avoiding unnecessary outdoor activities between 11am and 3pm, the hottest part of the day.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) said it was taking measures to mitigate the effects of the heatwaves.

A PDMA spokesperson said that the provision of water in Chitwan is being ensured 24 hours a day due to the heatwave situation.

Afghanistan asked to hand over plotters of Bisham attack

Continued from Page 1

Afghan government".

When asked what Pakistan would do if the Afghan government doesn't cooperate, Mr Naqvi said that "the government will take a unilateral decision".

Timeline

The interior minister's remarks came almost two weeks after Inter-Services Public Relations Director General Maj Gen Ahmed Sharif said the attack was planned in Afghanistan, and the suicide bomber was also an Afghan national.

National Counter Terrorism Authority (Nacta) coordinator Rai Tabir, who also addressed the press conference, confirmed that the attacker, identified as Murtaza aliz Tagi, hailed from Afghanistan.

Security forces have so far

arrested 11 suspects, including the attacker and their alleged Pakistani handlers.

They were identified as Adil Shahbaz, Shafiq Qureshi, Zafar Qureshi, Nasser Hussain, Faisalullah, Faisalullah, Inuran Swati, Sakhdullah, Akbarullah, Akbar Rahman and Kamal Khan.

The suspects are in the custody of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Counter Terrorism Department, and a charge-sheet will be submitted to the court after their names are completed, the Nacta chief added.

While giving a timeline of the events leading up to the attack, Mr Rai said the attacker had travelled from Afghanistan four months before the attack and lived with his alleged Pakistani handlers — Adil Shaabaz and Shafiq Qureshi — who

preparing him for the attack.

The two men

were identified through the data recovered from the alleged suicide bomber's partially burnt mobile phone confiscated by security forces from the attack site.

According to the Nacta chief, Shahbaz was in contact with Haqir Talal, who was appointed as the shadow governor of the so-called Hazara emirate by TTP chief Mansoor in January.

"The appointment was made with the sole purpose of attacking Chinese nationals,"

In Afghanistan, two individuals, Khan Lala and Qari Asadullah, allegedly planned the attack and got approval from the TTP chief.

The alleged suicide bomber was trained in Afghanistan's Kunar province and was one of the four terror-

ists who crossed into Pakistan in Nov 2023, the Nacta chief said.

These suspects were aided by security forces, but Murtaza managed to flee beforehand and arrived in Swat.

Between Dec 2021 and Jan 2024, the attacker moved from Swat to Haripur and was allegedly facilitated by Faisalullah, Mr Rai said.

On Jan 5, Faisalullah took Murtaza from Haripur and handed him over to Shahbaz in Mastohra, who kept him in the house of Shafiq Qureshi in Ugal area of Mastohra till the day of the attack.

The Nacta chief added that the car used in the attack was a Toyota Vitz, manufactured in Japan and exported to Afghanistan.

He said a Malakand-based car

showroom owner allegedly helped TTP militants in smuggling the car, fitted with explosives, into Pakistan from Chaman.

The man, identified as Imran Swati, who was contacted by the TTP, agreed to do the job for Rs 250,000.

Swat's agents collected the car in Chaman and drove it to Zhaki in northern Balochistan. The car then crossed into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and was collected by Swati from the Dera Ismail Khan area of Dera Ismail Khan. He took the car to Chakdara, where his showroom was located.

The smuggling was done between March 1 and 15, Mr Rai added.

When Mr Naqvi was asked how a car fitted with explosives managed to travel around 1,000km inside Pakistan without being detected,

he said security officials stopped the vehicle for checking, but no suspicion was raised.

He claimed action had been taken against officials over negligence in checking the car thoroughly.

New SOPs for Chinese' security

Mr Naqvi reiterated that Pakistan "attached great importance to its relationship with China and the threats emanating from across the Western border were 'compromising the security of Chinese nationals'".

The security of Chinese nationals in Pakistan was of utmost importance for the government and "we have devised new SOPs for that purpose and they are being strictly implemented".

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Mercury rising

SHOULD we expect a political bonfire this summer? The climate seems to be rather conducive to it. The two largest parties are once again on the warpath, with a slew of troubling developments precluding any hopes for the long-awaited normalisation of political temperatures. In Lahore, the chief minister of Punjab has approved the registration of fresh cases against the PTI leadership, this time for "building a hateful narrative against state institutions". It appears that the PML-N government will rely on the odious defamation bill it recently passed in the Punjab Assembly, going after its chief rival. The provincial information minister, speaking on the matter, explained to the media that the Punjab home department had provided information establishing that PTI leaders were "spreading mischief inside and outside jail". She claimed that the party was "spreading hate as part of organised propaganda" to incite the people, destabilise the country and incite hatred against its institutions.

Was this anticipated? Unfortunately, yes. Meanwhile, in Islamabad, the PTI has been engaged in a bitter confrontation with the Capital Development Authority, which this week raised part of the party's central secretariat and later sealed the building under an anti-encroachment drive after issuing several warnings. Twenty-six individuals, including a PTI leader, were subsequently booked by Islamabad Police on various charges, including terrorism, allegedly for violently resisting the CDA operation. Understandably, the party is incensed by its roleless victimisation; disappointingly, it has yet to show any remorse for its own culpability in similar targeting of its opponents in the past. It has also seemed unwilling to mend fences with its opponents, having set strict preconditions for any negotiations that are unlikely to be accepted in the current situation. It seems in no hurry to see matters resolved and appears to be hoping that the crisis engulfing the government will eventually bring about its downfall.

There are all worrying reminders that political stability, a prerequisite for the economic stability desperately sought by the inflation-weary citizenry, remains an elusive as ever. With the budget almost upon us and the IMF making it clear it will not consider extending more loans till its painful requisites are met, the months ahead are likely to see civil discontent explode once again as summer electricity bills and new taxation measures land on the largely unsuspecting public. The country seems to be at the end of its tether. At some point, its leaders need to ask themselves: what is the point of fighting if ashes are all that will be left to rule over after they are done? Each of them is equally responsible for the deep pit Pakistan seems to have fallen into. It is time they stopped digging deeper and started thinking about how to get it out.

Antibiotic overuse

ANTIMICROBIAL resistance is an escalating crisis claiming some 700,000 lives annually in Pakistan. It is the third leading cause of death, trailing only cardiovascular disease and maternal and neonatal disorders. These alarming statistics, shared recently at the National Antimicrobial Stewardship Summit 2024, underscore a grave situation. Antibiotics, heralded as "wonder drugs", have saved countless lives. However, their rampant misuse has precipitated a public health emergency. Pakistan, the third largest consumer of antibiotics globally, consumed Rs126bn worth of these medicines in 2023 alone. The consequences of overuse are dire, with bacteria now exhibiting resistance even to third and fourth-generation antibiotics. Many factors contribute to this crisis. Self-medication, "prescriptions" by quacks, incomplete courses of antibiotics, and substandard production practices are primary culprits. Moreover, the misuse of antibiotics in livestock worsens the problem, contributing to 80pc of antimicrobial resistance cases in this sector. This not only impacts human health but also threatens food security.

The government must aim to increase understanding of antibiotic resistance among both healthcare professionals and the public, through awareness drives, healthcare professional training, patient education, school and community programmes and the distribution of information material at hospitals, clinics and pharmacies. The government must also enforce strict regulations on the sale of antibiotics, ensuring they are available only through prescription by licensed doctors. Additionally, there should be stringent oversight of drug companies to guarantee the production of high-quality antibiotics. Moreover, investment in healthcare infrastructure is crucial. Strengthening antimicrobial stewardship programmes that promote appropriate use of antibiotics in hospitals can curb over-prescription. These programmes should incorporate lessons from past health crises, including the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw a spike in antibiotic use despite clinical guidelines advising against it for viral infections. Also, vaccination programmes can play a pivotal role in preventing infections that might otherwise necessitate antibiotic treatment. The success of the typhoid conjugate vaccine campaign in Sindh demonstrates the efficacy of such initiatives. The spectre of AMR looms large, threatening to render common infections untreatable and reversing decades of medical progress. Only through sustained efforts can we hope to turn the tide against the devastating antibiotic misuse can cease and safeguard public health for future generations.

World Cup team

PAKISTAN waited until the very end to name their T20 World Cup squad. Even then, there was last-minute drama. Four members of the selection committee, including captain Babar Azeem and head coach Gary Kirsten, had decided on the combination from England, where the national team is playing its final warm-up series ahead of the tournament in the US and West Indies. But with inputs from the remaining three committee members having apparently not been taken till the deadline set by the International Cricket Council, a virtual meeting was set up to rubber-stamp the final squad. There were few surprises — with almost all the players currently in England, apart from Salman Ali Agha and Imran Khan Niazi, grabbing a ticket to the World Cup. Five of them — batters Saïm Ayub, Azeem Khan and Usman Khan, and bowlers Abrar Ahmed and Abbas Afridi — will feature in the tournament for the first time. Babar will lead Pakistan for the third time at a T20 World Cup, his side having finished as semi-finalists and runners-up in the last two editions respectively. Eight players in the current squad featured in the final of the 2022 edition, where Pakistan lost to England.

Thus, the ongoing series against the defending champions will give a clearer idea of Pakistan's credentials. After the first game was washed out, Pakistan's batters came up short in the chase in the second. The players now have just two more matches to perform better before their World Cup opener. Pakistan experimented with their lineup in their last two series against New Zealand and Ireland, where results were not favourable. They came back twice to draw the series against New Zealand, before falling in the opening game of the series triumph against Ireland. Pakistan, however, have a knack of peaking before tournaments, and with a settled lineup, the team will hope to lay down a marker before the World Cup against England.

OPINION

BY MALEEHA LODHI



Tightening embrace

China and Russia have a common interest to resist US pressure but ties have limits.

WITH election politics dictating current US foreign policy moves, Washington's actions are driving China and Russia much closer in a strengthened strategic partnership. The unintended consequences of American policies were laid bare by the outcome of the recent meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing.

This was Putin's first overseas visit after he secured a fifth term as president. It took place against the backdrop of tough US warnings to China not to support Russia's war efforts in Ukraine, where Russian forces are reported to be advancing in an offensive in the northeast. Washington imposed sanctions earlier this month on several Chinese companies for allegedly supplying Russia with components for military use. This happened immediately after Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to Beijing, where he raised US concerns about China's military dealings with Russia. This met with a sharp response from Chinese officials, who dismissed US accusations as "groundless". Foreign Minister Wang Yi shot back, saying "China is neither the creator of the Ukraine crisis nor a party to it".

Subsequently, the Biden administration significantly raised tariffs on Chinese imports including electric vehicles, computer chips and medical products in a bid to woo blue-collar voters in America's swing states, where the president is trailing his rival, Donald Trump. This added to a growing stream of US trade restrictions, which Beijing sees as aimed at containing China and thwarting its economic progress. Predictably, the latest curbs provoked a furious response from Chinese officials.

The wide-ranging joint statement issued during Putin's visit directed strong words at the US. It accused Washington of following a policy of "shut containment" towards China and Russia and engaging in "hegemonic behaviour". "The United States," it said "will think in terms of the Cold War and is guided by the logic of false confrontation putting the security of 'narrow groups' above regional security and stability, which creates a security threat for all countries in the region." The statement criticised

America's Indo-Pacific strategy and also denounced US missile deployments around the world that "pose a direct security threat to China and Russia". Both pledged to counter America's "destructive and hostile course" that they cast as undermining global peace and stability.

The lengthy, comprehensive statement also listed the steps the two countries planned to take to solidify military ties and scale up economic relations while identifying other areas of cooperation for a "new era of partnership". Both renewed support for the other's core interest. Russia reiterated its recognition of Taiwan as an "inalienable" part of China. China joined the Russian critique of Nato activities in Europe. The statement also expressed their shared view on North Korea. Compensated by its absence was any Chinese endorsement of Russia's military intervention in Ukraine.

In fact, China has adopted a "neutral" position on the Ukraine conflict and offered to be a mediator in the crisis. From the outset, it had misgivings about Russia's 2022 invasion. It often communicated these to Moscow and occasionally even publicly voiced them in a veiled manner. In the meeting between Xi and Putin on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in 2022, the Chinese leader conveyed his reservations over escalation of the Ukraine crisis. Putin later acknowledged that "concerns and questions" were raised by the Chinese president. China's repeated calls for a ceasefire and negotiations for a political solution reflects its strong preference for a speedy conclusion to the war. Last year, it also offered a 12-point plan for a political settlement of the Ukraine crisis.

But hostile US actions and its trade and tech war with China have only aligned Beijing more closely with Russia and relegated differences with Moscow on Ukraine and other issues to the background. To be sure, China-Russia interests do not converge on many issues especially as China, as a rising global power, has nothing to gain by upending or destabilising the international system, while Russia has few connections to act responsibly. Moreover, they confront different challenges and have different stakes in

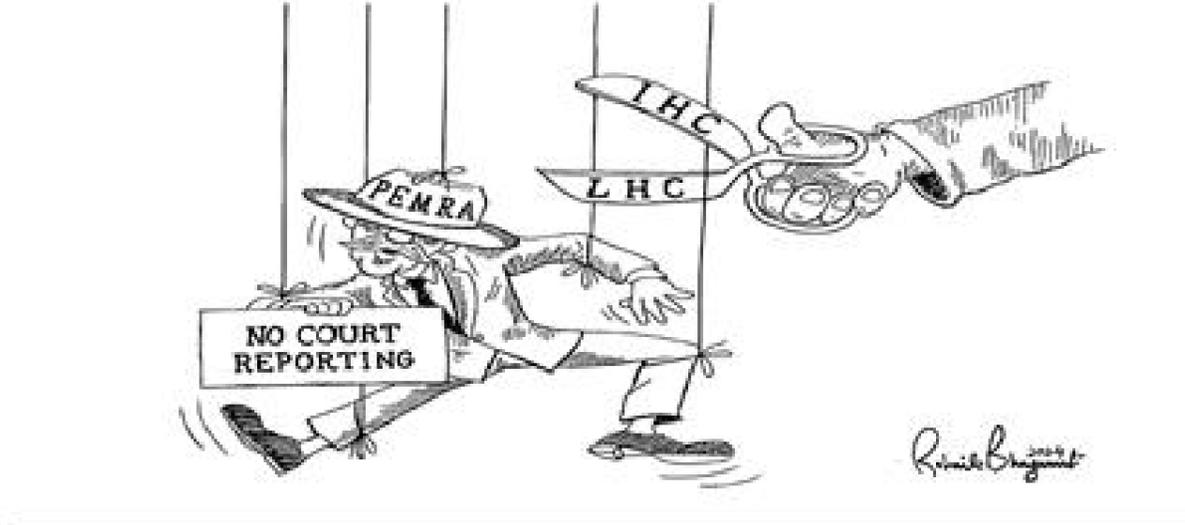
global stability. US threats of sanctions against Chinese banks and companies engaged in transactions that can aid Russia's military machine have apparently made Beijing somewhat cautious. Nevertheless, Beijing has responded strongly to US allegations that it is supporting Putin's war by supplying critical weapon components. It has countered these charges by insisting it is not supplying lethal arms and it "practically handles the export of dual-use items in accordance with laws and regulations". Moaning US pressure on this count has led Beijing to rebuff Washington by strengthening its military relations with Russia. Their deepening strategic cooperation has in turn perturbed Western nations.

Unclear China may be with Putin's Ukraine adventure, but what the war has done is to significantly deepen its economic ties with Russia and tied the economies of the two countries more closely. For Russia, facing Western economic sanctions, growing economic relations with China have enabled it to mitigate the impact of Western financial and trade curbs. In 2023, two-way trade between them reached a record high of \$240 billion. The bulk of this trade is conducted in rubles and renminbi.

Last year, Russia also became China's top source of oil supply, overtaking Saudi Arabia, providing discounted, cheaper crude. China is Russia's biggest trading partner, exporting a range of products from cars and machinery to electronics.

Both countries face pressure and sanctions — on different grounds — from the US in an increasingly coercive and punitive approach, even if Western actions against Russia are of a different order. This has created a greater incentive and common interest for China and Russia to join forces to resist US pressure. While there will be limits to the Sino-Russian relationship over time because the interests of the two countries don't converge on many counts, for now, US policies have ensured they will maintain a close alignment to counter Washington's pressure. ■

The writer is a former ambassador to the US, UK and UN.



BY UMAIR JAVED

In defamation's name

LAST week, the Punjab Assembly hastily passed a defamation bill, despite grave concerns raised by journalist unions and rights bodies, as well as opposition legislators. The bill, which now only requires the governor's assent before coming into force, proposes special tribunals to deal with cases of "fake news" and "purposeful misinformation", with punishments ranging from a fine of Rs1 million in general damages to 10 times that amount as punitive damages.

There are several reasons why the passage of this bill is a worrying development. It provides a pretext to the state to clamp down on speech in the name of fighting fake news, it opens up a new route to victimise opposition politics, and it empowers unaccountable, single-member platforms outside the existing legal apparatus to determine what constitutes defamation.

Before getting into these in detail, there is sufficient ground to wonder whether a defamation law of this nature helps in addressing its targeted problem in the first place. There is no denying that the widened use of social media outlets has created an oversupply of information, much of which is free from the burden of factual rigour or accuracy. It is also true that the proliferation of such information happens at a much faster rate now, with intended, or otherwise, effects taking place more rapidly and at a wider scale.

This premise makes it seem that a legal remedy of some sort is required, which defamation laws usually provide. But the government in this instance is monopolising the nature of the remedy, when it is not equipped or capable of determining the scale and nature of the problem. The task deserves careful deliberation by a much wider set of stakeholders that includes citizens, media watchdogs, journalist associations, and rights bodies, especially those dealing with digital rights.

One primary reason for caution and scepticism regarding this latest piece of legislation stems from the particular track record of the Pakistani public authorities on issues related to speech, especially in the online domain. The impact of Peco's passage under the PML-N government in 2021 and subsequent amendments in

recent years has been detrimental to free expression, especially regarding rights activists and critical voices (such as those of the opposition). This point was aptly demonstrated by representatives of the Lahore Press Club who pointed out the double standards of the current government, which sided with journalists against the Peco amendments while in opposition, but were quick to pass them once they stepped into power.

The end result has been that the grounds established for Peco, that it would protect the online rights of citizens, have been subverted by the act itself. Instead, it has turned out to be yet another example of the state using the law to empower itself against citizens. This is a natural consequence of a state that convinces itself primarily on grounds of (self-defined) national

Such a punitive legal instrument in the hands of state authorities can only indicate coercive intention.

security, and sees segments of its population as a source of insecurity and risk. In turn, this vision flows from the imbalance between civilian and security apparatuses within the structure of the state itself.

A second reason for caution lies in the timing and the political context in which this bill has been drafted. The last two years have seen an escalation of rights violations, culminating in the suppression of the PTI through a variety of legal and extra-legal means. The opposition party's use of social media is frequently cited as a key reason for its eroding popularity, which allowed it to stage an unprecedented, intemperate election campaign and emerge as the largest party in the country.

This defamation bill places the regulation of social media as one of its central objectives. In other words, it is reasonable to think of it as a key legal instrument that can be deployed against an

already suppressed political entity, further limiting its ability to play its role as an effective opposition. While there is no doubt that social media disinformation has been a key plank of the PTI's political strategy, such a punitive legal instrument in the hands of state authorities can only indicate coercive intention.

Finally, the procedural critique of setting up a parallel judicial structure, raised forcefully by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, is also worth raising here. As the rights body has stated in a recent statement, the 180-day time-bound nature of proceedings, while possibly well-intentioned, undermines the quality of the legal process and may lead to large punishments being levied in relative haste. It also sidesteps the provisions of existing witness laws in the country.

Additionally, the bill authorises the government to appoint tribunal members (drawing on a pool selected from the chief justice of the high court) and offer emoluments higher than currently being done by the judiciary. This represents a significant encroachment of executive authority on judicial functioning, leaving the door open to misuse and subversion for a wide range of political purposes.

Overall, the bill has selected an avenue from media and rights-based civil society, along with the expected opposition from PTI-80C members in the legislature. This alone should give the government reason to pause and evaluate the contours of this legislation.

It is an indictment of public authority in this country that punitive attempts to resolve a problem such as fake news involve significant scepticism about intentions and expected use. It reflects a deepening of mistrust between key civil society stakeholders and the state, and an erosion of democratic norms that grants rights and space for the functioning of political opposition. Simultaneously, it provides yet more proof that the undergirding logic of public authority in Pakistan is legal and extra-legal coercion rather than legitimised consent. ■

The writer teaches sociology at Lums. [@umairjaved](#)

OPINION



BY HUMA YUSUF

Boiling point

ANOTHER heatwave, another slew of alarming headlines. We are better prepared than we were in 2015, when over 2,500 people lost their lives to soaring temperatures. Public awareness has improved, and emergency measures such as relief camps have been mobilised in urban areas. But Pakistan is still a long way from building the resilience — in all respects, socio-political or infrastructural — that it will need to endure the ravages of climate change, particularly extreme heat.

Concern about extreme heat has largely been driven by economic considerations. The Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research has estimated that global warming will reduce global income by 19 per cent by 2045. The AIIB has found that extreme heat results in 650 billion hours of annual labour losses globally (equivalent to 148 million full-time jobs). Of immediate relevance to Pakistan, 2022 research from Dartmouth University found that an annual increase in the temperature of the five hottest days of the year can reduce economic growth by a percentage point.

This economic fallout is driven by decreases in labour productivity and supply as the working poor become unwell, supply chain disruption, and agricultural loss. A recent policy report by ISEI's Grantham Institute on the impact of high temperatures on Bangladesh's workforce found that wheat productivity and supply would decrease by 46.2pc by 2050 in a world with a three-degree temperature rise.

But extreme heat is not about GDP alone. Evidence is mounting that heatwaves amplify inequality. Women, the rural and urban poor, marginalised groups and those with less education are more likely to die in heatwaves. These are typically groups with fewer resources, informal housing, erratic energy access and poor healthcare. And we cannot easily ignore this demographic. I, too, urban and rural poor will be coping without cooling solutions by 2030.

Women are especially hard hit by extreme heat. According to an EAO report published in March, female-headed households lose 8pc of their income due to heat stress; in the case of female farm labour — a key working constituency in Pakistan — each day of extreme high temperatures reduces the value of crops produced by women by 3pc as compared to men. This is because when the mercury rises, women focus more on unpaid domestic work — sourcing water, caring for heat-affected dependents, and cooking under prohibitive conditions. The physical toll of extreme heat on women, particularly pregnant ones, is also more severe.

Worse, high temperatures also correlate

with an increase in gender-based violence. A 2023 study by JAMA Psychiatry based on research in Pakistan, India and Nepal found that a one-degree Celsius increase in the average annual temperature linked to a 6.3pc increase in incidents of physical and sexual abuse. Again, this is no surprise: when temperatures rise, crops fail, daily wage earners struggle to work, health suffers, and the financial pressures resulting from these realities lead to just as families are trapped indoors to escape the sun.

Extreme heat means extreme stress, driving not only domestic violence but also poor mental health. Research from the UK, for example, shows that higher temperatures coincide with an increase in hospital visits for anxiety, self-harm and substance abuse.

Children are also susceptible to extreme heat — and it's not just about dehydration. Frequent heatwaves can have a long-term effect on a child's educational attainment. Half of our country's school-going population has lost a week of learning to the current heatwave. Globally,

according to the EAO, higher temperatures also result in 49 more minutes of child labour per week as children pick up chores that women cannot attend to while they manage the extra domestic burden of hot days.

Given this, heat cannot only be considered through an economic lens, with bottom line considerations of worker productivity driving climate-adaptation efforts. We have to see extreme heat as an amplifier of social inequality and marginalisation, and recognise that the welfare of future generations could be jeopardised with each poorly managed heatwave.

We know the solutions: heat-resistant urban infrastructure, greenhouse gas reduction, holistic farm policies that acknowledge women's challenges in a climate-stressed world, etc. But what will make us implement them? Perhaps our policymakers should closely watch the election across the border, unfolding in extreme heat, with collapsing candidates and stalled campaigning. Early evidence shows that heatwaves alter voter preferences, with ballots going to those with prescriptive plans for building agricultural resilience and planning irrigation. If money couldn't get us to plan better for extreme heat, maybe politics will.

The writer is a political and integrity risk analyst.
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BY MOHAMMAD ALI BABAKHEL

Moving bombs

IN the post-9/11 scenario, suicide bombing emerged as the deadliest and most popular terrorist strategy adopted by various groups around the world. After 9/11, there was an intensification in both the frequency and innovation of suicide bombings. Among these, the suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (SVBIED) quickly became one of the most lethal weapons deployed. This sophisticated weapon requires significant technical proficiency, which leading military organisations developed and employed effectively.

The Islamic State's frequent use of SVBIEDs in Iraq and Syria helped the militant group attract global media attention. SVBIEDs served as a powerful force multiplier, enabling numerically inferior militants to deliver tons of explosives to designated targets and overrun larger enemy contingents. IS used SVBIEDs to punch holes in static defences, with follow-up attacks inflicting further damage on defenders.

IS tried to gain an edge over its enemies by tailoring SVBIED designs to specific threats, targets, and environments, with the aim of increasing the likelihood of the vehicle reaching its intended detonation point. For example, the covert SVBIED, the most commonly used type, features a vehicle with an unmodified exterior fitted with an interior explosive payload, driven and detonated at a specific target. The unmodified exterior allows it to blend in with other vehicles, deceiving the police and making it difficult to detect.

An up-armoured SVBIED typically has steel plates welded on the front exterior, shielding the engine block, windscreen, and tyres. These were used during conflicts in Iraq and Syria. The improved shielding protected the vehicle, the attacker, and the fitted explosives from incoming fire until the intended point of detonation. After capturing Mosul in 2014, IS seized many military-armoured vehicles, modified them, and used them as SVBIEDs.

A two-man SVBIED is operated by two attackers: one driver and one rooftop gunman. The gunman provides supporting fire until the vehicle reaches its detonation point. This type of SVBIED was used in attacks against hardened military targets in Iraq and Syria. To target fortified positions, IS designed specific SVBIEDs capable of removing concrete blast barriers to clear the passage.

The militants also use parked VBIEDs, which resemble SVBIEDs but are parked at a location and detonated remotely. Parked VBIEDs lack drivers and function as larger, disguised stationary IEDs.

Different vehicles provide varying storage capacities to place explosives as needed, effectively targeting and ensuring maximum damage. Usually, VBIEDs are employed by terrorists against large targets to facilitate forced entry and create significant impact.

To increase the explosion's impact, a few SVBIEDs were designed and used on some occasions by IS with rooftop rocket pods and a firing mechanism that enabled the drivers to suppress fire from the SVBIED's target. In some instances, explosives are mounted on the doors and windshields' interiors to direct as much of the explosive power of the blast forward and to the sides. The payload arrangement also included crude oil to increase the primary blast effect upon detonation of the main payload and ensure that the remnants at the site were burned, causing more losses.

From 2014 to 2024, a total of 85 suicide attacks, including 26 VBIEDs, resulted in the deaths of 557 civilians and 143 policemen in KP. The highest number of VBIED attacks was sight in 2014, followed by four in 2023. Between 2014 and 2024, Peshawar faced the highest number of attacks, with 26 suicide and 11 VBIED attacks, followed by 14 suicide attacks in North Waziristan and six VBIED attacks in Barani. Ground realities suggest that suicide bombing, including VBIEDs, is primarily an urban or bordering district phenomenon.

To prevent such incidents, Pakistan needs to revise the legal, administrative, and procedural dynamics of vehicle registration, purchase, activation and change of ownership of SIM cards, renting accounts, driver, driver and explosive businesses, and record-keeping of travellers. Strict enforcement is required for the regulation of auto workshops. Transparency in vehicle transactions and the prevention of vehicle theft, as well as addressing gaps in the transaction of explosives, will reduce the chances of using vehicles as moving bombs.

Employing sniffer dogs, high-tech explosive detectors, public safety education, target hardening, and redesigning the security architecture of high-profile hotels and commercial buildings, along with adherence to improved security protocols for public transport and trains, will reduce the space for terrorist groups.

The writer is the author of Pakistan: In Between (Ebrahman and Patoos).
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FROM THE PAST PAGES OF DAWN

1974 | Fifty years ago

There was no issue of the paper on this date due to a dispute between newspapers' managements and sales agents. The excerpt below is taken from the May 25 edition.

African liberation

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has renewed its commitment to the cause of the peoples of Africa in their struggle for independence, equality and dignity and sent its greetings to them on the African Liberation Day. . . . A statement issued by a Foreign Office spokesman . . . Today, 25th May, is being observed . . . as African Liberation Day. Pakistan which has always backed the peoples of Africa . . . renews its commitment to their cause.

The people of Pakistan attach great importance to the ties that bind them to the nations of Africa. They have followed with admiration the glorious march of the peoples of that great continent towards their high destiny, and shared their efforts to eliminate the evils of colonialism and racial discrimination. The resolute determination the African peoples have displayed in fighting political and economic domination by forces of imperialism . . . [has] already achieved significant results. — News agencies

1949 | Seventy-five years ago

UK help 'insufficient'

KARACHI: "Pakistan has the largest and most important strategic frontiers in the Commonwealth. Nevertheless [sic] . . . is not receiving . . . [sufficient] material assistance . . . from Britain necessary to carry out her commitments," Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, told Mr Douglas Stuart, BBC's Correspondent in Pakistan, in an interview. . . . He said that Britain had given Pakistan no assistance over . . . the division of defence stores with India. Under the agreement reached at the time of partition India was to have made available . . . about 160,000 tons of defence stores. India, however, had supplied Pakistan with only about 30,000 tons and has stopped [sic]. [Mr Khan] said . . . that the Commonwealth should act as a body to settle inter-Dominion disputes. "Unless the Commonwealth [countries] . . . can agree to [act] in concert on specific matters there is a serious danger of the Commonwealth . . . falling out."

[Meanwhile, according to Dawn's staff correspondent, . . . Khan Abul Ghayyum, Premier of NWFP, at a press conference at Karachi on [May 26] . . . [in the Kashmir publicist's] view: "For India . . . it might be a question of association, but for Pakistan it is a question of life and death. . . ."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@dawn.com

Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space. All letters should carry the writer's address, CNIC and phone numbers.

Will 'emergency' in education deliver?



THE incumbent prime minister recently announced the imposition of "education emergency" across the country. I wonder if somebody has told the prime minister that the education mafia in the country will itself defeat the initiative. And I have reasons for being pessimistic. When I recently experienced should be an eye-opener for the policymakers.

On May 10, during the matriculation examination of the National Board, I was serving as a marker (senior teacher). An hour into the paper, to ensure the decorum of the examination hall, I had to take away answer sheets from those who were disturbing other candidates with their constant chatter. As soon as I did that, a high school teacher entered the hall, despite having no authority to interfere in the duty of a supervisor. He violently snatched the answer sheets from my hand while pushing, abusing and threatening me in front of all the students.

Refraining from engaging in a scuffle, I went to inform the headmaster about the episode. He took me back to the same class, lectured the students about the sanctity of the classroom, and asked me to carry on with my assignment. The culprit was simply advised to move out to the headmaster's office.

Even with my self-respect in tatters, I continued with the task, hoping to have a word with the school administration once the exam was over. However, no action was taken against the intruder. No apology was tendered to me. Instead, I was asked by other staff members to let the influential candidates do whatever they wanted to. I felt frustrated and humiliated. There were some who actually praised the aggressive behaviour of the teacher concerned.

With this incident, which by no means was an isolated one, do we need to bring in more students in such schools? Should we have more children in schools where grossly large one-room halls and facilitate the influential students using unfair means? Writing these lines, the thought did cross

my mind that I may very well be made a scapegoat. After all, I am only a junior elementary school teacher appointed in August 2022. With hardly two years in service, I cannot fight the elements that do not fear even their headlines. I shudder at the thought of losing my job in these hyperinflationary times, but, if the worst does happen, I will know that I tried to expose toxic elements within the education system. Let us see how it goes.

Faha Muneer
Nawabshah

Private school mafia

EVERY morning, I see teachers of a private school carrying out the duties of "traffic wardens", directing vehicles in the right direction. These vehicles carry students coming to this school, a so-called elite private school's Jinnah Campus in Quetta. Every day, I feel sorry for those teachers who are made to carry out such "duties" by the school administration simply because it is not willing to hire relevant staff.

The teachers do not dare to complain against this unprofessional and inhuman behaviour of the school administration. Those who do are shown the door. Unfortunately, state institutions are powerless before these influential groups running private schools. Is there anybody at the helm of affairs brave enough to challenge the private school mafia and to somehow restore the dignity of teachers?

Feroze Ahmed
Hyderabad

Vulnerable commuters

COMMITTING as a woman in Pakistan is one of the most daunting, uncomfortable and risky experiences one can have simply because the unruly behaviour of drivers working for various cab services is mostly enabled by societal norms. The absence of an effective customer service further contributes to the sense of insecurity and vulnerability among the women.

The situation is further worsened by the fact that the hiring process of drivers lacks professionalism. There are no proper and reliable background checks in this regard, and everybody knows that. This makes the very idea of sharing with a complete stranger the closed cabin of a car makes one feel insecure. But there is not much of a choice for the commuters.

The unavailability of effective public transport worsens the situation. Had well-planned and efficient public transport been available, women would have had the much safer choice for their daily commute. The government should provide relief at the earliest to a major segment of society.

Public transport should be overhauled to make commute safer and safer for women. Besides, the cab services should be compelled to improve their hiring process and security steps to make travelling a safe experience.

Muniba Taseem
Islamabad



Digital inclusivity

THE National Human Development Report 2023-24 for Pakistan, titled "Doing Digital for Development", released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recently, has revealed disparities within Pakistan's digital landscape. While urban centres like Islamabad share with 'very high' digital development, vast areas of the country linger in the shadows of low digital development rankings. This disparity underscores the urgent need for comprehensive policies to bridge the digital divide, and ensure equitable access to digital opportunities for all.

Also, the report has highlighted that 83.5 per cent of women report limited autonomy over phone ownership, exposing deep-rooted gender disparities in the digital ecosystem of Pakistan. It is clear that the country needs a comprehensive scheme for digital development.

At the forefront of this agenda should be the imperative to expand mobile network coverage, ensuring stable internet connectivity even in the remotest corners of the country. Facilitating access to mobile phones is also crucial, especially for marginalised segments and communities. However, access alone is not sufficient. Awareness sessions on digital literacy can equip individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to leverage digital technologies for personal as well as professional growth.

Digitalising markets and promoting widespread adoption of digital payments represent crucial steps towards inclusivity. By transitioning from cash-based transactions to digital payments, Pakistan can foster greater efficiency, transparency and financial inclusion. Furthermore, implementing skill

development schemes for the uneducated population is essential to ensure that no one is left behind in the digital age.

Social media platforms offer ample opportunities for individuals to generate income through content creation even without formal education. People need to have access to, and understanding of, such opportunities without discrimination.

Jahan Zohb Brohi
Suarthi

Blinding headlights

WHILE travelling on the Karachi-Hyderabad motorway recently, I had to face a lot of trouble owing to the increasing use of high-intensity white lights by vehicles. I am sure I was not the only one having trouble fending off blinding light rays, and focusing on the road ahead.

These bright lights not only disturb drivers, but also pose a significant danger on the road. The intense glare from these white lights is distracting and blinding, creating a serious safety risk for all motorists. When a vehicle equipped with these lights approaches from behind or in the opposite direction, it becomes extremely challenging for drivers to maintain clear visibility. This threatens the safety of the affected drivers, and endangers passengers and pedestrians.

The use of high-intensity white lights on roads is in clear violation of safe driving practices. The lights can cause temporary blindness and disorientation, leading to delayed reaction times and increased chances of accidents. The potential consequences of such negligence can be catastrophic, including severe injuries and even loss of life.

The authorities concerned should take immediate and decisive action to address the issue. This includes establishing and enforcing clear guidelines for the use of vehicle headlights, including limiting the brightness and colour temperature of lights allowed on public roads.

There should be campaigns to educate motorists about the dangers of using high-intensity white lights and the importance of adhering to safe driving practices. There should be regular checks to ensure compliance with regulations by way of imposing harsh penalties.

Besides, there should vehicle inspection protocols to include checks for unshielded or non-compliant lighting systems in cars. Providing a platform for the public to report vehicles with illegal or hazardous lighting will help the authorities in taking appropriate action against the culprits. It is imperative that these measures be implemented without delay to safeguard the lives of all road users.

Azeez Ahmad Zai
Karachi

► ANGRY PEOPLE: Famous sportswear and baseball executive David Brick once said: "Keep your tongue. A decision made in anger is never sound". Someone needs to convey this quote to the higher-ups in Pakistan where everyone seems to be in an angry mood. It seems that anger has taken over all our decisions that are obviously riddled with errors and shall bring no good to the country. It is high time those who matter took a cool break.
Muhammad Qudus
Karachi

► DRIVING LICENCE WORK: As the expiry date of my driving licence came close, I applied for its renewal a month-and-a-half earlier to avoid any violation of law. My thought to get my licence before the expiry date proved to be a folly. Despite paying a hefty sum of Rs10,000, I have been waiting for it to date. It is now a law-abiding citizen treated in the country? The relevant department must get it done in order first before issuing of the services as supposedly delivers.
Dr. Ali Nazam Chaudhry
Lahore

► PROLONGED HEADBENDING: People in Khuzdar have for long been suffering from prolonged headbending. After electronic appliances one after another suffered at the hands of power fluctuations and outages, people have been forced to adopt ancient methods of sustaining life. As such, the current agency of unshielded headbending is made worse by the non-availability of natural gas. The government should come to the rescue of the people.
Azmat
Khuzdar

► PEDESTRIAN BRIDGES: The stretch of road in Karachi's Gulshan-e-Iqbal area which divides blocks 4 and 7 has become a death trap for commuters and pedestrians alike. Unfortunately, the drivers show no consideration for the pedestrians crossing the road. This has resulted in countless accidents. Building pedestrian bridges has become inevitable. The relevant authorities should immediately initiate the process in this regard.
M. Waqar Siddiqi
Karachi

External Ombudsman
Veteran journalist Muhammad Ali Siddiqi is Dawn's External Ombudsman (EEO). His duty is to attend to our readers' complaints, and to respond to them professionally. EEO is the investigating authority to whom all complaints can be referred, and it is EEO who takes notice of any alleged violations of Dawn's code of ethics, and informs the Editor for appropriate action.
Email: ali@siddiqi.com

PUNJAB NOTES

Authors: Nashad, Panhwar and Paul

By Masfiah Soob

PUNJABI writers and scholars keep research as busy as if it's a contagion that would incapacitate them mentally. They churn out piles and piles of poor quality poetry, and interminable streams of banal conversations.

important role in disseminating religious knowledge. His article on Chhachhi dialect is illuminating; it dispels certain misconceptions regarding the dialect popularised by scholars who were neither familiar with the territory it's spoken in nor its relationship with other dialects of Punjabi language.

description of social and cultural life. In the fourth section, he analyses the structure of Shah Hussain's Kaffi (lyrics) who happened to be the pioneer of this genre and its best representative.

researchers and students. It is a must for all libraries, public and private. 'Garbly Marnay' is Nasir Ali Panhwar's book published by Elm Publication, Hyderabad. The book says 'a prolific writer, Panhwar has penned numerous pieces on social, developmental, climate change, and environmental issues. He is also the founder general secretary of Friends of India Forum, a council member of Hissar Foundation, a member of general body of Thercep, and the founder executive director of Centre for Environment Development.'

prevailing system we live under seems unaltered consumption as the highest human goal. Coupled with this deadly fallacy is population explosion that has further exacerbated the highly fraught situation which can be described as an extremely challenging new phase in human evolution. If it remains unchecked it can prove fatal for all living creatures on the face of this earth.

tural world. He is a fiction writer, culture and language activist who has spent years struggling for the restoration of legitimate rights of Punjabi language to them denied to it by the ignorant hegemony of Punjab. He is workaholic and has written a large number of books, pamphlets and manuals in Punjabi. Defying the odds he regularly publishes online daily 'Lafkar'. His latest publication is 'Media To Social Media' brought out by Punjabi Markaz, Lahore. In his foreword Paul writes: 'Contemporary age is the age of social media. The start of twenty-first century introduced us to a new formula: the gaining power; in order to rule one needs neither force, nor money, nor any other traditional means. Now one who knows the art of ruling the media will rule the people.'

Woman dies, two daughters injured in roof collapse

By Our Correspondent

TORA TEK NINGGI: A woman died and her two daughters were injured when the under-construction roof of their house caved in on Saturday evening in Chak 67 JB in Faisalabad.

Niamnawa on Samundri Road, Kharianwa Bypass on Sarfiana Road, Railway Crossing in Jaranwala; Chak 104 RB near UET Campus on Makiana Bypass Road; Kharianwala Ground adjacent to the New Vegetable Market in Jaranwala; Chak 423 GB opposite Punjab College on Sarfiana Road in Tardharwala and Chak Jhanra Sports Ground.



LAHORE: Cyclists risk their life and limb on Queen Mary College Road.—White Star

Teachers oppose 'outsourcing' of 13,000 public schools to NGOs

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab Teachers Joint Action Committee has voiced strong opposition to the provincial government's decision to hand over government schools to the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) and Punjab Education Initiatives Management Authority (PEIMA) in the name of reorganisation.

schools up to 100 despite the shortage of staff. The committee leaders described the PEIMA and PEF as failed models with 12,000 educational institutions under their supervision deteriorating due to non-receipt of timely funds. They warned that giving the PEF and PEIMA another 13,000 educational institutions was an unwise move.

ment. They announced to hold a peaceful protest demonstration in front of the Punjab Assembly at 12 noon on May 29 under the auspices of All Government Employees Grand Alliance Punjab. Earlier, the Maryam Nawaz-led provincial government announced plans to hand over 13,000 non-performing public schools to non-government organisations (NGOs) in the name of bringing reforms.

FIA arrests Lesco official for bribe

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) official, Zahedy Bagan, was arrested by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for allegedly receiving a bribe of Rs100,000 from a consumer seeking restoration of electricity connection.

Rs264,000 detection bill to an electricity pylon in Sheikhupura Road, Rs414,000 detection bill to another power pylon in Shearapur area, Rs268,000 fine in the form of detection bill to a customer in Bari Atari area, and a Rs200,000 fine to a power pylon also in Bari Atari area.

Three held for demanding Rs2m ransom

RAHWALPUR: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested three people who demanded a ransom of Rs2 million from the family of an abducted man, Muhammad Sajid.

Sajid of village Khairpoh Sharif in Bahawalpur. They took Sajid to Iran on Feb 28, 2024, where, instead of providing him with a job, they kept him in illegal confinement. They shot a video of Sajid in confinement and sent it to his parents, demanding Rs2 million for his release.

Teachers oppose 'outsourcing' of 13,000 public schools to NGOs

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab Teachers Joint Action Committee has voiced strong opposition to the provincial government's decision to hand over government schools to the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) and Punjab Education Initiatives Management Authority (PEIMA) in the name of reorganisation.

The team conducted a raid at Shah Kamal Road in Kamboh Colony, where they dismantled a direct bypass installed on the main gas line. The stolen gas was being used by a landlord and hotel. The owner had also installed two gas compressors to siphon gas.

Advertisement for National Highway Authority (NHA) Corrigendum-VI Invitation for Bids (IFB) for 03x Manual Toll Plazas of West Zone. Includes details on procurement, references, and contact information.

Advertisement for National Highway Authority (NHA) Corrigendum-VI Invitation for Bids (IFB) for 20x Manual Toll Plazas of South Zone. Includes details on procurement, references, and contact information.

Ji announces drive to uphold constitution after Eid

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naveem Rehman has announced a national movement following Eid to uphold the supremacy of the constitution and law.

He categorically stated that the Ji would never recognise a government formed through fraudulent elections, advocating for the restoration of the people's true mandate as reflected in Form 45. There is no need for the fresh election, he said.

Row over HMC hospital director's appointment affects patient care

Health minister terms replacement of Dr Faisal by BoG illegal

By Ashtaq Yasufzai

PESHAWAR: The tug-of-war between health minister and Board of Governors (BoG) over appointment of new hospital director has been adversely affecting patient care at medical teaching institution Hayatabad Medical Complex.

On Saturday, the BoG of the hospital appointed Dr Sher Zaman Khan as director replacing Dr Faisal Shehbaz but health department asked the latter to continue his work.

The health minister said that the step was against the government's directives barring the BoGs of all 10 medical teaching institutions in the province from taking major decisions.

"We have already banned postings, transfers, promotions, terminations, procurements and awarding fresh tenders at the teaching hospitals and the BoG's order contravened that. Therefore, the hospital director has been asked to work as usual," Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah told Dawn. He said that such haphazard moves were bound to impact the performance of the hospital and the government would not allow it.

"Dr Faisal is still hospital director of Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC) as per law," he said.

Ghulam Qadir Khan, the chairman of BoG of HMC, said that the decision was approved by the board unanimously because Dr Faisal Shehbaz was refused extension in deputation by health department and therefore was reappointed to it on completion of his period.

"He was given opportunity to get department's permission to stay on the post but he didn't," he said.

The BoG of HMC in its meeting on May 22 approved reappointment of Dr Faisal Shehbaz to health department and appointed another senior administrative doctor, Sher Zaman, as hospital director.

The health department, however, noted that boards were barred from taking any major decision and asked it to withdraw the notification. But the BoG feels that it is autonomous to take such decisions.

"As a result, HMC has two personnel working on the key position of hospital director, who is also the principal accounting officer and hence responsible for all the finances. Parallel orders are being issued," sources said.

They said that there was utmost confusion and unrest in the institute with the managers and employees contemplating which orders to pursue. "The tug-of-war between the board and government is damaging the flow of services in the institute," they added.

A similar decision taken by BoG had already been rejected by health department, a week ago, arguing that there was bias on transfers and the reappointment was illegal.

The BoG's order to replace hospital director was termed illegal in a notification and it was asked to submit an application for relaxation of ban on transfers. It also asked the BoG to comply with its directives and submit a report within three days. Dr Faisal continues to work as per the health department's instructions.

The HMC administration in a notification said on Saturday that on per decision of BoG, Dr Faisal Shehbaz was reappointed to his current department on May 22 and he should relieved as hospital director of HMC. It said that he could not hold or chair any meeting. The board being the competent authority has given acting charge to Dr Sher Zaman. All managers and hospital staff are advised to follow the instructions of new director and disobey illegal orders of his predecessor.

Dr Faisal is a BPS-20 management cadre doctor.

The current BoGs of teaching hospitals have been appointed by caretaker government and their replacement is round the corner as the incumbent government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf wants to appoint its own people as members of the boards. "The BoG's members are well aware of their removal so they are taking such decisions," said sources.

They said that despite the fact that these were voluntary positions, many BoG members were using official vehicles, petrol and drivers and had occupied offices in HMC in violation of the law.

"The government will not accept illegal decision of BoGs," said health minister.



A VIEW of the beautiful Jannat Waterfall in Lahore, Pakistan, located in the suburbs of Khanpur, Ayubia. The waterfall has still not caught the eye of many people and it can serve as one of the many tourist destinations situated in the picturesque Abbottabad district.—Photo by Tarvoor Shafiq

Officials on deputation can be sent to parent dept anytime, rules PHC

Bench rejects plea of educationist against repatriation from FEF

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court has ruled that an official on deputation can be repatriated to his parent department anytime without assigning any reason prior to completion of his normal tenure.

A bench consisting of Justice Ijaz Awan and Justice Shaukat Ahmad issued the order while rejecting plea of an assistant professor, challenging his repatriation to higher education department from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Frontier Education Foundation, where he was posted as deputy director (administration) on deputation in 2021.

"So far as, the right of a 'deputatant' to complete his normal tenure is concerned, the same has never been recognised by courts. It is well settled by now that deputatant has no right to remain on a post as deputatant, he can be repatriated at any time without assigning any reason," the bench observed.

"In terms of Civil Servants Act, either federal or provincial, a civil servant is liable to serve anywhere throughout the province or Pakistan, as the case may be, he cannot claim posting of his own choice at a particular post," the bench observed.

The court further stated: "In fact,

we have seen that the expertise of such civil servants are spoiled when they are specialists in teaching and are posted against an administrative post, and experience has shown that such deputatants often opt for deputation to other departments when they once complete their normal tenure."

The bench ruled: "The deputation is an administrative arrangement between the borrowing and lending departments for utilising the services of an employee in the public interest and exigency of services against a particular post, and such deputatants are entitled to be allowed to remain on deputation for an indefinite period or stipulated period by his own choice and wishes. The law on this point is very much clear."

The petition was filed by Shaukat Chaf, who was initially appointed as lecturer (BPS-17) in higher education department on the recommendation of KP Public Service Commission in 2012 and was then promoted to the post of assistant professor (BPS-18) in December 2022.

His counsel stated that the petitioner was posted as deputy director (admin) on deputation through a notification on October 12, 2021, in KP Frontier Education Foundation.

He said that the petitioner had filed a complaint against an acting managing director of the foundation for missing his authority and committing certain irregularities. He added that an inquiry was conducted by provincial inspection team wherein the director and some others

were found involved in certain irregularities.

The counsel claimed that the director firstly transferred the petitioner from the post of deputy director and then repatriated his services in April 2024 to his parent department, where he was posted as assistant professor of political science at a government degree college.

He contended that repatriation of the petitioner was based on mala fide and was without any justification. He said that although the respondent department had the power to repatriate the petitioner, yet such powers should be exercised in good faith.

The bench observed that Frontier Education Foundation was a corporate body created under KP Frontier Education Foundation Act, 1992, for promoting and financing the development of education in the private sector in the province.

"We have observed that in numerous cases instead of allowing promotion to employees of autonomous bodies and without adhering to recruitment rules of these autonomous bodies, the government sends civil servants on deputation against the promotion posts or the posts meant for initial recruitment," the bench observed.

The bench said when recruitment rules didn't permit filling of a post through deputation, sending a civil servant to such post was a source of harm learning for servants serving in the organisation on one hand, and on the other it violated the statutory law of that organisation.



Two including Christian killed in North Waziristan

By Our Correspondent

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: Two persons, including a member of the Christian community, were killed in what the police claimed targeted attacks here on Sunday.

The first attack took place near the Miral Road, where unidentified motorcyclists opened fire on 30-year-old Ashtaq Masooh, killing him on the spot. The assailants escaped after the attack.

The body was shifted to the Miral Hospital. The police said that the second attack also took place in the same area as unidentified motorcyclists shot dead one Jull Banoos.

The police said that the body was shifted to a hospital, from where it was later transported to Banna district, the hometown of the deceased. The police launched an investigation into both the cases.

Local officials said that Ashtaq Masooh's wife was a constable and they were living in Toshi Scouts Street in Miranshah. They said that Mr Banoos was a motor mechanic.

The Christian community members later gathered outside the Miranshah Press Club along with the body to protest his murder. A local journalist and two others were killed and another sustained injuries in different attacks in the district during the week.

The police said journalist Karim Khan was killed in Taji area when some masked men opened fire at him outside his house. Fayaz Khan, a local resident, was killed in Haderkhet area of the district.

The police also said that another local, Imtiaz, was targeted after unidentified motorcyclists opened fire at him.

Three women, girl die as vehicle falls into Tank ravine

DERA ISMAI KHAN: Three women and a girl were killed and seven others injured when a vehicle going in a wedding procession plunged into a deep ravine in Tank district on Sunday.

The police and local residents said that the tragic accident occurred in Sanghar area of the district due to brake failure. Mostly children and women were onboard the vehicle. The deceased were identified as Aarwal Jans, Hazrat Bibi, Islam Bibi and an unknown girl. The bodies and the injured were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, Tank.

Separately, unidentified assailants opened fire on a motorcycle killing a man, identified as Haris Baloch, 28, and critically injuring his wife.

The police said that the couple was coming to Dera from Bhakkar district of the Punjab. The incident occurred near Bagh-I-Saboon Park on Chaggaerwah Road in the limits of Gomal University police station.

The body and the injured were immediately shifted to a hospital, where the woman also succumbed to her injuries.

The police started a search to trace the suspected killers.—Correspondent

Food dept to instal vending machines for wheat farmers

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa food department has said that FIRs would be registered against those trying to fraudulently sell Punjab wheat to it.

The department also announced plans to establish a separate window for the convenience of local farmers. It said that vending machines would also be installed in Mastan, Dera Ismail Khan, Malakand, Swabi and Nowshera districts.

The food department said that now only 500 metric tonnes of wheat would be purchased from a farmer instead of 500 metric tonnes as announced earlier.—APP

Jirga demands measures to curb targeted killings in Bannu

By Our Correspondent

LAKKI MARWAT: The residents and elders of Nurpur area have demanded concrete measures to stop targeted killings in Bannu district. The demand came at a jirga held in the area on Saturday.

It was convened in the backdrop of the murder of a paper leader, Maulana Iftakhar, a few days ago.

A delegation of Ahsanul Majlis Tahaffuz Khatri-Nafarwal led by Mifti Amrullah Saifi also participated in the jirga to express solidarity with the people of Nurpur.

An elder said they would form a task force to assist the police and other law enforcement agencies in eliminating microcosms and maintain peace in the area. He said residents would also hold a demonstration on Friday against targeted killings.

Other participants said lawlessness had returned to the district as incidents of targeted killing had become a routine.

They said microcosms were on a killing spree as they targeted government employees in the first phase and now elders and citizens were on their hit list.

They said four targeted killings had occurred in last two months. They said sev-

eral policemen also lost their lives in target killings during the anti-polio drives.

"After government employees and law enforcement personnel, the microcosms have now started targeting religious scholars," an elder said.

The elders said they could not be a silent spectator anymore and would play an effective role along with the police and other law enforcement agencies to curb targeted killings and eliminate those involved in such heinous crimes.

OUTLAW ARRESTED: The police arrested an outlaw in injured condition after an exchange of fire in Shahbuzkhal area of Lakki Marwat on Saturday night.

A party of Shahbuzkhal police station reached Malakhal village on information about the presence of a proclaimed offender, identified as Ibrahm, there.

The outlaw opened fire on the cops when he noticed them around his hideout, an official said, adding the police returned the fire. The official said when firing stopped the law enforcers launched a search in the locality and arrested the wanted man in injured condition.

He said the suspect was wanted in murder, attempted murder, extortion and other cases. "The cops seized a hand grenade, arms and ammunition from him and shifted him to a hospital," he added.

Khar traders take to streets against colleague's murder

Demand early arrest of killers

By Our Correspondent

BAJAUR: Traders of Khar Bazaar on Sunday demonstrated against the murder of a shopkeeper on Saturday, and demanded the early arrest of his killers.

Social and political activists also attended the protest held at the main Chowk.

The protesters, who blocked the road for about an hour, charged slogans against the police for failing to ensure security of traders.

Servilal was killed by unknown gunmen in Khar Bazaar on Saturday.

Bajaur Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Haja Lakh Shakh, Khar traders' association president Haji Asim Rahman, PML-N leader Amrullah Han, Javed Khan and Sahib Rahman of Jamat-e-Islami also spoke.

The protesters described the broad daylight murder in the crowded bazaar a failure of the police to ensure safety and security of traders and shoppers in the main trade centre of Bajaur.

They noted this was not the only incident of killing in the Khar Bazaar as several such incidents had happened in the past.

The speakers regretted that the police had yet to make any arrest.

They demanded an improved security environment in Khar and other major bazaars of the district. They also asked the local police chief to



TRADERS stage a protest demonstration in Khar Bazaar on Sunday.—Dawn

ensure the early arrest of those involved in the murder of Servilal, who was killed by unknown assailants in front of his shop.

PROTEST: Rejecting the proposed plan of imposing taxes in Malakand division, JI local leaders on Sunday announced to attend the planned sit-in at the Swat Motorway toll plaza on June 2.

Addressing a news conference, JI Bajaur deputy chief Qari Abdul Majid, general secretary Muhammad Hanood, Farooqullah, Abdul Mannan, Haji Dawlat Khan and others said that like rest of Malakand division and tribal districts, the people of Bajaur had also rejected the federal government's plan of imposing taxes in the region.

They said there was no justification

of imposing taxes in Malakand division and tribal districts as these regions were the most backward, where most people were living on a subsist life.

The Jamat leaders said Malakand division and tribal districts were badly affected by militancy and war on terrorism.

They said the Malakand and tribal districts should be given relief like the people of Aard, Khyber and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The JI leaders asked the provincial government, the local leaders of PML-N, PPP and PTI to play their role to stop the federal government from imposing taxes in Malakand division.

The Jamat leaders said a large number of party activists would participate in the planned sit-in.

Six newborns killed in Delhi hospital fire

NEW DELHI: Six newborn babies have died after a fire tore through a children's hospital in the Indian capital, with people charging into the blaze to rescue the infants, police said on Sunday.

"All the 12 newborn babies were rescued from the hospital with the help of other people," senior police officer Surender Choudhary said in a statement, but adding that when they reached medical attention, six were dead.

"Legal action is being taken against the owner of the hospital," Choudhary said.

He did not give further details on how the child died.

In addition to the six who died, another baby among the 12 brought out of the smoldering furnace was dead before the fire began, Choudhary said, without elaborating further.

The fire broke out late Saturday in the New Born Baby Care Hospital in Delhi's Vasant Vihar area.

Delhi Fire Department Director Anil Garg said 14 fire trucks were sent to battle the blaze, he told the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency.

"The fire spread too fast due to a blast in an oxygen cylinder," he told PTI.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called the situation "heart-breaking".

"We all stand with those who lost their innocent children in this accident," he said on social media.

"The causes of the incident are being investigated, and whoever is responsible for this negligence will not be spared,"—AFP



BERLIN: German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and French President Emmanuel Macron play table football as they visit the Democracy Festival to mark 75 years of the German Basic Law and 35 years of the peaceful revolution, on Sunday.—Reuters

Macron vows to defend democracy against nationalism

French and German presidents attend 'democracy festival' two weeks ahead of European elections

The European elections is different from the previous election, a lot has happened.

"Europe is mortal"

The trip comes two weeks ahead of European elections where polls show, in a major potential endorsement for Macron, that his coalition is trailing well behind the far right and may struggle to even reach third place. In Germany too, all three parties in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition are polling behind the far-right AfD in surveys, despite a series of scandals embroiling the anti-immigration party.

In a keynote address on foreign policy last month, Macron issued a dire warning about the threats in Europe in a changing world in the wake of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

"Our Europe, today, is mortal and it can die," Macron said. "It can die and this depends only on our choices." Ramping up his warning in Berlin, Macron urged Europeans "to go vote for the party that we back and a party that defends Europe."

After the talks with Steinmeier in Berlin on Sunday, Macron is due to bring his message to Dresden in the former East German Saxony state, where the AfD has a strong supporter base. Tuesday seen Macron in the western German city of Munster and later in Muehlenberg, outside Berlin, for talks with Scholz and a Franco-German joint cabinet meeting.

"Ackward"

Beyond making joint calls for the European elections, Macron's three-day visit will seek to emphasize the historic importance of the post-war relationship between the two key EU states, as France next month commemorates 80 years since the D-Day landings that marked the beginning of the end of German World War II occupation.

But all has not been smooth in a relationship often seen as the engine of the EU, and German officials said to be uneasy at times about his often-theatrical style of foreign policy. In a question-and-answer session on social media with young people this month, Macron enlisted help from Scholz when asked if the Franco-German "couple" was still working.

"Hello dear friends, long live Franco-German friendship!" Scholz said in French in a video on Macron's X feed. "Thank you Olaf! I very much agree with you," Macron replied to heavily accented German.—AFP

Tories pledge to bring back national service for 18-year-olds

LONDON: Britain's ruling Conservative Party has said it will bring back national service if it wins power again in the UK general election on July 4.

Eighteen-year-olds would either choose to join the military full-time for 12 months or spend one weekend every month volunteering in their community over a year, under the plans announced on Saturday.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the scheme would "create a shared sense of purpose among our young people and a renewed sense of pride in our country." This new, mandatory national service will provide life-changing opportunities for our young people, offering them the chance to learn real world skills, do new things and contribute to their community and our country," he said in a statement. Despite Sunak saying it would be mandatory, his interior minister James Cleverly told Sky News on Sunday that there would be no criminal sanctions for any young person who refuses to take part.

The Conservative, in power since 2010, estimates the scheme will cost around 2.5 billion (£3.2 billion) a year, with the first teenagers taking part in September 2025.

Young people who choose to sign up for a placement in the forces would "learn and take part in logistics, cyber security, government or civil response operations", the Tories said.

Volunteering could include helping local fire, police and NHS services as well as charities tackling loneliness and supporting elderly, isolated people, the party added.—AFP

China, Japan premiers in Seoul for rare summit

SEOUL: South Korean and Chinese leaders agreed on Sunday to start diplomatic and security dialogue and push a trade deal, when they met in Seoul ahead of a key trilateral summit with Japan.

There are low expectations of any major announcements or breakthroughs at the trilateral meeting on Monday, but the leaders have expressed hopes it could help revitalize three-way diplomacy and ease regional tensions.

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol met Chinese Premier Li Qiang, who is making his first visit to South Korea since taking office in March 2023, and they agreed to establish a diplomatic and security dialogue and economic talks on a free trade deal.

"China and South Korea face significant common challenges of the international affairs," Yoon said, pointing to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza as sources of increased uncertainty in the global economy. But with decades of solid ties behind them, he said he hoped the two countries "will continue to strengthen our cooperation amid today's complex global crisis." Li said Beijing wanted to work with Seoul to become "each other's friendly neighbors who trust each other and partners who succeed together."

The two leaders discussed North Korea, which has violated successive rounds of UN sanctions over its banned weapons programs, with Yoon telling Li he hoped China could be "a bastion of peace as a permanent member of the UN Security Council." China is North Korea's largest trading partner and a key diplomatic ally, and it has previously resisted sanctions against Pyongyang for its weapons tests, instead criticizing joint UN-South Korea drills for raising tensions.

Yoon, Li and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will hold a trilateral meeting on Monday, the first such encounter since 2015, partly due to the pandemic but also to long-standing ties between South Korea and Japan.

Yoon, who took office in 2022, has sought to bury the historical hatred with former colonial power Japan in the face of rising threats from nuclear-armed North Korea.—AFP

Three injured in knife attack in Lyon

LYON: At least three people were injured in a knife attack on the metro in the eastern French city of Lyon on Sunday, police said, adding that an attacker was arrested.

Separately, Lyon public prosecutor Thierry Druas said that the attack left four people injured, adding their lives were not in danger.

A police source said that two of the victims were wounded in the abdomen and a third in the arm. An investigation was launched into "attempted homicide", prosecutors said.

"The national police questioned an individual following a knife attack near the Jean Jaurès metro station in Lyon," the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes prefecture said on X.

"Three victims are being treated by emergency services", the regional prefecture added.

The incident occurred at around 2:40pm on line B, near Place Jean Jaurès in the city's 7th district, according to a police source. The suspect was taken into custody.—AFP

Everest record-setting female climber receives warm welcome in Kathmandu

KATHMANDU: Nepal's Phurjo Dorengma Lama, who smashed the record for the fastest ascent of Everest by a woman, said on Sunday when returning to her country.

Lama on Thursday conquered the world's highest mountain in just 14 hours and 31 minutes—a feat that usually takes other climbers days to rest and acclimatize. The mountain guide and skilled helicopter long-line rescuer—flying in during from a rope to save an injured climber—chopped more than 11 hours off the previous best that had stood since 2021.

Generations of men from Nepal, especially from the famed Sherpa community, have climbed the Himalayan

their wives and daughters have traditionally kept the home fires burning. But in a sign of changing times, a string of Nepali women are now climbing and breaking records. "I don't know if my climb will inspire other women," Lama said, a mother of a daughter.

"But what I want to say is, that if we pursue this profession, there are many opportunities for women trekkers and climbers."

"Passion, work and everything"

Lama was back at base camp in an incredible 24 hours and 26 minutes. But she said her motivation was to showcase the skills of Nepal's talented mountain

guides, who risk their lives to bring clients from around the world to the top of the 8,848-meter (29,000-foot) peak.

"I am not chasing records," Lama said when she arrived in the capital Kathmandu, noting how Nepal was famed for its mountaineering. "I, as a guide, was thinking 'What can we do to show that to the world?'" she said. "Maybe we can show that we have talented guides, to bring mountaineers here."

Climbing Everest can be deadly, with at least four people killed on the peak this year, but the experience and training of Nepal's guides play a huge role in reducing the risk.

"I am a guide and work in the mountaineering — this is my profession and work," she said. "The mountains are tied to my passion, work and everything."

Lama, who said she is 32, previously set the record in 2018, when she climbed Everest in 19 hours and six minutes.

That record was broken in 2021 by Adu Tsang Yinshang from Hong Kong, who conquered the mountain in 25 hours and 50 minutes. "I was very happy when I reached the summit," she said. "In my last attempt... I faced problems along the route, but this time everything worked out."

Nepali climber Dorengma Golu Sherpa holds the record for the fastest ascent of Everest, reaching the summit in 10 hours and 56 minutes in 2003.—AFP



KATHMANDU: Mountaineer guide Phurjo Lama greets the crowd upon her arrival at the Tribhuvan International airport, on Sunday.—AFP



MONS (Belgium): People take part in the Douidou de Mons, more commonly known as Douidou festival, Sunday. The Douidou feast comprises two parts, a procession with the shrine of Waltrude and the fight between Saint George and the dragon (Lumecore). The Douidou was recognized in 2005 by Unesco as one of the masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.—AFP

NEWSMAKERS



Musk plans largest-ever supercomputer for xAI startup

WASHINGTON: Billionaire tech mogul Elon Musk has told investors he plans to build a supercomputer dubbed "factory of compute" to support the development of his artificial intelligence startup xAI, an industry news outlet reported on Saturday.

Musk wants the supercomputer—which will string together 100,000 Nvidia chips—operational by fall 2025, and "will hold himself personally responsible for delivering it on time," The Information said.

The planned supercomputer would be "at least four times the size of the biggest GPU clusters that exist today," such as those used by Meta to train its AI models, Musk was quoted as saying during a presentation to investors this month.

Since OpenAI's generative AI tool ChatGPT exploded on the scene in 2022, the technology has been an area of fierce competition between tech giants

Microsoft and Google, as well as Meta and startups like Anthropic and Stability AI.

Musk is one of the world's few investors with deep insights (thanks to compute with OpenAI, Google or Meta on AI) xAI is developing a chatbot named Grok, which can access social media platform X, the former Twitter which is also owned by Musk, in real time.

Musk cofounded OpenAI in 2015 but left in 2018, later saying he was uncomfortable with the profit-driven direction the company was taking under the stewardship of CEO Sam Altman.

He filed a lawsuit against the company in March, accusing it of breaking its original non-profit mission to make AI research available to all. OpenAI argues that Musk's lawsuit, as well as his embrace of open source development, is little more than a case of sour grapes after leaving the company.—AFP



VILNIUS (Lithuania): A voter casts a ballot during the second round of the country's presidential election, on Sunday. Lithuania's president and prime minister are facing off in the second round of the Baltic state's presidential vote after the incumbent failed to win an overall majority in the first round on May 12.—AFP



TOKYO: Members of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JSDF) operate a howitzer during a live fire exercise at East Fujii Maneuver Area, on Sunday.—AFP



PARIS: Demonstrators gather at a rally to protest against a national and international use of per- and polyfluorinated substances (PFAS), as a precautionary principle, in Orléans, on Sunday. PFAS are a family of around 4,000 chemical compounds often referred to as "forever chemicals" because of their long lifespans in bodies and the environment. They resist grease, oil, water and heat.—AFP

Seven killed in Israeli strikes on south Lebanon

BEIRUT: Israeli strikes on south Lebanon on Sunday killed seven people, official media and a source close to Hezbollah said, as Israeli military claimed attacks targeting the Iran-backed group.

Hezbollah, a Hamas ally, has traded regular cross-border fire with Israel since the Palestinian group's October raid on Israel which escalated war in Gaza.

Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) reported that "the Israeli enemy targeted a motorcycle in Hula, a border village, "leading to two martyrs and two wounded".

It was the third such strike on people on motor bikes in south Lebanon on Sunday, the agency said.

The NNA had earlier reported "two martyrs and wounded civilians in the raid that targeted a motorcycle in Aita al-Shaab", another border village.

It was unclear whether civilians were among the dead in Hula and Aita al-Shaab.

The NNA also reported unspecified casualties in a separate strike earlier that "targeted a motorcycle" in the border town

of Naqura.

The Israeli army said in a statement that a Hezbollah man was identified exiting a military structure in the Naqura area, adding that "an aircraft struck and eliminated" the operative.

It also said the army struck two Hezbollah fighters who were identified operating in the Aita al-Shaab area.

Hezbollah announced a fighter had been killed, and a source close to the group said he died in Naqura.

The powerful movement claimed several attacks on Israeli troops and positions on Sunday, including some in retaliation for the Naqura and Aita al-Shaab strikes.

In recent weeks Hezbollah has stepped up its cross-border attacks, which it says are in support of Gaza and its ally Hamas, while Israel has struck deeper into Lebanese territory.

The violence has killed at least 438 people in Lebanon, including 82 civilians, according to a tally.

Israel says 14 soldiers and 11 civilians have been killed on its side of the border.—AFP



PALESTINIANS inspect the aftermath of an Israeli strike on a building in Nuseirat, on Sunday.—AFP

EU hosts talks to strengthen Palestinian Authority for Gaza

European countries want PA to eventually take over the besieged Palestinian territory from Hamas

BRUSSELS: EU Foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Sunday invited Palestinian prime minister Mohammed Mustafa for international talks on building up the Palestinian Authority to eventually take over Gaza rule from Hamas.

A "strong" Palestinian Authority is needed to bring peace in the Middle East, Borrell said just before going into the meeting with Mustafa. The talks were being held as efforts were narrowing to try to find a Gaza truce and a prisoner-release deal.

They also came just before Norway — which was hosting the Brussels meeting — was on Tuesday to recognize the State of Palestine, along with Spain and Ireland, to Israel's fury.

While the United States is using its influence to halt the Gaza crisis, moves are starting to take place to establish conditions to make for lasting peace.

A key requisite for that is the removal of Hamas as Gaza's rulers.

The only viable option diplomats have arrived at is to bolster Mustafa's Palestinian Authority, which controls the West Bank, so that it can take charge of Gaza. "A functional Palestinian Authority is in Israel's interest too, because in order to make peace, we need a strong Palestinian Authority, not a weaker one," Borrell said.

Plans for funds

Mustafa said Sunday's meeting was "a very important opportunity" for the Palestinian Authority to outline its priorities and plans.

He said the "first priority" was to support Palestinians in Gaza, especially through a ceasefire, and then the "rebuilding the institutions of the Palestinian Authority" in that territory, which Hamas seized control of in 2007.

He also called on international partners to press Israel to release Palestinian Authority funds as "we will be ready to reform our institutions...and hopefully together sustain our efforts towards statehood and peace for the region".

The Brussels meeting, focused on international aid, was being chaired by Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide, under his country's key role in the 1993 Oslo Accords that established a series of arrangements between the Palestinians and Israel.

"We need to make sure that the Palestinian Authority...has to be able to survive to be strengthened, to improve its capacity to deliver services, to reform, and also to plan for a future return to Gaza," Barth Eide said.

Borrell's fury

Represented at the talks, alongside the EU, Norway and the Palestinian Authority, were Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Tunisia and the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations. Australia, Britain, Canada and Japan also took part.

Before the talks, Mustafa held a separate news conference with Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Alonso to thank him for his country's announcement it was recognizing Palestinian statehood.

The move by the three European nations addresses "the injustice that has been inflicted on the Palestinian people for decades," Mustafa said, adding: "We want to have every country in Europe to do the same." Later, Mustafa was to have further talks with Borrell, Barth Eide and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan.

On Monday he will have another meeting in Brussels with the Spanish, Norwegian and Irish ministers. And on Wednesday he will be in Spain.—AFP

US expected to lift ban on sale of offensive weapons to S. Arabia

WASHINGTON: The United States is expected to lift a ban on the sale of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia, potentially in the coming weeks, The Financial Times reported on Sunday.

Washington has already signaled to Saudi Arabia that it was prepared to lift the ban, the newspaper reported, citing a person familiar with the matter.

Soon after taking office in 2021, Biden adopted a tougher stance over Saudi Arabia's campaign against the Iran-aligned Houthis in Yemen, which has inflicted heavy civilian casualties, and over Riyadh's human rights record, in particular the 2018 killing of Washington Post journalist and political opponent Jamal Khashoggi.

Saudi Arabia, the big

gest US arms customer, has shaded under those restrictions, which freeze the kind of weapons sales that previous US administrations had provided for decades.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Wednesday said the US and Saudi Arabia were very close to concluding a set of agreements on nuclear energy, security and defense cooperation, the bilateral component of a wider normalization deal with Riyadh and Israel.

However, lifting the ban on offensive weapons sales were not directly linked to these talks, FT said.

The White House and Saudi Arabia's government communication office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.—Reuters

PPP seeks share

Continued from Page 1

He also welcomed the ICJ's recent ruling on Rafah and Gaza and called for its full and effective implementation.

The two leaders reiterated their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties in various sectors, including trade, investment, education, and renewable energy.

Knowit, Qatar centre accept invitation

The emirs of Kuwait and Qatar have accepted PM Shehbaz's invitation to visit Pakistan.

This was conveyed by the two countries' ambassadors, who held separate meetings with the PM on Sunday.

They presented the letters of their respective leaders, confirming their acceptance of an invitation to visit Pakistan.

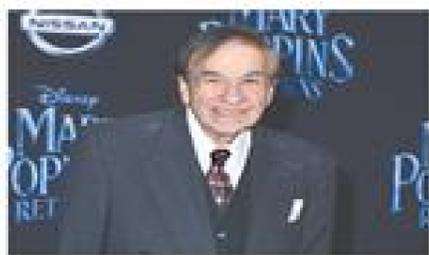
The PM also reaffirmed "Pakistan's support for the Chinese stance on Taiwan".

"An iron brother and a strategic partner of China, Pakistan has always extended its principled support to the Chinese position on Taiwan and will continue to do so," the PM wrote in his official X account.

He said the "so-called objections or transition of duty to the self-proclaimed government in Taiwan did not change the objective facts on the Taiwan issue".

Also on Sunday, PM Shehbaz called his Norwegian counterpart, Jonas Gahr Store, to convey "his deep appreciation for Norway's landmark decision to recognize the State of Palestine".

He said Norway's "principled decision" would send "a strong message of hope and solidarity to the brave Palestinian people who have been enduring Israel's brutality".



A NOV 29, 2018. He photo shows US songwriter Richard Sherman arriving for the world premiere of Disney's 'Mary Poppins Returns' at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood.—AFP

Richard Sherman, songwriter behind Disney hits dies at 95

LOS ANGELES: Richard Sherman, the writer behind songs in classic Disney movies such as "Mary Poppins" and "The Jungle Book" died on Saturday at the age of 95, the film and entertainment company said. He died in Beverly Hills from age-related illness, Disney said.

Sherman and his brother Robert, who died in 2012, worked as staff composers for Disney between 1960 and 1973, sharing which time they wrote more than 200 songs for 27 films and two dozen television productions.

Their work was that of another era, with Hollywood magazine Variety describing their roles as "a job that no longer exists in-house songwriters for a studio".

"Even when they weren't working for the Mouse House, their songs carried a Disney sensibility — bouncy and positive, without any of the cynicism so prevalent in creative works (including music) in the late 1960s and 1970s," the magazine said.

In a statement, Disney described Richard Sherman as a "key member" in founder Walt Disney's "inner circle of creative talents".

The brothers' work included "Chim Chim Chere-ee," a hit from the 1964 film "Mary Poppins," which won them an Oscar for best song. They also won the Academy Award for best score.

Robert Sherman wrote the lyrics and Richard, known as Dick, composed the music, following in the footsteps of their songwriter father Al Sherman.

"We are forever grateful for the mark Richard left on the world, and we extend our deepest condolences to his family," Disney CEO Bob Iger said in a statement.

The brothers were also responsible for hits such as "It's a Small World" and "I Wanna Be Like You" from "The Jungle Book," and composed the scores for non-Disney works such as 1968's "Christy Christy Bang Bang".

"The duo's work remains the quintessential lyrical voice of Walt Disney," the company said.

They continued collaborating with Disney throughout the years, with Richard Sherman writing new lyrics for the live action version of "The Jungle Book" in 2016 and composing songs for "Christopher Robin" in 2018.—AFP

'US double standards' on ICC, ICJ rulings denounced

By Arwan Iqbal

WASHINGTON: US lawmakers' push to penalize international courts for curbing Israel's aggression against Palestinians have sparked criticism of their apparent double standards.

An assembly of 121 human rights and civil society groups penned a letter to the White House this week, urging President Biden to "oppose any legislative efforts to undermine" the International Criminal Court (ICC) for seeking arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

In their letter to Biden, the groups including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, emphasized the ICC's crucial role in ensuring justice for grave international crimes.

They also urged the Biden administration to denounce recent threats by some US lawmakers to sanction ICC officials if arrest warrants were passed against top Israeli officials accused of war crimes in the Gaza Strip.

"Acting on these calls would do grave harm to the interests of all victims globally and to the US government's ability to champion human rights and the cause of justice, which are stated priorities of your administration," it said.

"Full respect for the ICC is necessary for it to provide justice for victims," the letter emphasized. "A selective approach to judicial decisions undermines the credibility, and ultimately, the force of the law as a shield against human rights violations and abuses."

"We urge you to oppose any legislative efforts to undermine the ICC, and to make clear that regardless of its views on specific ICC investigations, the United States continues to support independent international justice mechanisms," the letter concluded.

In previous statements, Amnesty International has also called on the US to "end its double standard of failing to criticize the human rights records of security partners".

It reminded Washington that its annual human rights reports on other countries would "ring hollow unless it also upholds human rights at home."

Washington's silence criticized

Meanwhile, The Washington Post highlighted Washington's silence after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered Israel to fulfill its obligations under the Genocide Convention and immediately halt its offensive in Rafah.

"This silence is in stark contrast" to the Biden administration's "effusive welcome" of a nearly identical ICJ ruling in March 2022, which ordered Russia to immediately suspend its military operations in Ukraine, The Post pointed out.

Even within the US Congress, progressive lawmakers criticized a bipartisan move to sanction the ICC for declaring Netanyahu a war criminal.

"It's profoundly disturbing," Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a New York Democrat, told reporters. "It is an alarming precedent to attack institutions responsible for bringing international law," she added.

Rep. Pramila Jayapal, head of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, defended the ICC's global role, emphasizing its independence and expert constitutions.

"Simon Tisdal, an assistant editor of The Guardian, pointed out the inconsistency in condemning some leaders while avoiding accountability for others.

Commenting on the ICJ's order to Israel to halt its offensive in Rafah, he wrote: "The message is clear: impunity cannot stand. No one, however powerful, is above the law."

Debra Shulkin, Middle East director of Human Rights Watch (HRW), emphasized the urgency of the situation.

Two and 36-year-old Havdakar Shafiq Ullah from Karak district, having fought gallantly, embraced martyrdom.

The statement read that a sanitation operation was being carried out to eliminate any terrorists based in the area.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister paid tribute to the security forces for the successful operation against terrorism in the Hamaa Khol area of Peshawar.

The PM also offered his condolences to the families of Captain Hussain Jahangir and Havdakar Shafiq Ullah, who embraced martyrdom during the operation in which the terrorists were killed.

On Nov 16, 2023, four militants were killed and a soldier was martyred in the Sher Kera area within the jurisdiction of Mardan police station.

The military's media wing said that security forces had "effortlessly engaged the militant 'localities' and killed militant 'commander' Samiullah alias Sheraz, militant 'commander' Salmaan alias Ahmed, Iranian alias Muhammad, and Hazrat Umar alias Khalid.

The area remained under militants' influence since 2007 and terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings, took place in which several law enforcement personnel and members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba militia lost their lives.

The militia was rained with the government support and meant to protect the area against terrorist attacks. Hagi Abdul Malik, former member of Ahamad union council and head of the local police militia, died when a suicide bomber blew himself up on Nov 8, 2009.

Two martyred

Continued from Page 1

He also welcomed the ICJ's recent ruling on Rafah and Gaza and called for its full and effective implementation.

The two leaders reiterated their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties in various sectors, including trade, investment, education, and renewable energy.

Knowit, Qatar centre accept invitation

The emirs of Kuwait and Qatar have accepted PM Shehbaz's invitation to visit Pakistan.

This was conveyed by the two countries' ambassadors, who held separate meetings with the PM on Sunday.

They presented the letters of their respective leaders, confirming their acceptance of an invitation to visit Pakistan.

The PM also reaffirmed "Pakistan's support for the Chinese stance on Taiwan".

"An iron brother and a strategic partner of China, Pakistan has always extended its principled support to the Chinese position on Taiwan and will continue to do so," the PM wrote in his official X account.

He said the "so-called objections or transition of duty to the self-proclaimed government in Taiwan did not change the objective facts on the Taiwan issue".

Also on Sunday, PM Shehbaz called his Norwegian counterpart, Jonas Gahr Store, to convey "his deep appreciation for Norway's landmark decision to recognize the State of Palestine".

He said Norway's "principled decision" would send "a strong message of hope and solidarity to the brave Palestinian people who have been enduring Israel's brutality".

Trump booed and heckled by raucous crowd at Libertarian convention

WASHINGTON: Presidential candidate Donald Trump was booed and heckled by many in a raucous audience at the Libertarian National Convention on Saturday night, a marked change from the adulation he receives at rallies from his fervently loyal supporters.

Libertarians, who believe in limited government and individual freedom, blame Trump, a Republican, for rushing through the creation of a Covid-19 vaccine when he was president and for not doing more to stop public health restrictions on the unvaccinated during the pandemic.

When Trump took to the stage in Washington, there were loud boos and jeers. A smaller section of the crowd, Trump supporters, cheered him.

Shortly before he appeared, one Libertarian Party member shouted: "Donald Trump should have taken a bullet!" Trump's campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment about the hostile reception.

Trump, who was president between 2017 and 2021, immediately mentioned the total 88 felony charges he faces in four federal and state prosecutions.

"If I wasn't a Libertarian I am now," he said. He denounced the administration of President Joe Biden, his challenger in the Nov 5 election rematch, and Biden's fellow Democrats as being part of a "rise in left-wing fascism".

Trump was trying to appeal to libertarians, who have more in common with Republican policy positions than Democrats on issues including taxes and the size of government, in what is expected to be a closely fought election.

He added: "We should not be fighting each other." He asked libertarians to work with him to defeat Biden, an appeal which was greeted by many boos, although the vast majority in the crowd were fervently opposed to Biden and his administration.

Libertarians garnered only 1.2 per cent of the national vote in 2020,



WASHINGTON: Former US president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks at the Libertarian Party's national convention, on Saturday.—Reuters

the convention but he declined to attend. "The Libertarian Party can make a big difference. If we unite we will be unstoppable," Trump said to a mix of applause and jeers. Trump said he was a "Libertarian

without even trying to be one," and that the Libertarian Party should endorse him, another line greeted by boos and jeers.

Unheeded, Trump poked fun at the crowd, saying if they did not back him, they would continue to garner just a tiny portion of voter support in national elections.

He pledged to put a libertarian in his cabinet if he wins the election, which was met by cries of "No! No!" Trump did not get huge applause for one promise.

A rallying cry for libertarians is the case of Ron Ullrich, who is serving a life sentence for creating and operating the website Silk Road, which allowed users to secretly buy and sell drugs and other illegal products.

Libertarians believe Ullrich's 2015 sentence represents government and judicial overreach. In front of a crowd holding "Free Ron" signs, Trump promised to commute Ullrich's sentence if he wins back the White House.—Reuters

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Hamas fires rockets at Tel Aviv as Israel attacks Rafah

Palestinian death toll nears 36,000; Tel Aviv signals renewed efforts for truce

CAIRO: Hamas said it launched a "large rocket barrage" at Tel Aviv on Sunday, prompting sirens to sound in the Israeli city for the first time in four months as the Palestinian group sought to show military strength despite Israel's Gaza offensive.

On the other hand, Israeli strikes killed at least five Palestinians in Rafah, as tanks probed around the edges of the city, close to the main southern crossing point into Egypt.

The Israeli military claimed eight projectiles were identified crossing from the area of Rafah, about 100km south of Tel Aviv, where Israel kept up operations despite a ruling by the top UN court ordering it to immediately stop the offensive.

Nearly 36,000 Palestinians, most of them women and children, have been killed in Israel's offensive, Gaza's health ministry says.

In the latest fighting, Gaza's civil defence agency said it had retrieved six bodies after a house was targeted in a strike on Rafah's eastern Khirbet al-Adas neighbourhood. Witnesses said Israeli artillery fired also targeted Rafah's Yitran camp, and that heavy artillery shelling hit the city's Shuq al-Halal and Qudus areas.

Elsewhere in Gaza, Israeli air strikes targeted the Nuseirat refugee camp, and witnesses said heavy artillery shelling hit northern Gaza. Israeli tanks in Gaza City rained heavy gunfire on targets in the Zeitun and Natarim areas, an AFP reporter said. Fighting also continued in the northern Gaza area of Jabalya.

Israel claims it wants to root out Hamas fighters holed up in Rafah and rescue Israeli prisoners it says are being held in the area, but its assault has worsened the plight of civilians and caused an international outcry.

Truce efforts

Efforts to agree a halt to the fighting and return more than 100 Israeli prisoners held by Hamas in Gaza have been blocked for weeks, but there were some signs of movement following meetings

between Israeli and US intelligence officials and the prime minister of Qatar.

An official with knowledge of the matter said a decision had been taken to resume the talks this week based on more proposals from Egyptian and Qatari mediators, and with "active US involvement". However, a Hamas official said, "It is not true." Leon Eilending, a senior Hamas official in exile, said the group had not received anything from the mediators on new data for the resumption of talks as had been reported by Israeli media. He reiterated the demands which include "halting the aggression completely and permanently, in all of Gaza Strip, not only Rafah".

While Israel is seeking the return of Israeli prisoners, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has insisted that the war will not end until Hamas is eliminated.

Aid trucks enter Gaza

Israel has faced calls to get more aid into Gaza after more than seven months of a war that has caused destruction on an unprecedented scale and hunger in the enclave.

Israel prepared on Sunday to allow around 200 aid trucks into Gaza through Kerem Shalom at the southeastern edge of the Palestinian enclave, bypassing the main Rafah crossing that has been blocked for weeks.

It follows an agreement between US President Joe Biden and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on Friday to temporarily send aid via the crossing.

Khaled Zayed, an official from the Egyptian Red Crescent, said that 200 trucks of aid, including four fuel trucks, were expected to enter on Sunday through the Kerem Shalom crossing.

Egypt's state-affiliated Al-Qahira News TV shared a video on social media platform X, showing aid trucks entering Kerem Shalom, which before the conflict was the main commercial crossing station between Israel, Egypt and Gaza.

The Rafah crossing has been shut for almost three weeks, since Israel took control of the Palestinian side of the crossing as it stepped up its offensive in the area on May 6.

Egypt has been increasingly alarmed at the prospect of large numbers of Palestinians entering its territory from Gaza and has refused to open its side of the Rafah crossing.—Agencies



A MEMBER of the Israeli police bomb squad collects debris after a rocket struck Herzliya, on Sunday.—AFP

After drills, Taiwan's ruler wants to work with China

US lawmakers to meet Taiwan's new president today

TAIPEI: Taiwan's new president has said he is still ready to work with China, despite this week's military drills around the self-ruled island.

After Lai Ching-te was sworn in, Chinese warships and fighter jets encircled Taiwan during the two-day drills that China said were a test of its ability to seize the island.

Lai told reporters on Sunday that he wanted Taiwan and China to "jointly shoulder the important responsibility of regional stability". "I also look forward to enhancing mutual understanding and reconciliation through exchanges and cooperation with China... and moving towards a position of peace and common prosperity," he said at an event in Taipei.

Communications between China and Taiwan were severed in 2016 after former president Tsai Ing-wen took office, pledging to defend Taiwan's sovereignty.

Lai, who comes from the same Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as Tsai, has vowed to rein-

tain her policies of building up Taiwan's defence capabilities, while remaining open to dialogue with China and strengthening relations with the island's partners — particularly the United States.

But China said Lai's inaugural speech amounted to calls for independence, pushing commentators in Taiwan into a perilous situation of war and danger. "Every time Taiwan independence provokes us, we will push our countermeasures one step further, until the complete reunification of the motherland is achieved," defence ministry spokesman Wu Qian made it clear on Friday.

Wen Ti Sheng, a transresident lobbyist at the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub, believed Lai would "hold firm to project resolve" after this first interaction between his administration and Beijing. "However, he will no doubt be looking to leverage all other international partners and friends to help facilitate more back-channel communications with Beijing," he said.

US delegation

The United States' de facto embassy earlier announced that Republican Congressman Michael McCaul would lead a delegation to visit Taiwan from Sunday to Thursday "to discuss US-Taiwan

relations, regional security, trade and investment".

Taiwan's presidential spokesperson Wen Li said the delegation would be meeting with Lai on Monday.

The visit "conveys an expression of support for the new administration and the people of Taiwan through concrete actions," he said.

Meanwhile, Meng Xiangying, a professor from Beijing-based National Defense University, told Xinhua that the People's Liberation Army vessels were getting closer to the island than ever before. "The drills have shown that we can control that western area," Meng said.

During this week's drills, fighter jets loaded with live ammunition scrambled towards targets and bombers formed formations to combine with warships to simulate "strikes against important targets", CCTV reported.

The US, which does not diplomatically recognise Taiwan yet is its biggest ally and arms supplier, urged China on Saturday to "act with restraint".

On Sunday, two days after the drills ended, Taiwan's defence ministry reported that seven Chinese aircraft, 14 naval vessels and four coast guard ships were "operating around" the island.—AFP

12 hurt as another flight hits turbulence

DUBLIN: Nearly a week after a Singapore Airlines flight from Heathrow airport hit severe turbulence over the Indian Ocean leaving at least one British passenger dead and 20 others injured, six crew members and six passengers travelling on a Qatar Airways flight from Dubai to Ireland suffered injuries during a bout of turbulence on Sunday.

However, the flight (QR017), a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, landed shortly before 1pm, Dublin Airport said, adding that the plane landed safely and as scheduled.

"Upon landing, the aircraft was met by emergency services, including airport police and our fire and rescue department, due to six passengers and six crew (12 total) on board reporting injuries after the aircraft experienced turbulence while airborne over Turkey," the airport authorities explained in a statement.

Irish broadcaster RTÉ, citing passengers arriving at the airport, said the incident lasted less than 30 seconds and occurred during food service.

Qatar Airways said in a statement that a "small number" of passengers and crew sustained minor injuries during the flight and were receiving medical attention.

The airline did not directly comment on the turbulence, but said the matter is subject to an internal investigation.

Turbulence-related airline accidents are the most common type, according to a 2021 study by the US National Transportation Safety Board.

From 2009 through 2018, the US agency found that turbulence accounted for more than a third of reported airline accidents and most resulted in one or more serious injuries, but no aircraft damage.—AFP

Not the way to wage a war, says Karim of Israeli actions

ICC prosecutor justifies decision to seek arrest warrants of Netanyahu, Hamas leaders

LONDON: International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan justified his decision to request arrest warrants for Israel's prime minister and defence minister, saying Israel's actions were not how war is supposed to be fought.

Khan said on Monday that he was seeking warrants for Benjamin Netanyahu and Yassir Qadafi, as well as top Hamas leaders Yahya Sinwar, Ismail Haniyeh and Mohamed Deif, on suspicion of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

His announcement sparked the ire of Israel and its allies, the United States and the United Kingdom, all of which criticised Khan for putting together Hamas, which attacked Israel on October 7, and Israel, which has carried out a robust but military campaign in Gaza since then.

"I couldn't be clearer, Israel has every right to protect its population and to get the hostages back. But nobody has a licence to commit war crimes or crimes against humanity. The means define us," Khan, who rarely speaks publicly, told the Sunday Times newspaper.

In the interview published on Sunday, he cited a number of allegations against Israel, including "the fact that water was turned off... that people queuing for food [were] targeted, that people from aid agencies have been killed".

"This is not how war is supposed to be waged," said Khan.

"I am not saying that Israel with its democracy and its supreme court is akin to Hamas, or even a 'not'. Khan added in his interview. "If this is what compliance with international humanitarian law looks like, then the Geneva Conventions serve no purpose."

International law

The war in Gaza escalated in October 2023 after Hamas's unprecedented attack on the occupied territory resulted in

the deaths of more than 1,120 people, including Israeli army personnel, according to Israeli official figures. Since then, Israel's offensive has killed at least 35,984 Palestinians, mostly women and children, in Gaza, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

Khan said it was a "precautionary measure internationally, and if we don't hold on to the law, we have nothing to cling onto".

He added that countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia were watching closely as to whether global institutions would seek to uphold international law.

"Are powerful states sincere when they say there's a body of law or is this rule-based system all a pretence, simply a tool of NATO and a post-colonial world, with no real intention of applying law equally?" Khan asked.

The warrants, if granted by the ICC judges, would mean that any of the 128 ICC member states would technically be obliged to arrest Netanyahu and the others if they travelled there.—AFP

Nearly a million flee for shelter as Cyclone Remal hits Bangladesh

Chittagong, Kolkata airports shut; ferry sinks, three seaports closed, shelters set up

PATUAKHALI: An intense cyclone smashed into the low-lying coast of Bangladesh on Sunday, with nearly a million people fleeing inland for concrete storm shelters away from howling gales and crashing waves.

"The severe Cyclone Remal has started crossing the Bangladesh coast," Bangladesh Meteorological Department Director Anwar Hossain said, adding that the raging storm could continue hampering the coast until at least the early hours of Monday morning.

"We have so far recorded maximum wind speeds of 90 kilometres (56 miles) per hour, but the wind speed may pick up more pace."

Authorities have raised the danger signal to its highest level, as forecasters predicted gusts of up to 100km (61 miles) an hour, with heavy rain and winds also lashing neighbouring India.



COMMUTERS travel on a three-wheeler along a Kolkata road as clouds loom over the sky, due to the effect of cyclone, on Sunday.—AFP

At least 800,000 Bangladeshis fled their coastal villages, while more than 50,000 people in India also moved inland from the vast Sundarbans mangrove forest, where the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers meet the sea, ministers and disaster officials said.

"We want to ensure that a single life is not lost," said Rankin Chandra Barua, a senior minister

in India's West Bengal state.

Ferry sinks

As people fled, Bangladesh police said that a heavily laden ferry carrying more than 50 passengers — double its capacity — was swamped and sank near Mongla, a port in the expected path of the storm.

"At least 15 people were injured and were taken to a hospital," local police chief Moshfiqur Rahman Tusher said.

Bangladesh's disaster management secretary Kamrul Hossain said people had been ordered to move from "vulnerable and vulnerable" homes.

"At least 800,000 people have been shifted to cyclone shelters," Hossain said.

He said around 4,000 cyclone shelters have been readied along the country's lengthy coast on the Bay of Bengal.

Airports closed

Besides country's three seaports, Chittagong airport and India's Kolkata airport were closed on Sunday, while the Indian navy readied two ships with aid and medical supplies for "immediate deployment".—AFP

670 feared dead in Papua New Guinea landslide, says UN

PORT Moresby: More than 670 people are believed to be dead after a massive landslide in Papua New Guinea, a UN official said on Sunday as aid workers and villagers braved perilous conditions in their search for survivors.

The once-bustling hillside village in Enga province was almost completely obliterated when the landslide struck in the early hours of Friday morning, burying scores of homes and the people sleeping inside them.

"There are an estimated 150-plus houses now buried," said UN migration agency representative Nathan Akoprak, adding that "670-plus people are assumed dead".

"The situation is terrible with the land still sliding. The water is rising and this is incre-



PEOPLE dig at the site of a landslide at Yambou Village in Papua New Guinea's Enga province.—AFP

asing a massive risk for every- one involved," added Akto Moresby. The unforgiving terrain, which overuses teams of

emergency workers from Port Moresby. The unforgiving terrain, damaged roads and an

outbreak of tribal violence nearby have seriously hampered efforts to get help into the disaster zone.

More than two days after the landslide rumbled down the face of Mount Mungah, rescuers and villagers in some areas are still searching for their loved ones using shovels, axes and other makeshift tools.

Disaster worker Gregor Mohamed arrived at the site on Sunday, finding deeply "traumatised" villagers using "sticks and spears to discover the trapped bodies".

"The situation is really terrible, people are in shock and traumatised," he said. "The land is still sliding. You can see rocks falling down from the mountain." More than

1,000 people have been displaced by the catastrophe, aid agencies estimated, with food gardens and water supplies almost completely wiped out.

Aid agencies and local leaders initially located between 100 to 200 people had perished underneath the mud and rubble spanning almost four football fields in length.

But the death toll grew after local leaders and disaster workers realised official figures underestimated the population, Akoprak said.

Five bodies and the leg of a sixth had been pulled from the debris by Saturday night.

This number is expected to start climbing in the coming days as diggers and other heavy machinery speed up the painstaking excavations.

"The destruction is mas-

sive," Nickson Pakea, president of the nearby chamber of commerce, said on Saturday.

"They need machinery and other equipment to uncover these bodies. We are facing a big problem."

Tribal violence

Located on the side of densely forested Mount Mungah, the village was home to a transient population that could swell to more than 4,000 people.

It served as a trading post for the aboriginal minorities panned for gold in the highlands region.

"It's a centre of the community. People come from near and far to do their tribal mining, and then they come to this place to trade," Pakea said.

A difficult journey to make

at the best of times, vehicle access has been further complicated by a burst of tribal violence along the only route not blocked by the slip.

Akoprak said the violence was "not related to the landslide".

Papua New Guinea's military had stepped in to provide a "security escort" to aid convoys, he added. "In one day alone, a total of eight persons had been killed, five buildings were and 30 houses had been burnt down," Akoprak said of the escalating tribal feud.

At some points, the landslide — a mix of air-sized boulders, uprooted trees and charred-up earth — was thought to be eight metres deep. Locals said it may have been triggered by heavy rains in recent weeks.—AFP

SPORT

Leverkusen win German Cup for maiden domestic double

BERLIN: Granit Xhaka scored the only goal as a 10-man Bayer Leverkusen battled past second division Kaiserslautern 1-0 on Saturday to win the German Cup and secure the club's first ever domestic double.

Leverkusen missed out on a treble after losing 3-0 to Atalanta in the Europa League final on Wednesday in their first defeat of the season after a European record 51-game unbeaten run.

This was Leverkusen's second German Cup win after their maiden victory back in 1993.

"To win like that at the end, we showed our team spirit. We fought hard, we did it for everyone, the fans, the club," Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso told Germany's ARD. "To achieve the double, it's been a

great season".

Alonso won praise from his opposing coach Friedhelm Furler, 70, who was managing his last game before retiring.

"To go through the Bundesliga season unbeaten, it's madness. That he could flick that switch in his first year, it's incredible. I think he'll win many, many titles."

In Berlin's Olympic stadium that will host the Euro 2024 final in July, the champions bagged the winner with Xhaka's 20-metre strike in the 66th minute.

They controlled the tempo even after they were reduced to 10 men following Odion Kossounou's second booking a minute before halftime.

Kaiserslautern rarely threatened after the break with



BAYER Leverkusen head coach Xabi Alonso celebrates with the trophy after winning the DFB-Pokal final against Kaiserslautern at the Olympic Stadium.—AFP

Leverkusen comfortably holding on to cap a memorable season with a second trophy.

"It was a deserved victory," said club CEO Fernando Carro. "We could have added another goal but overall a fully deserved win. We lifted the Cup after we failed to do so Wednesday. Compliments to the team to win

this double."

Long derided as 'Neraklassen' for their failure to win a major title since that 1993 Cup win, Leverkusen ended their season with more silverware after also winning the Bundesliga title without a single loss — the first German team to achieve that feat.—Agencies

Real fans see off Kroos in Betis draw

MADRID: Real Madrid supporters bade farewell to midfielder Toni Kroos in his final La Liga game for the club at the Santiago Bernabeu on Saturday, a 0-0 draw against Real Betis.

The Spanish champions have one match remaining this season — the Champions League final on June 1 against Borussia Dortmund at Wembley.

"It's not easy, I can only say thanks to Madrid, the club, my teammates, to the stadium, I've always felt at home here in these 10 years, I can't ask for more, they've been 10 unforgettable years," said Germany international Kroos, 34, who is retiring after Euro 2024.

The Spanish champions' draw with Betis was a forgettable affair to see out what has been a triumphant campaign.

Carlo Ancelotti selected a strong side, his likely starting line-up next week in London, but with nothing at stake beyond potential injury risk, they did not push themselves.

Los Blancos finish the season with only one league defeat and were unbeaten at the Bernabeu.

Earlier, Athletic Madrid ended their La Liga campaign with a 2-0 win at Real Sociedad thanks to a first-half strike by Brazilian winger Samuel Lino and a Remildo Maranhao tap-in in stoppage time.

Athletic, who had already secured fourth place and a spot in next season's Champions League, finished the season on 76 points, 11 ahead of Athletic Bilbao, who edged Rayo Vallecano 1-0, in fifth.

Sixth-placed Sociedad had qualified for the Europa League.

Relegated Almeria, who won much of the season without a single victory, earned only their third win to move off the bottom of the table, thrashing Cadix 6-1, to leave Granada 20th.

Villarreal striker Alexander Soriano limped off injured in his team's 1-1 draw against Osasuna, leaving the golden boot in the hands of Greece striker Artem Doniyk, who scored a hat-trick on Friday to move to 24 goals, one ahead of the Norwegian.—Agencies



MADRID: Real Madrid's Toni Kroos waves goodbye to fans after being substituted during the La Liga match against Real Betis at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.—Reuters



LILLE: Paris St Germain's Kylian Mbappe lifts the Coupe de France trophy as he celebrates with team-mates after the final against Olympique Lyonnais at Stade Pierre-Mauroy.—Reuters

PSG beat Lyon to clinch French Cup in Mbappe's farewell appearance

VILLENEUVE D'ASCQ: Paris St Germain beat Olympique Lyonnais 1-1 in the French Cup final on Saturday courtesy of first-half strikes from Ousmane Dembelle and Fabian Ruiz to end the season with a domestic treble in Kylian Mbappe's farewell match.

The Ligue 1 and French Super Cup champions dominated the first half at Lille's Stade Pierre-Mauroy to secure their record-extending 15th Cup title and first since 2021.

"We played the final very well. We played with great intensity and were great on the ball," said Luis Enrique.

"I think we have had a very good season. We would have liked to stay around for another week and not go on holiday yet but that is life," he said, referring to next weekend's Champions League final.

"Nobody said football was fair, but it doesn't matter. Next season we will come back stronger and will look to sign even hungrier players, who have even more desire to win."

Of the departing Mbappe he added: "I think I have been lucky to coach Kylian but it has been a difficult season for him because after seven years and all he has achieved it is always hard to say goodbye."

But he was always prepared to help the team and tonight was the cherry on the cake even if he didn't score.

The game was somewhat overshadowed by incidents earlier in the day, with rival fans clashing at a motorway toll around 50 kilometres south of the northern city of Lille.

The clashes involved about 100 Lyon supporters and about 200 PSG fans, with two coaches ending up on fire, according to a police source.

A source in the regional police authority said 20 supporters were slightly injured, with French President Emmanuel Macron, who attended the final, condemning the violence.

Dembelle put PSG ahead after 23 minutes when Nano Mendez' cross found him unmarked in the six-yard box to coolly head home, and Ruiz doubled the advantage with a strike from a tight angle at the second attempt.

Lyon pulled one back 10 minutes into the second half thanks to Jake O'Brien's covering header off a corner before PSG keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma produced a superb save minutes later.

PSG's all-time top scorer Mbappe failed to find the net in his final game for the club, leaving his record at 256 goals in 308 appearances over his seven-year spell.

"I've been thinking a lot about the last few years. Saying that it's all over, it makes my heart ache a little. What I've had here, I'll never find anywhere else," the 25-year-old Mbappe said.

"It's been a wonderful evening, and a wonderful season. I hope that children will continue to watch PSG. We've tried to get people excited, to give young people the chance to play for PSG. I hope that more youngsters will want to make their mark here."—Agencies

Chebet breaks 10,000m record

EUGENE: Kenyan Beatrice Chebet shattered the women's 10,000 metres world record at the Prefontaine Classic on Saturday, as Britain's Jodie Foster beat archrival Jakob Ingebrigtsen in the mile race at the Eugene Diamond League meet.

Chebet clocked 28 minutes 54.14 seconds, taking nearly seven seconds off the previous world record set by Ethiopian Letesenbet Gideyo three years ago to qualify for the event at the Paris Olympics.

"The last lap just motivated me, especially when Giedel dropped. Then I realized 'Oh, I am the best, as I can go,'" said Chebet, who had the fans on their feet at Hayward Field in Oregon as she cruised through the finish.

The men's mile served up the biggest drama of the day as Kerr faced Norwegian Ingelbrigtsen for the first time since he stunned the Olympic champion to win the 1,500 metres world title in Beijing.

Kerr pulled away from the pack with 600 metres to go but had Ingelbrigtsen hot on his heels through the final stretch.

Ingelbrigtsen, twice world champion over 5,000 metres, tried to find another gear but could not get past Kerr who crossed the line in a national record time of 3:45.34.

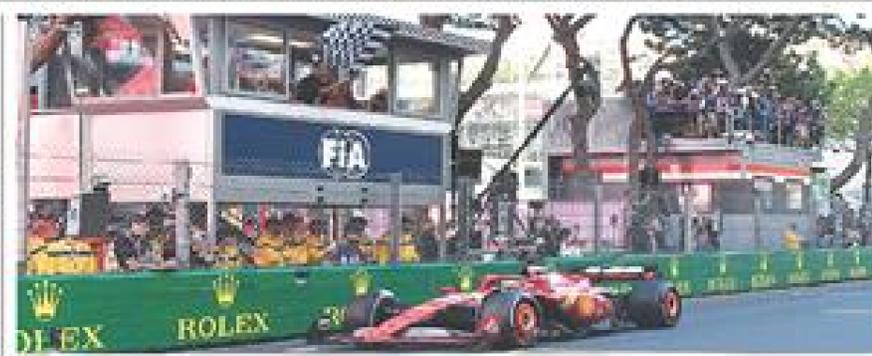
Making his season debut after missing eight months due to an Achilles injury, Ingelbrigtsen finished in 3:45.60 with American Yared Nuguse third.

With the US Olympic trials set for next month, world champion Sha'Carri Richardson underlined her claim as favourite for the women's 200 metres, exploding off the blocks to finish in 1:0.83.

Raine Lucia's Julian Alfred finished a tenth of a second slower with Britain's Dina Asher-Smith third in 1:0.98. Rwanda's Amina Jamaison rival Elaine Thompson-Herah, who completed a second successive Olympic upset double in Tokyo, finished last in 1:1.30.

American Christian Coleman held off a late challenge from Kenyan Ferdinand Omoniyale to win the men's 100m in 9:05 seconds.

The 2019 world champion beat Omoniyale by 0.03 seconds with American Brandon Hicklin third in 9:08.—Reuters



FERRARI'S Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc passes the chequered flag, which is waved by French football star Kylian Mbappe, to win the Monaco F1 Grand Prix at Circuit de Monaco on Sunday.—Reuters

Leclerc ends Monaco jinx with dream home victory

MONACO: Ferrari's Charles Leclerc celebrated a long-awaited dream come true on Sunday as the first home winner of Formula One's showcase Monaco Grand Prix since Louis Chiron triumphed in 1931.

It was also the first time the 26-year-old had stood on the Monaco podium in six attempts and came after two standing starts from pole position in a race halted when first lap collision took out a fifth of the field.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri finished runner-up, 2.1 seconds behind after 78 laps without a chance to overtake on a street circuit that often produces professional races, and Ferrari's Carlos Sainz was third.

"It means a lot," said Leclerc, who screamed over the radio as he took a chequered flag waved by France soccer forward Kylian Mbappe while the crowd erupted and Prince Albert gave a royal thumbs-up.

"It's the race that made me dream of becoming a Formula One driver one day."

Red Bull's championship leader and 2023 Monaco winner Max Verstappen started and finished sixth, the third time in eight races this season that the triple world champion has been beaten.

McLaren's Lando Norris was fourth and George Russell fifth for Mercedes.

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton was seventh, with a

harmful pole for fastest lap, and Yuki Tsumada eighth for Red Bull-owned RB.

Also Alonso scored Williams' first points of the season in ninth and Pierre Gasly took the final one for Alpine despite a first-lap collision with team mate Esteban Ocon, whose race ended immediately.

Leclerc's light-to-flag success, and first win since the 2022 Austrian Grand Prix, trimmed Verstappen's championship lead to 31 points from 48.

Ferrari are now only 24 points behind Red Bull in the constructors' standings.

Leclerc had twice before started from pole in Monaco, in 2021 and 2022, but failed to convert the huge advantage into a top-three finish on the street-circuit streets he has known all his life.

On a bright and sunny afternoon, and with the weight of expectations heavier than ever, he finally got to live the dream what was only Ferrari's third win in the Mediterranean principality this century.

"Tonight is going to be a big night," he told his team on the cool, late-evening lap.

"No words can explain that," he added later, before Prince Albert joined in the podium celebrations by spraying his own bottle of fizz.

"It's such a difficult race; I think the last time I've been starting on

pole position and we couldn't quite make it makes it even better in a way."

The red flags that came out after a huge crash involving Red Bull's Sergio Perez and Haas test-driver Nico Hulkenberg and Kevin Magnussen led to a delay while forces were fixed and debris removed.

The stoppage allowed teams to change tyres — removing the need for further pitstops that might have shaken up the order — and also reduced Sainz.

The Spaniard had run wide and stopped in Casimo square after a clash with Piastri left him with a puncture but he was able to return to the pit and re-start in his original grid position of third.

"It was a tight one and a very bad feeling in lap one which very quickly turned into a really good feeling after getting re-started in P3," he said.

"I'm incredibly happy to see Charles win on his home Grand Prix," he added. "To be able to share this podium with him in P3 is great for the whole team, and it feels like we're getting stronger and stronger."

Leclerc deliberately slowed the field when the race resumed to save his tyres and prevent a big enough gap opening up behind him to allow rivals to pit for fresh and faster rubber.—Reuters

Australian volleyball team arrive for three-match series

ISLAMABAD: The Australian volleyball team arrived here on Sunday for a three-match series against Pakistan.

The series will commence on May 28 here at the Pakistan Sports Complex with subsequent matches

on May 29 and 30. All matches will start at 6:30pm.

Led by Nehemiah Mose, the Australian squad includes Luke Perry, Archie Simpson, Jackson Holland, Trent O'Kea, Matthew Aubrey, Max Service, Beau Graham,

Thomas Heppinstall, Sam Flowerday, Nicholas Butler, Ethan Garrett, William O'arcy Miles and Jacob Baird.

Daniel Bort will serve as head coach, accompanied by James Bagley, Alex Walker, and Brendan Garlick as team-coaches.

Pakistan, fresh from their victory on campaign in the Central Asian Volleyball Championship, will be captained by Mural Jelban.

The team also includes Kadir Navard (deputy captain), Waleed

Khan, Mural Khan, Aimal Khan, Usman Farayd Ali, Fakhar Ud Din, Afaq Khan, Abdul Zahoor, Musawer Khan, Mohammod Hamad, Haider Ali, Nasir Ali and Mohammad Yousof.

Roben Wolochin is the national team's head coach.—Sports Reporter

Al-Ain crush Marinos to secure Asian Champions League title

AL-AIN: Al-Ain crushed 10-man Yokohama F Marinos 5-1 in the second leg of the Asian Champions League final on Saturday as a rampant Soufiane Rahimi led his team to a 6-3 aggregate win and their first continental title in 21 years.

"It's really difficult to describe the emotion," said Al-Ain coach Hernan Crespo, who only joined the club in November and was mobbed by jubilant players as he spoke to reporters.

"We deserve this title. Every time we were facing the quarter-finals, semi-

finals and even the finals as underdogs," he said. "At the beginning, nobody believed in us and we did it. These days, these players did something big."

Rahimi was instrumental in the United Arab Emirates club lifting the trophy for the first time since the inaugural edition in 2003, scoring twice at Hazza Bin Zayed Stadium and playing a key role throughout the final.

Trailing 2-1 from the opening leg in Yokohama two weeks ago, Al-Ain were level on aggregate in the eighth minute as Rahimi struck into the



AL-AIN coach Hernan Crespo raises the winner's trophy after the second leg of the AFC Champions League final against Yokohama F. Marinos at the Hazza Bin Zayed Stadium.—AFP

bottom corner having roared onto Yalta Nader's clever back flick of the striker's own through ball.

The goal was a sign of what was to come from Rahimi as he tormented the Yokohama defence, directing a ball from Shunsuke Hatsumaki on the half-hour mark that led to Al-Ain's second, the home side awarded a penalty after a VAR review.

Midfielder Kaku stepped up to score as Marinos goalkeeper William Pope guessed the correct way but was unable to prevent the ball from finding the target in

the 33rd minute.

However, the Harry Kewell-coached Japanese side pulled one back to level the aggregate score with five minutes left in the half, Yan Mathias parishing Kusunoki Kosuke's effort after his mistake to strike a low, left-foot shot past Khalid Issa.

But there was to be further drama deep into injury time of an already eventful first half that swung the outcome in Al-Ain's favour.

Pope was sent off when he fouled the on-rushing Soufiane Rahimi deep into injury time of a first

half that stretched to an extraordinary 62 minutes.

Kewell was left fuming at what he called a lack of sportsmanship by Al-Ain.

"We play at a level where sportsmanship is supposed to be high. For me, the referee tonight was poor and he allowed certain things to happen. It was never a penalty," said the Australian.

"So again, we're going to use this. We're going to put this into our season. We're going to put this into every game now that we play, and we're going to go forward."

In the 67th minute

Rahimi punished adjacent goalkeeper Yama Shirozuka, forcing him at his near post with a left-foot strike that put Al-Ain in command of the tie and gave the Moroccan his 15th goal of the campaign.

With a one-goal lead and a man advantage, Crespo's side went for the kill as Kido Lobo capitalised on a terrible mistake by Shirozuka in the first minute of injury time to slot into an empty net and, four minutes later, he directed the ball in from close range to complete the Japanese side's misery.—Agencies

Imad concerned as middle-overs problems continue to haunt Pakistan

BIRMINGHAM: Middle-overs problems returned to haunt Pakistan yet again in their 23-run defeat against England at Edgbaston on Saturday. And with their T20 World Cup opener hardly 10 days away, Babar Azam and co. would be putting their heads together to find a way around it.

Having restricted the hosts to 181 runs (thanks to a fairly disciplined bowling show, Pakistan had got off to a flying start with the bat with skipper Babar and Fakhar Zaman leading from the front.

But Babar getting trapped low by Moeen Ali's off-spin was Pakistan's first of the four dismissals that occurred between the start of the sixth over and the end of the 18th.

During that period Pakistan scored only 37 runs, which eventually proved to be ruin the match in England's favour.

"Our middle overs have been our lacking for a long time, and we need to plan how to gain momentum during this phase," Pakistan all-rounder Ihsanullah Khan said during the post-match press conference. "Today, the middle phase where we lost 37 runs for four wickets was critical.

"We need to dominate the middle overs. Dominating doesn't mean hitting every ball for a boundary but playing smartly ball by ball and not letting the bowlers set it."

Imad and Fakhar Ahmed threatened to switch it back from Jon Butler's men with a 40-run partnership of just 21 balls, but before the impact of the stand could translate into a definitive edge for Pakistan, the latter lost his wicket just ahead of the death stages of the contest.

"I think we sometimes lack the intent we need," Imad noted. "However, you see glimpses of it, like how Fakhar played with full backing to attack from the start."

"If you put the opposition under pressure from the beginning, it reduces the required run rate, making it easier to chase. Today, we needed a run rate of 10 per over, and if Fakhar and I hadn't gotten out at crucial moments, we could have crossed the finish line."

Imad could have had a perfect all-round show under his belt if he did so. With the bat, he was the best for Pakistan, conceding only 19 runs and taking two wickets in his quota of four overs.

Although he shared with the new ball, the left-arm spinner said he was comfortable with bowling at any given stage of the game, especially with Pakistan having the likes of Shahbaz Aizad and Mohammad Amir as attackers at their disposal.

"I am comfortable bowling at any position because you can see the records of Shahbaz and Amir with the new ball, which are excellent," Imad observed. "Mine is also very good, but only two bowlers can bowl with the new ball at a time."

"As we get closer to the World Cup, the rules and clarifications for everyone are becoming more defined, especially in bowling."

The third T20 will be played in Cardiff on Tuesday. —Agencies



TAUNTON: Pakistan opener Sidra Aris in action during the second women's One-day International against England at the County Ground on Sunday. Pakistan had batted only 6.5 overs, scoring 29 runs for no loss, before rain stopped play and eventually forced the game to be abandoned. England won the first of the three-match ODI series by 37 runs. The third and final match of the series will be played in Chesham on Wednesday. —Reuters

Nepal hope for Lamichhane US visa as deadline passes

KATHMANDU: Nepal said Sunday they had not given up hope on including controversial star batsman Lamichhane in their T20 World Cup squad, despite the spin bowler having cleared a US visa and the deadline for final squads expiring.

The T20 World Cup begins next Saturday, co-hosted by the United States and West Indies, with Nepal's first game on June 4 in Dallas.

"We are lobbying the embassy through the Nepal government," Chairman Babbar Chaud, president of Cricket Association of Nepal, told AFP on Sunday.

Nepal are keen to select Lamichhane, who had his eight-year sentence for rape quashed on appeal this month.

The International Cricket Council said that all T20 World Cup squads had been named by the May 25 deadline.

Any alteration to Nepal's squad would now require approval from the ICC's event technical committee.

Nepal will play their first two group games in the United States followed by two in the West Indies. —AFP



TEAM UAE's Slovenian rider Tadej Pogacar, wearing the overall leader's pink jersey (C), cycles with the peloton in the final kilometers of the 2nd and last stage of the Giro d'Italia. —AFP

Pogacar wins Giro d'Italia on debut as Merlier secures final stage

ROME: Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar emphatically won the Giro d'Italia on his debut when he retained his unassailable overall lead after Sunday's 21st and final stage in Rome, winning by the biggest overall margin since 1965.

The 25-year-old UAE Team Emirates rider had been in the leader's pink jersey since winning stage two, the first of his six stage victories, and finished Sunday's ceremonial 125-km flat run safely in the bunch as Tim Merlier won the stage.

"I can't describe it, it's hard to describe this moment, it's amazing," Pogacar said. "A lot of nice memories for sure, in a while I will see which one was the best moment but I think in general it was a really beautiful Giro."

Merlier (SoudalQuick Step) outperformed Italy's Jonathan Milan (Lidl-Trek) as the Belgian won his third stage. Milan had made his way back to the front for the bunch sprint after crashing on the last lap around the Eternal City.

"For the people it's a really big win, but for myself, it feels a bit strange because everybody was already on the plane yesterday, drinking beer and everything," Merlier said.

"Today we need to race. The first part easy, then it was full gas. For me this kind of race is a bit special, for sprinters a really nice victory."

Milan, winner of three stages, wins the points classification, ahead of Australian Rohan Gwoon (Alpecin-Deceuninck) who finished third in the final stage.

Pogacar finished nine minutes and 50 seconds ahead of Colombia's Daniel Martinez (BORA-Hanjosek), with last year's runner-up Geraint Thomas of Wales (Ineos Grenadiers) a further 28 seconds behind in third in the overall standings.

He adds the Giro title to his two Tour de France triumphs in 2020 and 2021, and did it in style, proving exactly why he had been the pre-race favourite as nobody came even close to challenging once Pogacar had done an early marker on day two.

Last year's winner and fellow Slovenian Primoz Roglic was absent from the race along with Remco Evenepoel and Jonas Vingegaard, but nothing can take away from Pogacar's dominance in Italy, and he will now aim for the Tour de France.

Pogacar really took control on stage seven by winning the individual time trial ahead of Filippo Ganna, stretching his lead to over two and a half minutes, and followed that by winning the next stage.

Ganna gained revenge in the next time trial but Pogacar still extended the gap to his rivals when finishing second, and by stage 15 it was all but over when the Slovenian won his fourth stage and put an extra three minutes between himself and Thomas.

Pogacar won the final stage and showed an early marker on the penultimate day when going solo to take his sixth stage to cement his grip on the maglia rosa, with an overall lead not seen in almost 60 years at the Giro.

The Slovenian also won the mountains classification and could relax on the final day and enjoyed his first ride around the streets of the Italian capital safe in the knowledge he was the Giro winner without a doubt. —Reuters

Alcaraz eases injury concerns with dominant early display at Roland Garros

PARIS: Carlos Alcaraz eased into the second round of the French Open after struggling off to a shaky start in his first-round match against Alexander Zverev. The 20-year-old Spaniard, who has won the Wimbledon and US Open titles, showed signs of a return to form with a dominant performance in the second round.



JEFFREY John Wolf of the US plays a forehand return against Spain's Carlos Alcaraz Garfia during their French Open match on Court Philippe-Chatrier at the Roland Garros Complex on Sunday. —AFP

Alcaraz, who has won the Wimbledon and US Open titles, showed signs of a return to form with a dominant performance in the second round. He defeated Zverev in straight sets, 6-3, 6-3, 6-3.

But cheered on by the Philippe Chatrier crowd, the two-time Grand Slam champion who skipped three of the four time-up events he planned to participate in, stamped the lucky loss 6-1, 6-2, 6-1.

"I'm really happy to be back here in Paris and competing again. It's been a difficult month for me... I love playing tennis," third seed Alcaraz said.

"To stay away from that was hurting me. I tried everything I could to be at 100% in Roland Garros to show my best. I think I did it today."

Madrid champion and sixth seed Roddick was pushed hard by Japanese Yaro Daniel before securing a 6-2, 6-7(3), 6-3, 7-5 victory while Polish eighth seed Harkavec was dragged the distance by another Japanese player in Shintaro Mochizuki.

Harkavec returned from a rain break to seal a 4-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 victory.

French hopes of a first men's triumph since Yannick Noah's triumph more than four decades ago were dampened somewhat

earlier as their number one player and 17th seed Iga Swiatek crashed to a 6-4, 2-6, 6-4, 6-3 defeat by Italian Lucia Bronzetti.

German Maximilian Marterer, ranked No 99, comfortably moved into the next round as he defeated Jordan Thompson of Australia 6-3, 6-2, 6-0 while Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov beat Aleksander Kornevich of the US 6-4, 6-3, 6-4.

In the women's fixtures on Sunday, four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka and 2017 winner Jelena Ostapenko also advanced before rain interrupted play but the action continued on Suzanne Lenglen with a new retractable roof inaugurated earlier in the day deployed

immediately. Osaka's reward for a battling 6-3, 4-6, 7-5 win over Italian Lucia Bronzetti could be a meeting with defending champion Iga Swiatek in the next round.

Top seed Swiatek, chasing a fourth French Open, will face Osaka if the Pole gets past qualifier Lucia Bronzetti on Monday.

Ostapenko continued her strong season by beating Romania's Jaqueline Cristian 6-4, 7-5.

Russian Maria Timofeeva crashed out of the event after losing against experienced Chinese Wang Yafan 6-3, 6-3. Wang, 36, will next face Dayana Yastremska of Ukraine, who downed Australian Alja Tomljanovic 3-6, 6-3, 6-3, on Monday.

Bagnaia pips Martin to claim Catalunya Grand Prix

BARCELONA: Ducati's reigning champion Francesco Bagnaia won the Catalunya Grand Prix on Sunday to close the gap on championship leader Jorge Martin, who finished second, while Gresini's Marc Marquez was third despite starting 14th on the grid.

Marquez repeated his heroics from Saturday's sprint when he finished an astonishing second from 14th, keeping pole-sitter Alex Espinoza at bay until the chequered flag and finishing five tenths of a second ahead to take third.

Bagnaia had crashed on the final lap of the sprint when he was leading but Sunday's victory

— his third of the season — was redemption for the Italian who is now 39 points behind Martin.

"Honestly, I was angry about yesterday knowing I had the potential to win," Bagnaia said. "When I saw riders struggling with the front today I started to push more."

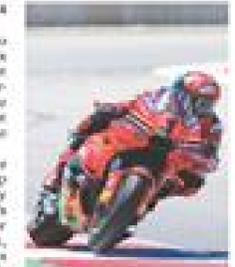
Bagnaia and Pedro Acosta moved up to first and second at the start while sprint winner Espinoza was pushed down to 16th in his final home race.

Martin also had a blistering start to go from seventh on the grid to third, with Red Bull KTM's Brad Binder also starting in behind him. Acosta attempted to overtake Bagnaia when

he could but it was Martin who had the pace and he quickly took second place from the Catalan Tech3 rider before overtaking the factory Ducati rider when he saw a slip gap on the fourth lap.

But Acosta, an old rival, was in no mood to sit back when he saw Bagnaia showing him down, overtaking the Ducati to give Martin chase as the duo quickly posted away from Bagnaia.

Martin had longer-lasting medium tyre and could afford to bide his time while behind him Acosta looked for every opportunity to move ahead, but the eager rookie made a second mistake in as many races



DUCATI Italian rider Francesco Bagnaia competes in the MotoGP Grand Prix of Catalunya at the Circuit de Catalunya on Sunday. —AFP

Chase leads West Indies to T20I series victory over South Africa

KINGSTON: Roston Chase struck a magnificent 38-ball 67 as West Indies beat South Africa by 16 runs at Sabina Park to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match T20I series.

Chase led a strong batting performance from the home side who made 207-7 and while South Africa made a fast start they were unable to get close to the target.

West Indies, who are co-hosts of the T20 World Cup which gets under way on June 1 in the United States, will face South Africa again on Sunday to conclude the series.

It was a strong all-round performance from the Caribbean team coached by Darren Sammy, who captained the West Indies to the T20 World Cup title in 2016.

King was the man and opted to bat and the skipper made a bright start scoring 34 off 22 balls.

Kyle Mayers was aggressive as he struck 32 off 16 balls, with three sixes before he went in the ninth over with the home side on 83-3.

Both King and Mayers were dismissed by 21-year-old leg spinner Ngabonzoni Peter, who impressed in his debut for South Africa.

But the damage was done with the 63-run partnership between Chase and Romario Shephard.

Scoreboard	
WEST INDIES	SOUTH AFRICA
B. King 67 (22)	R. Hendricks 41 (34)
K. Mayers 32 (16)	C. de Kock 33 (34)
J. King 27 (17)	R. Rossouw 27 (27)
R. Chase 27 (17)	M. Bhebe 19 (19)
A. Peter 16 (16)	R. van der Dussen 16 (16)
A. Shephard 16 (16)	A. Markham 16 (16)
F. Allen 16 (16)	W. Mulder 16 (16)
A. Hazratullah 16 (16)	B. van der Merwe 16 (16)
A. Hazratullah 16 (16)	N. Peter 16 (16)
A. Hazratullah 16 (16)	N. Peter 16 (16)
EXTRAS 16 (16)	FALLS OF WICKETS 1-20 (Chase) 2-34 (King) 3-50 (Mayers) 4-116 (Peter) 5-183 (Chase & Shephard) 6-207 (Chase & Shephard)
DO NOT BAT S. Jordan, O. McCoy	DO NOT BAT L. Ngidi, A. Nortje
BOWLING Ngidi 4-0-17-0, Peter 4-0-21-1 (16), Ntseke 4-0-47-0, Peter 4-0-32-2 (16), Shephard 4-0-21-0, Mulder 1-0-18-0 (16)	BOWLING Mayers 1-0-0-0, Chase 4-0-20-1 (16), Markham 2-0-30-0 (16), Jordan 1-0-17-0 (16), Hazratullah 2-0-21-0 (16), Allen 1-0-16-0 (16), Mulder 1-0-18-0 (16)

ended with figures of 2-51 off his three overs.

South Africa made a lightning start to their reply, with openers

Rossouw and Quinton de Kock rattling up 81 in 45 overs before de Kock was bowled by slow left-arm spinner Akeem Hossain having made 41 off just 17 balls.

de Kock had taken the attack to the West Indies smashing four fours and four sixes.

Hendricks went in the next over, bowled by the off-spin of Chase having made 34 off 18 balls with three sixes.

But slow left-armers Godakosh Motie ensured that South Africa couldn't build any real momentum taking 3-22 from his four overs, including the wicket of skipper Rassouw van der Dussen, who had threatened with his aggressive 30 off 22.

Van der Dussen would have been disappointed with his dismissal as he hit a wide full toss to Hossain at long-off.

The tourists' tail was unable to keep up with the run-rate in the final overs as West Indies secured the series win and offered a reminder that, as two-time winners, they could be a factor in this World Cup.

METRO

South



Alcaraz eases injury concerns with dominant early display
Pg.18 SPORT

KARACHI
Sunset: 07:15 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow): 05:42 am
NEXT 24 HRS
Minimum: 30°C
Maximum: 35°C
Outlook: Sunny/Wind



AMID golf peppy and chess pushcarts, a large number of people enjoy the evening on Seewee beach, on Sunday.—Shakil Aidi / White Star

Shortage of tetanus injections puts injured people at risk of health complications

Injection available on the black market at very high price, say doctors

By Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: An acute shortage of tetanus injection has been prevailing in the city for almost a month, forcing many hospitals to refuse the medication to injured patients, it emerged on Sunday. Doctors associated with different private and public sector hospitals in the city told Dawn that the shortage of the medication had been prevailing for almost a month and that the injection was available on the black market at a very high price.

"Yes, there's been an acute shortage of the medication for a month. But, we are managing this problem internally through our own resources," an official of the Incha Hospital shared.

"Several people suffer injuries daily in Karachi who are now at a grave risk of suffering health complications, if they are not administered with antitoxin medication," Pakistan Medical Association-Centre secretary general Dr Akhbar Ghaffoor Shams said, adding that severe complications of tetanus could be "life-threatening".

Commonly known as lockjaw, tetanus is a serious disease of the nervous system caused by a toxin-producing bacterium. The disease causes muscle contractions, particularly of the jaw and neck muscles. Severe complications of tetanus can be life-threatening. Immunisation is the only effective prevention from tetanus. Doctors said health complications of tetanus included vocal cord spasms, broken bones due to severe muscle spasms, breathing problems, high blood pressure and blood clots in the lungs.

Countrywide shortage

Sources said the shortage of the medication wasn't restricted to Karachi alone,

but rather prevailed throughout the country. The Punjab government, in its bid to overcome the shortage, was set to purchase 1.5 million doses of the medication through a pharmaceutical company. The imported consignment would arrive in a few days, they said.

"It's not just tetanus, rather many medicines, including that of diabetes, which have been in short supply for over a month. We had brought this matter to the notice of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) in writing over a month ago, inquiring whether the medicines' shortage exists due to shortage of their raw material or problems in their import. Regrettably, there was no response and action," said Dr Shams of PMA.

Often medicines' shortage was artificially created to raise their prices, he said, recalling that sometime back there was an acute shortage of the dog-bite vaccine.

"In both cases, the poor man suffers in silence. The anti-tetanus also has an important role in neonatal care where

would-be mothers are given the medication to protect themselves and their babies from neonatal tetanus," he explained.

At the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre, officials stated that while the hospital faced a serious shortage of tetanus immunoglobulin, there was no shortage of antitoxin serum. "The serum has a preventive role while immunoglobulin is required to build passive immunity."

Officials at the Dr Quill Plea Civil Hospital Karachi emphasized the need for an advisory of the health department on the use of antitoxin medication.

"There is a shortage of anti-tetanus serum but not of tetanus toxoid. While both medications have a preventive role, the former carries several risks. Hence, it's better to use the latter medication, which is safe and globally recommended for tetanus," a senior CIH doctor said, adding that most hospitals in Pakistan used antitoxin serum prepared from equine blood.

No official of the health department or DRAP was available for comments.

Commission for newsmen protection asks IGP to form new body to probe Gadani's killing

Ghotki police yet to register journalist's murder case

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: While no FIR has been lodged in connection with the murder of journalist Nasrullah Gadani, the commission for the protection of journalists and other media practitioners (CMPJP) has rejected an investigation team formed earlier to probe the targeted attack and directed the inspector gen-



PROTESTERS demanded the arrest of journalist Nasrullah Gadani's killers outside the Karachi Press Club, on Sunday.—White Star

eral of police (IGP) to form a new body to investigate the case.

On May 21, three assailants riding on a motorcycle had targeted Gadani in Ghotki's Mirpur Mathelo. He was initially moved to a hospital in Sakhi Yaq Khan from where he was airlifted to Karachi, where he died during treatment at a private health facility on May 24.

In its meeting held on Saturday evening, the commission asked the IGP that the head of the new special investigation team and its members should not be taken from Sindh.

CJMP chairman retired Justice Nasir Akbar chaired the

meeting which was attended by Dr Taseem Ahmed Khan, Dr Jabbar Khan, Faisal Sahibpuri and Muzhar Abbas.

Dr Khattak informed the meeting about the killing of journalist Gadani, who was affiliated with Sindh language daily Aaraz Jang.

The participants observed that the police and administration did not take necessary steps for protection of the journalist who was earlier subjected to an undesirable attitude by Ghotki administration that ordered his detention under the Maintenance of Public

Continued on Page 14

UBL presents awards to writers, prominent personalities

By Our Reporter

KARACHI: The 11th UBL Literary and Arts Awards 2024 were held at a local hotel on Saturday evening.

The prestigious lifetime achievement award was presented to Zaheda Hira for her exemplary work across a long distinguished career.

The following are the names of the winners:

The children's Urdu literature award presented to Ahmed Adnan Taryq for *Dastan-e-Anwar Hamam*, children's English literature award to Marjish Abbas for *Media and Naad Series*.

Translation into Urdu (joint awards) presented to Isam Nadeem for *Aasma Se Zindagi* and Yasmeen Hameed for *Jamuni Aasa Ki Muntakhab Nazam*.

Urdu poetry award presented to Moham Shakoor for *Kuch Farq Hota*.

Pakistani languages award given to Dr Syed Wajid Ali Shah for his work *Abdur Ghani Khan — Zward Au Zamana* in Pashto language.

Online literature award presented to Nayyar Mustafa for his work *Fangon Main Sochnay Wali Larik*, song lyrics award presented to Sabir Zafar, best drama script to Hashim Nadeem for his play *Parload*, best Urdu debut award presented to Ahmad Jahangir for *Shah Darya*.

English fiction award presented to Haroon Khaliq Akhtar for his work *Ear's Truth*, English non-fiction award given to Tariq Hafman for *Pakistan's Wars: An Alternative History*.

Urdu fiction award presented to Dr Awanagrab Khan Niaz for his book *Urdu Afsan — Maholayal Tanzeer* while Urdu non-fiction award was given to Shahwan Abbas for *Leema Yakkur Ban*.

The jury members in the Urdu categories were Dr Asghar Nadeem Syed, Dr Aris Syeda, Dr Anwar Ahmed, Kashwar Nadeem and Dr Nasir Abbas Nayyar. Jury members for the English categories included D. Nazir Mahmood, Dr Aroosa Karwal and Haris Khattak.

The show was hosted by Sajjad Hasan and Faiza Gillani.

'Robber' shot dead by citizen in Surjani

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A teenage suspect was shot dead by a citizen in Surjani Town on Sunday morning, police said.

Area SHO Asadullah Akha said that two robbers attempted to loot an unidentified citizen in Gulshan-i-Farooq. The citizen, who was armed, put up resistance and opened fire on the muggers, resulting in bullet injuries to one of them. The armed citizen left the scene before the arrival of the police.

The wounded suspect was taken to the Abbasi Shahzad Hospital (ASH) where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

He was identified as Bilal Yasir, 18, and the police said he had a past criminal record. A pistol was recovered from his custody.

Meanwhile, a motorcycleist, Asif Shakir, 20, was shot at and wounded by robbers over resistance near Kameez Fatima Society on Sunday.

Extraction of underground water without KWSC licence banned

Five-member committee formed to grant licence for groundwater extraction

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: The provincial government has approved Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation's regulations to regulate and control subsoil water extraction and prevent its illegal extraction for industrial and commercial purposes.

A gazette notification of the Groundwater (Extraction, Consumption and Management) Regulations-2024 was issued on May 16.

According to the regulations, licences will be issued

for two years for extracting underground water in industrial areas and motors will be installed on all boreholes.

Under the regulations, all previous licences have been cancelled and from one licence would allow four boreholes. Additional boreholes will require a separate licence and a licence from the water utility was made mandatory for using underground water for industrial purposes.

Talking to Dawn, KWSC chief executive officer engineer Syed Salahuddin Ahmed said that if water theft or illegal sales were proven, the water utility could impose a fine of Rs5 million on the licence holder.

He said that the implementation of this law would significantly increase the water utility's income and stop the illegal water extraction for commercial and industrial purposes.

Mr Ahmed emphasized that the new administration of the water corporation was taking strong measures to ensure fair distribution of water, and negligence would not be tolerated.

The new regulations categorised water into five types — industrial, groundwater, surface, commercial, healthcare and educational institutes, and residential complexes.

The KWSC chief formed a five-member committee for issuing underground water licences.

The committee would be led by Owais Malik, with members Muhammad Dilanar Jafri, Muhammad Khalid Farooqi, Mirza Usaid-Ul-Rohman, and Syed Hamam Abbas.

Interested applicants must submit their licence applications through the chairman or president of their respective

industrial estate to the water utility chief and the committee would review the applications and decide on approval or rejection.

According to the new law, those with records of water theft or illegal sales would have their licences revoked under the Subsoil Water Regulation Act 2018.

Under the regulations, boreholes or tube wells cannot be placed within 130 feet of the KWSC's conduits, bulk lines, reservoirs, or pumping stations, and they must not exceed a diameter of 24 inches.

Violators will face strict legal action, including immediate licence cancellation.

As per regulations, a person having criminal record regarding theft of water from the pipelines or infrastructure of the water utility, or involved in illegal sale of water, or had its

licence revoked under the Subsoil Water (Extraction and Consumption) Regulation 2018 or has been declared insolvent by any court of law shall be ineligible for the grant of licence.

According to the law, the person applying for the industrial use as an individual unit is liable to consume the water extraction for itself and further sharing or supplying of extracted water to nearby or other industrial units is not allowed.

For individual industrial extraction, the person has to apply separate licence for individual industrial unit.

Besides, under no circumstances transportation of groundwater (processed or otherwise) shall be allowed through bulk water tanks/buffers, but shall not be applicable to the bottled or water under small containers.



A BOREHOLE is being made in New Karachi. Under new regulations, individual residential houses are exempt from obtaining a licence for extraction of subsoil water.—Shakil Aidi / White Star

PRAYER	
Fajr	4:15
Zuhr	12:30
Asr	5:17
Maghrib	7:17
Isha	8:41

REFLECTIONS

DO YOU KNOW IT WELL, SON, THAT THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF LIVED HOOD: ONE WHICH YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR AND THE OTHER WHICH FOLLOWS YOU (WHICH HAS BEEN DESTINED FOR YOU). IT WILL REACH YOU EVEN IF YOU DO NOT TRY TO OBTAIN IT. 53

— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.) —

Street criminal sentenced to seven years in prison

By Sumair Abdullah

KARACHI: A sessions court has sentenced a street criminal to seven-year rigorous imprisonment in a case pertaining to robbing of a citizen near Al-Muntaha Hospital, Khokhro.

Additional District and Sessions Judge (East) Shahid Ali Memon pronounced the judgement after recording the evidence and hearing arguments from both sides.

The judge convicted Nisar Ali Khan alias Dildhad Ali Khan of committing an armed robbery and ruled: "The accused after his arrest had remained in jail and later on, he got bail... his bail bond stands cancelled and his arrest is discharge."

The court put the case of absconding accused Faraz as dormant file. He would be tried for the robbery after his arrest.

"Based on the comprehensive analysis of the evidence presented by both parties, it is evident that the prosecution has established its case beyond a reasonable doubt. The testimony of the witnesses, supported by corroborative evidence and investigative findings, convincingly implicates the accused in the commission of the crime," the court observed.

According to the prosecution, the complainant stated

before police that in January 2021, while returning from work, two street criminals riding a motorcycle stopped him at gunpoint and robbed him of a laptop, mobile phone and other personal belongings.

Five months later, one of the snatched mobile phones was recovered and the buyers of the mobile phone emerged as prosecution witnesses against the accused. They subsequently identified the accused in the court.

During the trial, state prosecutor S. Khurshid Bokhari argued that prosecution witnesses had fully substantiated their case on all major points, connecting the accused with the crime beyond any doubt. He urged the court to convict the accused.

On the other hand, the accused claimed that the police had falsely implicated him due to personal enmity. He alleged in his statement before the court that the police had taken him in custody from his residence two years ago and demanded bribe, but when he refused, they implicated him in this case.

The court rejected his plea as he failed to highlight discrepancies in the case of the prosecution.

"The witnesses rightly identified the accused person in the open court. The case properly was also identified by the witnesses. Even the contradictions with regard to date, time, place and course of investigation have come on record," the court observed.



A LARGE number of persons with disabilities participate in a rally, organised by the Jama'at-e-Islami, to express solidarity with the people of Gaza, on Sunday. —PTI

IGP asked to form new body to probe Gadani's killing

Continued from Page 13

Order (MPO). However, Gadani was released on the directives of the commission.

The participants also expressed their concerns over the law and order situation in Sukkur division, where police have so far failed to arrest the killers of another journalist Jan Mohammad Mahar, who was gunned down in Sukkur eight months ago.

It was pointed out in the meeting that not only influential personalities of Ghazal but police and administration were also not 'happy' with the Gadani's work.

The meeting was of the view that members of the investigation team should not be included from Sukkur as they might adversely affect the probe.

The commission head directed the IGP to furnish a progress report on a daily basis.

Meanwhile, DCG Sukkur Pir Mohammad Shah told Dawn that a murder case was yet to be registered as victim's relatives wanted to hold some consultation before lodging an FIR.

Benefits of simulation-based education highlighted in healthcare

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Speakers at a two-day international conference "IMPACT 2024" highlighted the wide-ranging benefits of simulation-based education that has revolutionised healthcare landscape.

The conference was organised by the Aga Khan University Centre for Innovation in

Medical Education (CIME).

With a hybrid format blending in-person events at the CIME in Karachi and Nairobi with virtual participation options, the conference brought together a diverse array of simulation professionals, including doctors, nurses, educators, researchers, engineers, students and industry leaders from around the world.

"This conference has marked a significant

milestone for our region, and we were excited to explore new horizons and drive innovation that will transform the future of healthcare training and practice," said Dr Michael Mooneygan, regional director of the CIME East Africa.

The event commenced with hands-on workshops covering specialties such as inter-professional simulation, laparoscopic skills, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics and cardiol-

ogy management of dermatological disorders in primary care.

In his speech at the inaugural session, Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin, president and vice-chancellor of the Aga Khan University, said the conference embodied the essence of simulation-based education, offering benefits such as enhanced patient safety, skill acquisition, team training, personalised learning, and fostering research and innovation.

THIS WEEK 50 YEARS AGO

Condolence resolution for Ayub Khan and water shortage

By Peerzada Salman

A FORMER president of Pakistan, Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Khan, died on April 19, 1974. More than a month later, on May 29, 1974, the Sindh Assembly passed a condolence resolution expressing its sense of sorrow at Gen Ayub Khan's death. The resolution was put forward in the assembly by Bostan Ali Hoti (Council Muslim League) and was allowed to be presented on the floor of the house after the members' consent. It read: "This house expresses its deep sense of sorrow over the sad demise of the former President of Pakistan, Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Khan. His patriotism and loyalty to the country will be long remembered." The Provincial Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Abdul Wahid Katpat, objected to the second sentence after which, on a voice vote, the sentence was deleted.

Another Bostan was in the news on June 2 when it was reported that an auto-rickshaw driver had

appealed to the Sindh Chief Minister, Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi, to help him recover his rickshaw taken away by the traffic police. The driver, Bostan, said on May 25, the mobile court of the SDM Harbour fined him Rs150 on account of over-speeding. Since he had no money at the time, he was locked up and his vehicle was detained. Later in the day, one of his friends paid the fine and got him released. As he came out of the lock-up, he was shocked to see that his rickshaw was missing. He inquired about it at the police station and was told that the vehicle was with the traffic police. Subsequently, he went again to the SHO of the station and the inspector assured he would trace the rickshaw but it could not be recovered.

Remonstrance of a different kind happened in the world of literature on May 29. The General Secretary of the Arguman Akhbari Feroze, Sahba Lakhnavi, in a statement, protested against the cancellation of newspaper quota of the literary magazine Feroze published by the well-known writer and poet Ahmed Nadeem Qasbi.

arguing it had created a grim situation for such magazines. He appealed to Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Kaseer Niazi to immediately order restoration of the quota and issue advertisements to the magazines as promised by him.

Dissatisfaction could not just be seen in political and literary circles; the masses, too, were in a state of agitation that week. On May 28, residents of Orangabad and Jamhoria Colony staged a rally in front of one of the offices of the Karachi Municipal Corporation (KMC) in Nazimabad to protest against the shortage of water in their locality. They had earlier taken out a procession raising slogans against the corporation. Later, they mobbed the KMC's complaint centre in Anaragar and pelted stones at it. The incident took place after the residents found out that one of the two tankers of the KMC which were meant to supply water to Orangabad were supplying water to a bakery while another was giving it to a private nursery. When the KMC staff saw the angry crowd approaching their office they put a lock on it and ran away.

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KARACHI

400 Shares of Pakistan State Oil Company Limited, standing in the name of Late Jamia (Photo No. 20170) Certificate No. 00495, 02771, 02487 with Depository No. 2070000320204703 (CPL), 0204470720040000 (CPL), 02040041-00040041 (CPL), have been lost. If no claim / objection is lodged within 7 days with CDO Share Registrar Services Limited, GDC House 99-B, Block 9 (KARACHI) then the said Shares will be transferred to the Commission as per the legal Successor Mr. Muhammad Irfan and no claim will be entertained thereafter. (0212770880)

NOTICE TO PUBLIC

KARACHI

MRS. KAUSAR BANO W/o Muhammad Shahid R/o Karachi has agreed to sell to our client, Sub-Registered Residential Plot No. 201, PAFED FLOOR, measuring 800 SQ. FT., "SULARA HOMES" having 1.45% undivided share in Plot Survey No. 247, Survey Street 04B, measuring 1200 sq. yds. GARDEN EAST QUARTERS, KARACHI with complete present recent possession and free from all encumbrances, charges, liens, demands and dues whatsoever. Any Person / Authority having any claim / objection should notify the same to us with documentary evidence within 7 days from the date hereof failing which all claims and objections whatsoever shall be deemed to have been waived and abandoned. KASIR AHMED KHAYATI Advocate High Court, KHAYATI & KHAYATI LAW ASSOCIATES, 7, Macarthea Place HAMILTON COURT, Plot No. 3-2, Main Canton Road, Block 7, Clifton, Karachi, Phone: 33533443, (0212770887)

M/s start has agreed to purchase Double Double House at Banglore No. 0-115, measuring 900 square yards, Barely Having Scheme Clifton, Karachi, with present and physical vacant possession from Mr. Muhammad Idris Soysa, CNIC No. 4200126989933, R/o Karachi. Any Person / Authority having any claim / objection should notify us with documentary evidence under registered A/D to the undersigned and Sub-Registered, Clifton Town Block 2, behind Baita House, Karachi, within seven days from the date hereof failing which any claim / objection if any shall be deemed to have been waived and abandoned. A/D to the undersigned and Sub-Registered, Clifton Town Block 2, behind Baita House, Karachi, within seven days from the date hereof failing which any claim / objection if any shall be deemed to have been waived and abandoned. 302-3rd Floor, Kabeer Electronics Centre, Opp. Hafeez Centre, Model Town, Karachi. Phone: 33533443, 021-35613274

OUR client has contracted to purchase Plot No. 1810, 50x100 SQ YARDS, Phase VI, measuring 17710 square yards, DHA, Karachi, from Mr. Faraz Ahmad Chaudhry, 5th Ghulam Hassan Road, Ahmed CNIC 4200104700010 resident of Karachi, free from all encumbrances, charges, liens, demands and dues whatsoever. Any Person / Bank / Authority having any claim / objection should notify us with documentary evidence within 7 days of the publication after that no objection will be entertained and the transaction should be completed favor of our client. AMERIKATE Office No. 201 and Floor, Al-Markaz, Clifton Town, 1, Phase VII, DHA, Karachi. BOWEN CONSULTANTS, PAKISTAN 021-35613274, (0212770813)

OUR client has contracted to purchase Double Double Banglore No. 1015/1, 10th Lane Phase VI DHA Karachi measuring 100 square yards from Mr. Faraz Ahmad Chaudhry, Ahmed CNIC No. 4200104700010 R/o Karachi, through Aman Estate / Real Estate. Free from all dues, claims, mortgages, liens, demands and dues whatsoever. Any Person / Bank / Authority having any claim / objection should notify us with documentary evidence within five days of the publication, otherwise the sale will be completed in favor of our client. AMERIKATE Office No. 201 and Floor, Al-Markaz, Clifton Town, Karachi. BOWEN CONSULTANTS, PAKISTAN 021-35613274, (0212770813)

OUR client has contracted to purchase Double Story Banglore No. 2218, 10th Street, Phase VI DHA, Karachi measuring 600 sq yards from Mr. Faraz Ahmad Chaudhry, Ahmed CNIC 4200104700010 resident of Karachi, free from all dues, claims, mortgages, liens, demands and dues whatsoever. Any Person / Bank / Authority having any claim / objection should notify us with documentary evidence within five days of the publication, otherwise the sale will be completed in favor of our client. AMERIKATE Office No. 201 and Floor, Al-Markaz, Clifton Town, Karachi. BOWEN CONSULTANTS, PAKISTAN 021-35613274, (0212770813)

THE VENDOR, Mrs. Shahzad Abdul Rehman wife of Abdul Rehman Muhammad, Muslim, adult, resident of Karachi, THE PROPERTY: 63 all encumbrances, charges, liens, demands and dues whatsoever. Any Person / Authority having any claim / objection should notify us with documentary evidence within seven days of the publication of this notice, otherwise the sale will be completed in favor of our client. AMERIKATE Office No. 201 and Floor, Al-Markaz, Clifton Town, Karachi. BOWEN CONSULTANTS, PAKISTAN 021-35613274, (0212770813)

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Hesco, HW&SC officials promise to address LUH water issue

By Our Staff Correspondent

HYDERABAD: Acting Commissioner Ahsan Ali Qureshi, Deputy Commissioner Zahid Akbar and senior officials of the water and power utilities held an emergency meeting with the Liaquat University Hospital (LUH) Medical Superintendent Dr. Ahsan Abbas and his executive team on Sunday on Chief Secretary Syed Asif Hyder Shah's directive to help resolve the hospital's water shortage issue on an urgent basis.

Dr. Abbas, along with LUH Additional Dispensary Superintendent Dr. Afiaz Pruthi, Dr. Farzan Memon and others apprised the Hyderabad Water and Sewerage Corporation (HW&SC) Managing Director Zahid Malik, Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (Hesco) Superintending Engineer Arneer Ali Memon and other executives of the two utilities about the issue and the serious situation arising out of water shortage.

After the meeting, CS Asif Hyder Shah told Dawn over phone that he had asked the district administration, Hesco and HW&SC to make sure that hospital's working was not affected considering an emergency-like situation feared to be caused by the providing hardware.

He said that administration in consultation with the LUH management would also prepare an action plan for hospital's working.

The LUH administration officials informed the visiting officers that the hospital had been facing an acute shortage of water off and on for several days and the problem was not being resolved.

They said that when HW&SC administration was approached, they were told that the HW&SC was facing power outages problem which was to be resolved by Hesco alone.

They pointed out that the LUH, being one of the largest tertiary facility of lower Sindh, received countless number of patients from several districts.

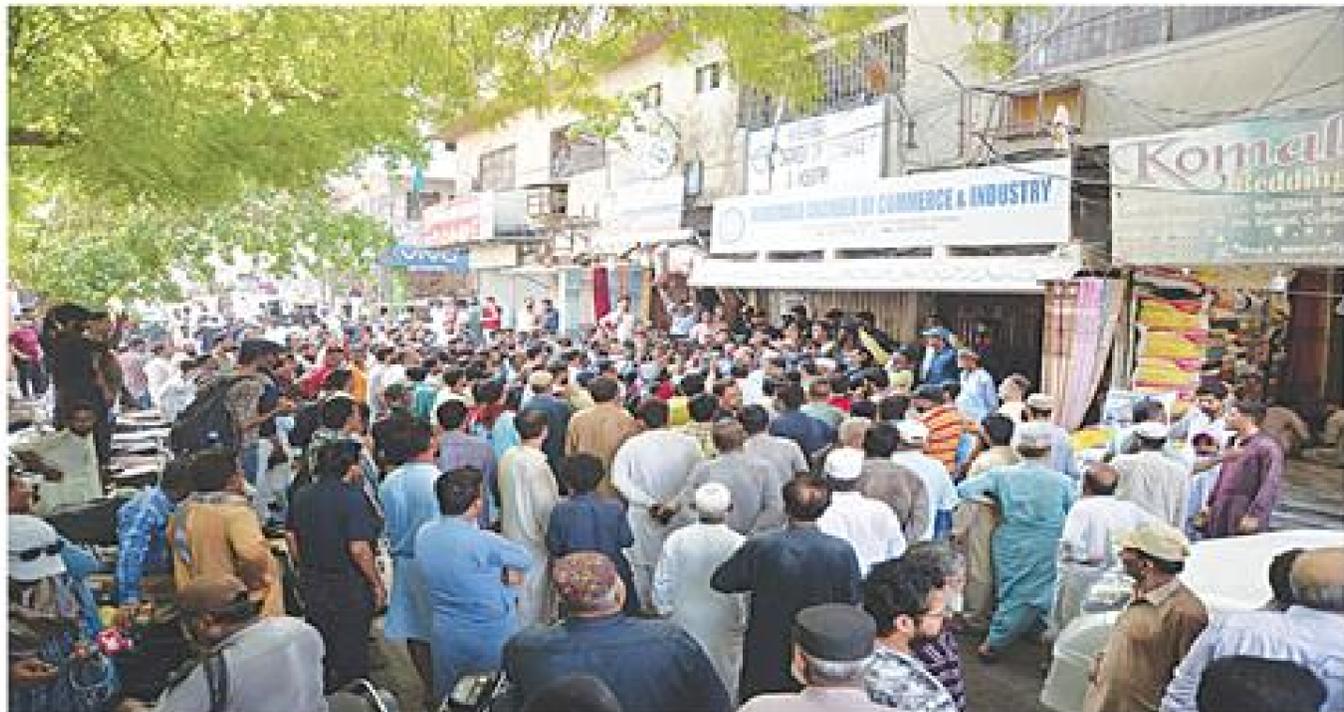
They said that the amount of bills being paid to HW&SC was sufficient to install reverse osmosis plants, and that the hospital was not simply getting uninterrupted water supply.

HW&SC MD Zahid Malik said that since power loadshedding was affecting overall water supply system, the hospital was also facing water shortage.

Acting Commissioner Ahsan Qureshi said that Hesco officers were asked to ensure resolution of water supply to the LUH at the earliest.

Hesco officers promised to ensure supply through express feeders to the HW&SC for those facilities which provide water to the LUH. For this purpose, he said, Hesco MD and SE would submit their report to him.

According to Dr. Afiaz, a committee was also constituted to assess water consumption and feasibility for RO plant installation after he proposed use of renewable energy.



SUPPORTERS of rival HCCI groups gather outside its secretariat after scuffles on Sunday.—Umar Ali

Rival groups clash for HCCI control after high court verdict

• Sitting and former office-bearers bicker over conditions, spelt out in judgement • Secretariat sealed after SHO, two constables remained trapped inside for over 10 hours

By Mohammad Hussain Khan

HYDERABAD: Intermittent scuffles took place between two groups of former and incumbent representatives of the Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) on Sunday for the control of its office in the wake of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) judgement pronounced on May 22.

SIO of the Cantonment police station Abdul Raazay, two of his subordinate constables and some HCCI staff members remained locked in the chamber secretariat during the episode.

The SIO told Dawn that he had come to maintain law and order in view of the similar incident in the past when in a mob-like posture people had intruded the chamber, ransacked its offices. A patrol was recovered from one of the intruders, he recalled.

On Sunday, the SIO said, he along with two constables, locked the chamber from inside and sat with HCCI staff to ensure a smooth transition. The police officer and his two subordinates remained trapped in the office for over 10 hours while the two rival groups, involved in the scuffles, continued their respective sit-ins outside the secretariat and a strong contingent of police stood guard in front of it to meet any eventualities. Another round of talks between the two sides, under deputy commissioner's supervision, continued till midnight. The police then sealed off the secretariat.

Earlier, the two sides failed to reconcile and stuck to their respective positions on HCCI's control. Both offered legal explanations in support of their argument as the City assistant commissioner tried to mediate between the two sides. The negotiations that had started at around 2pm continued without any break. One group was led by Ahsan Siddiqui, the sitting HCCI President and the other group was led by Seth Goharullah, a former HCCI president, who has opted for litigation over the old chamber's license issue. HCCI has been registered under a new license from DGTO.

Eventually, an appeal was filed by the old HCCI office-bearers before federal government but the same was dismissed on April 1, 2022. A new license was issued to Ahsan Siddiqui-led HCCI on April 20, 2022 and his body started working there. The new license was issued in the light of IHC's order of Oct 16, 2019. The other group remained engaged in litigation in the

IHC, which pronounced its judgement on May 22. The operative part of the May 22 order, read out by Justice Mansoor Hassan Arsanjani, said that "the appeal No. 56/2022 and writ petition No.156/2023 are allowed in that orders dated Jan 27, 2020 and April 1, 2022 of DGTO and federal government, respectively, are set aside and license dated April 20, 2022 granted by Ministry of Commerce to New-HCCI is declared to have been granted in violation of requirements of Section 9(1) of the TO Act, 2013".

The order, however, read that "matter is remanded to DGTO who shall be at liberty to amend the above-mentioned notice issued to old HCCI on Jan 10, 2020 and thereafter decide whether or not to cancel old HCCI's license after affording it as well as respondent 5 (Ahsan Siddiqui) an opportunity of a hearing as required by Section 7(2) of TO Act, 2013".

On the basis of said order Goharullah's group comprising Ziauddin, Hajj Ismail, Muhammad Shabbid, Mahmood Rajput and others tried to enter HCCI to take control of HCCI but office-bearers of present HCCI body were already present there. They resisted the move. Intermittent scuffles were seen between supporters of the rival groups. Siddiqui's associates, Iqbal Raig, Najam Qureshi, Awas Khan, Brikhar Abbas and others also remained present. Situation remained tense outside HCCI as both groups were staging sit-ins. AC City Babar Rafiqpoto and DSP

Brikhar Barin spoke to the two sides to settle the issue amicably but in vain. Both sides insisted that they had the legal standing to claim possession of the chamber.

According to Ziauddin, after the May 22 order of IHC, old HCCI's position before cancellation of its license had been restored. "Our status is restored," he told Dawn but did not reply that why the matter was still referred to DGTO to decide whether or not to cancel old HCCI's license after hearing the two sides.

Ahsan Siddiqui and Awas Khan admitted that the IHC had passed an order in their rivals' favour but the bench has also simultaneously referred the matter to the DGTO. "It is DGTO that is to decide if old HCCI which is not yet done because DGTO, as per the IHC order, is at liberty to amend above-mentioned notice to the old HCCI and, thereafter, decide whether or not to cancel old license after hearing both sides," he said. He questioned how could the rival group intrude HCCI premises on the basis of finalisation, and said since they had the IHC order they should get matter decided from DGTO as per the May 22 order.

HCCI was granted license on March 16, 1959 by Federal Ministry of Commerce in its directives that it be registered as a company with limited liability and on July 14, 1960, the old HCCI was incorporated as a company under provision of erstwhile Companies Act 1913.

Dacoits kill shepherd, take away herd

By Our Correspondent

SUKKUR: Dacoits shot dead a shepherd and took away his herd in Mir Hassan Jaffer village within the limits of the Jamal police station of Tangraon tehsil in Kandhkot on Sunday.

Residents of the village and police said that a gang of heavily armed dacoits surrounded the herd and fired a shot to kill the shepherd, Suleman Jaffer, before driving away the herd into the nearby riverine area.

Upon receiving the information, the shepherd's family and relatives went after the dacoits but when they reached close to them, the dacoits started firing to scare the villagers away.

Four of the villagers, including a woman, suffered bullets wounds and they had to return to their village. A police party later also chased the dacoits but without any success. The area was cordoned off and a hunt for the dacoits was under way till late in the evening.

Jaffer's body and the wounded villagers were shifted to the Karampat Hospital.

MQM-P leader assails PPP for ordering Pucca Qila operation

By Our Staff Correspondent

HYDERABAD: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Chairman Dr. Khalid Masroor Siddiqui has commented that on the one side, there are areas that contribute 100pc taxes to Sindh and, on the other, there are those who spend this money. He wondered whether an elected house could be run with this equation.

He was speaking at a gathering held to remember those killed in the infamous Pucca Qila operation carried out on May 26-27, 1990.

The 24th anniversary of the tragic happening was observed at the Qila ground

on Sunday night.

Mr Siddiqui remarked that living nations never forget incidents like Pucca Qila. He said that the incident of Dec 27, 2007 was also not to be forgotten when people of Karachi and Hyderabad were targeted in the aftermath of former prime minister and PPP chairperson Benazir Bhutto's assassination. He said proportion of the victims were too high.

He recalled that Ms Bhutto could not have become prime minister in 1988 without MQM support. He said that the MQM had given a message from Hyderabad that it wanted to unite Sindh and it had sacrificed more than what was expected from it to ensure brotherhood

and harmony in Sindh.

He said that despite having success, MQM supported PPP to enable it to form government but the latter ordered Pucca Qila operation in May 1990. He condemned that because of MQM supporters were besieged. He said that the Hyderabad campaign was staged because MQM had swept LG polls in 1987 and first general elections were due in the next year.

He regretted that hate was spread over the last 15 years in Sindh, and added that right from education to jobs, doors were closed to the Urdu-speaking people. He said that 97pc taxes were paid by Karachi and rest of 3pc by Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas,

Narwalpakk and Sukkur. These were the cities which paid 100pc taxes while on the other hand, there were those who spend this money. "Homes are not run in this fashion," he remarked. He said that Muttahida had already sacrificed much and now it was the turn of someone else to come forward and offer sacrifices.

The MQM-P leader said his party had been offering sacrifices for Pakistan's stability, democracy, national language and justice. He added that MQM had also given its share of clearing misgivings and creating love. "If someone doesn't need this love and harmony for the province, then MQM is not bound to proceed to do so".

He said Urdu-speaking community's people were marginal in Hyderabad and this incident was awaiting justice from the state and punishment for those responsible. He said that Hyderabad carnage (Sept 30, 1988) was still afloat in the minds of people and despite this incident, MQM was elected in 1988 to emerge as the largest urban party. He said PPP was elected from rural areas alone.

Mr Siddiqui alleged that it was the same PPP that had divided Pakistan in 1970s, and claimed that when people from East Pakistan migrated to West Pakistan, their businesses, universities and companies were nationalised and handed over to feudal lords.

PUBLIC AUCTION
BEFORE MR. NAUSHABA NAZI (JUDGE)
IN THE BANKING COURT-III AT KARACHI
BLOCK NO. 50, PHASE IV, GARDEN ROAD, KARACHI

Execution No. 121 of 2023
Sub No. 09 of 1998

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2. The mortgagor is...
3. The amount of...
4. The date of...
5. The...
6. The...
7. The...
8. The...

PUBLIC AUCTION
BEFORE MR. SOMAL JAMRAN MALIK (JUDGE)
IN THE BANKING COURT NO. 02, AT KARACHI
BLOCK NO. 50, PHASE IV, GARDEN ROAD, KARACHI

Execution No. 78 of 2023, EXECUTION NO. 194 OF 2017

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Daughter of SIR DR. ZIAUDDIN AHMAD (Late)
Wife of DR. TAJAMMUL HUSSAIN (Late)
Mother of DR. ASIM HUSSAIN

MOURNERS: DR. ASIM HUSSAIN
DR. RUBINA HUSSAIN
MRS. SABINA & KHALID BIN SHAHEEN
DR. ARIF HUSSAIN & DR. SAADIA ARIF
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Please recite Surah Fateha

SUDOKU ALPHA

QUICK A4714 TRICKY B4714

		1		9			3	
	3		6					
		9	4				1	2
7	2							
4			3					
		6	7		8			
	9	8	7			3	6	
	6			5			8	
3	5	7	2				4	

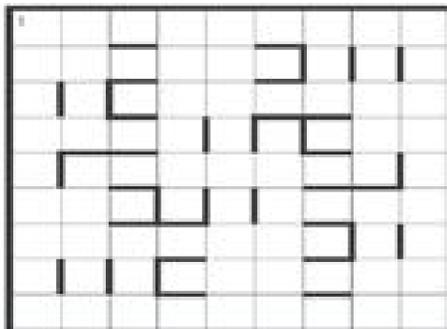
	1	2	5		9	2		
	7						1	
								8
3					4			5
					1	4		
		5	3				7	
	6	8	4					
					7	1		

To solve this puzzle each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9. While the rules may be simple, there are numerous strategies to help you solve sudoku. For hints and information visit www.sudoku.org.uk. Created by Peter Finlayson (C) PZL.com

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

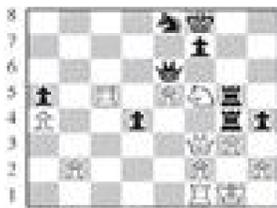
- Loathsome (9)
- Very small (4)
- Decay (7)
- Tearful (imag.) (9)
- Duke's wife (7)
- Announce openly or formally (7)
- Venomous snakes (8)
- Administer (6)
- Bomb thrown by hand (7)
- Butterfield, actor (3)
- Unit of length (4)



DOWN

- Capital of the Netherlands (8)
- Historical period (3)
- Dried grape (8)
- Followed orders (8)
- Dutch cheese (5)
- Treason (9)
- Skilled storyteller (9)
- Congolese (4)
- Indonesian island (4)
- Feline (3)
- Tend (8)

CHESS



WHITE TO PLAY
HINT: WIN MATERIAL

1. e4, e5, d4, d5, c4, c5, b4, b5, a4, a5, g4, g5, f4, f5, e3, e6, d3, d6, c3, c6, b3, b6, a3, a6, g3, g6, f3, f6, e2, e7, d2, d7, c2, c7, b2, b7, a2, a7, g2, g7, f2, f7, e1, e8, d1, d8, c1, c8, b1, b8, a1, a8, g1, g8, f1, f8, e0, e9, d0, d9, c0, c9, b0, b9, a0, a9, g0, g9, f0, f9, e-1, e-2, d-1, d-2, c-1, c-2, b-1, b-2, a-1, a-2, g-1, g-2, f-1, f-2, e-3, e-4, d-3, d-4, c-3, c-4, b-3, b-4, a-3, a-4, g-3, g-4, f-3, f-4, e-5, e-6, d-5, d-6, c-5, c-6, b-5, b-6, a-5, a-6, g-5, g-6, f-5, f-6, e-7, e-8, d-7, d-8, c-7, c-8, b-7, b-8, a-7, a-8, g-7, g-8, f-7, f-8, e-9, e-10, d-9, d-10, c-9, c-10, b-9, b-10, a-9, a-10, g-9, g-10, f-9, f-10, e-11, e-12, d-11, d-12, c-11, c-12, b-11, b-12, a-11, a-12, g-11, g-12, f-11, f-12, e-13, e-14, d-13, d-14, c-13, c-14, b-13, b-14, a-13, a-14, g-13, g-14, f-13, f-14, e-15, e-16, d-15, d-16, c-15, c-16, b-15, b-16, a-15, a-16, g-15, g-16, f-15, f-16, e-17, e-18, d-17, d-18, c-17, c-18, b-17, b-18, a-17, a-18, g-17, g-18, f-17, f-18, e-19, e-20, d-19, d-20, c-19, c-20, b-19, b-20, a-19, a-20, g-19, g-20, f-19, f-20, e-21, e-22, d-21, d-22, c-21, c-22, b-21, b-22, a-21, a-22, g-21, g-22, f-21, f-22, e-23, e-24, d-23, d-24, c-23, c-24, b-23, b-24, a-23, a-24, g-23, g-24, f-23, f-24, e-25, e-26, d-25, d-26, c-25, c-26, b-25, b-26, a-25, a-26, g-25, g-26, f-25, f-26, e-27, e-28, d-27, d-28, c-27, c-28, b-27, b-28, a-27, a-28, g-27, g-28, f-27, f-28, e-29, e-30, d-29, d-30, c-29, c-30, b-29, b-30, a-29, a-30, g-29, g-30, f-29, f-30, e-31, e-32, d-31, d-32, c-31, c-32, b-31, b-32, a-31, a-32, g-31, g-32, f-31, f-32, e-33, e-34, d-33, d-34, c-33, c-34, b-33, b-34, a-33, a-34, g-33, g-34, f-33, f-34, e-35, e-36, d-35, d-36, c-35, c-36, b-35, b-36, a-35, a-36, g-35, g-36, f-35, f-36, e-37, e-38, d-37, d-38, c-37, c-38, b-37, b-38, a-37, a-38, g-37, g-38, f-37, f-38, e-39, e-40, d-39, d-40, c-39, c-40, b-39, b-40, a-39, a-40, g-39, g-40, f-39, f-40, e-41, e-42, d-41, d-42, c-41, c-42, b-41, b-42, a-41, a-42, g-41, g-42, f-41, f-42, e-43, e-44, d-43, d-44, c-43, c-44, b-43, b-44, a-43, a-44, g-43, g-44, f-43, f-44, e-45, e-46, d-45, d-46, c-45, c-46, b-45, b-46, a-45, a-46, g-45, g-46, f-45, f-46, e-47, e-48, d-47, d-48, c-47, c-48, b-47, b-48, a-47, a-48, g-47, g-48, f-47, f-48, e-49, e-50, d-49, d-50, c-49, c-50, b-49, b-50, a-49, a-50, g-49, g-50, f-49, f-50, e-51, e-52, d-51, d-52, c-51, c-52, b-51, b-52, a-51, a-52, g-51, g-52, f-51, f-52, e-53, e-54, d-53, d-54, c-53, c-54, b-53, b-54, a-53, a-54, g-53, g-54, f-53, f-54, e-55, e-56, d-55, d-56, c-55, c-56, b-55, b-56, a-55, a-56, g-55, g-56, f-55, f-56, e-57, e-58, d-57, d-58, c-57, c-58, b-57, b-58, a-57, a-58, g-57, g-58, f-57, f-58, e-59, e-60, d-59, d-60, c-59, c-60, b-59, b-60, a-59, a-60, g-59, g-60, f-59, f-60, e-61, e-62, d-61, d-62, c-61, c-62, b-61, b-62, a-61, a-62, g-61, g-62, f-61, f-62, e-63, e-64, d-63, d-64, c-63, c-64, b-63, b-64, a-63, a-64, g-63, g-64, f-63, f-64, e-65, e-66, d-65, d-66, c-65, c-66, b-65, b-66, a-65, a-66, g-65, g-66, f-65, f-66, e-67, e-68, d-67, d-68, c-67, c-68, b-67, b-68, a-67, a-68, g-67, g-68, f-67, f-68, e-69, e-70, d-69, d-70, c-69, c-70, b-69, b-70, a-69, a-70, g-69, g-70, f-69, f-70, e-71, e-72, d-71, d-72, c-71, c-72, b-71, b-72, a-71, a-72, g-71, g-72, f-71, f-72, e-73, e-74, d-73, d-74, c-73, c-74, b-73, b-74, a-73, a-74, g-73, g-74, f-73, f-74, e-75, e-76, d-75, d-76, c-75, c-76, b-75, b-76, a-75, a-76, g-75, g-76, f-75, f-76, e-77, e-78, d-77, d-78, c-77, c-78, b-77, b-78, a-77, a-78, g-77, g-78, f-77, f-78, e-79, e-80, d-79, d-80, c-79, c-80, b-79, b-80, a-79, a-80, g-79, g-80, f-79, f-80, e-81, e-82, d-81, d-82, c-81, c-82, b-81, b-82, a-81, a-82, g-81, g-82, f-81, f-82, e-83, e-84, d-83, d-84, c-83, c-84, b-83, b-84, a-83, a-84, g-83, g-84, f-83, f-84, e-85, e-86, d-85, d-86, c-85, c-86, b-85, b-86, a-85, a-86, g-85, g-86, f-85, f-86, e-87, e-88, d-87, d-88, c-87, c-88, b-87, b-88, a-87, a-88, g-87, g-88, f-87, f-88, e-89, e-90, d-89, d-90, c-89, c-90, b-89, b-90, a-89, a-90, g-89, g-90, f-89, f-90, e-91, e-92, d-91, d-92, c-91, c-92, b-91, b-92, a-91, a-92, g-91, g-92, f-91, f-92, e-93, e-94, d-93, d-94, c-93, c-94, b-93, b-94, a-93, a-94, g-93, g-94, f-93, f-94, e-95, e-96, d-95, d-96, c-95, c-96, b-95, b-96, a-95, a-96, g-95, g-96, f-95, f-96, e-97, e-98, d-97, d-98, c-97, c-98, b-97, b-98, a-97, a-98, g-97, g-98, f-97, f-98, e-99, e-100, d-99, d-100, c-99, c-100, b-99, b-100, a-99, a-100, g-99, g-100, f-99, f-100, e-101, e-102, d-101, d-102, c-101, c-102, b-101, b-102, a-101, a-102, g-101, g-102, f-101, f-102, e-103, e-104, d-103, d-104, c-103, c-104, b-103, b-104, a-103, a-104, g-103, g-104, f-103, f-104, e-105, e-106, d-105, d-106, c-105, c-106, b-105, b-106, a-105, a-106, g-105, g-106, f-105, f-106, e-107, e-108, d-107, d-108, c-107, c-108, b-107, b-108, a-107, a-108, g-107, g-108, f-107, f-108, e-109, e-110, d-109, d-110, c-109, c-110, b-109, b-110, a-109, a-110, g-109, g-110, f-109, f-110, e-111, e-112, d-111, d-112, c-111, c-112, b-111, b-112, a-111, a-112, 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c-174, b-173, b-174, a-173, a-174, g-173, g-174, f-173, f-174, e-175, e-176, d-175, d-176, c-175, c-176, b-175, b-176, a-175, a-176, g-175, g-176, f-175, f-176, e-177, e-178, d-177, d-178, c-177, c-178, b-177, b-178, a-177, a-178, g-177, g-178, f-177, f-178, e-179, e-180, d-179, d-180, c-179, c-180, b-179, b-180, a-179, a-180, g-179, g-180, f-179, f-180, e-181, e-182, d-181, d-182, c-181, c-182, b-181, b-182, a-181, a-182, g-181, g-182, f-181, f-182, e-183, e-184, d-183, d-184, c-183, c-184, b-183, b-184, a-183, a-184, g-183, g-184, f-183, f-184, e-185, e-186, d-185, d-186, c-185, c-186, b-185, b-186, a-185, a-186, g-185, g-186, f-185, f-186, e-187, e-188, d-187, d-188, c-187, c-188, b-187, b-188, a-187, a-188, g-187, g-188, f-187, f-188, e-189, e-190, d-189, d-190, c-189, c-190, b-189, b-190, a-189, a-190, g-189, g-190, f-189, f-190, e-191, e-192, d-191, d-192, c-191, c-192, b-191, b-192, a-191, a-192, g-191, g-192, f-191, f-192, e-193, e-194, d-193, d-194, c-193, c-194, b-193, b-194, a-193, a-194, g-193, g-194, f-193, f-194, e-195, e-196, d-195, d-196, c-195, c-196, b-195, b-196, a-195, a-196, g-195, g-196, f-195, f-196, e-197, e-198, d-197, d-198, c-197, c-198, b-197, b-198, a-197, a-198, g-197, g-198, f-197, f-198, e-199, e-200, d-199, d-200, c-199, c-200, b-199, b-200, a-199, a-200, g-199, g-200, f-199, f-200, e-201, e-202, d-201, d-202, c-201, c-202, b-201, b-202, a-201, a-202, g-201, g-202, f-201, f-202, e-203, e-204, d-203, d-204, c-203, c-204, b-203, b-204, a-203, a-204, g-203, g-204, f-203, f-204, e-205, e-206, d-205, d-206, c-205, c-206, b-205, b-206, a-205, a-206, g-205, g-206, f-205, f-206, e-207, e-208, d-207, d-208, c-207, c-208, b-207, b-208, a-207, a-208, g-207, g-208, f-207, f-208, e-209, e-210, d-209, d-210, c-209, c-210, b-209, b-210, a-209, a-210, g-209, g-210, f-209, f-210, e-211, e-212, d-211, d-212, c-211, c-212, b-211, b-212, a-211, a-212, g-211, g-212, f-211, f-212, e-213, e-214, d-213, d-214, c-213, c-214, b-213, b-214, a-213, a-214, g-213, g-214, f-213, f-214, e-215, e-216, d-215, d-216, c-215, c-216, b-215, b-216, a-215, a-216, g-215, g-216, f-215, f-216, e-217, e-218, d-217, d-218, c-217, c-218, b-217, b-218, a-217, a-218, g-217, g-218, f-217, f-218, e-219, e-220, d-219, d-220, c-219, c-220, b-219, b-220, a-219, a-220, g-219, g-220, f-219, f-220, e-221, e-222, d-221, d-222, c-221, c-222, b-221, b-222, a-221, a-222, g-221, g-222, f-221, f-222, e-223, e-224, d-223, d-224, c-223, c-224, b-223, b-224, a-223, a-224, g-223, g-224, f-223, f-224, e-225, e-226, d-225, d-226, c-225, c-226, b-225, b-226, a-225, a-226, g-225, g-226, f-225, f-226, e-227, e-228, d-227, d-228, c-227, c-228, b-227, b-228, a-227, a-228, g-227, g-228, f-227, f-228, e-229, e-230, d-229, d-230, c-229, c-230, b-229, b-230, a-229, a-230, g-229, g-230, f-229, f-230, e-231, e-232, d-231, d-232, c-231, c-232, b-231, b-232, a-231, a-232, g-231, g-232, f-231, f-232, e-233, e-234, d-233, d-234, c-233, c-234, b-233, b-234, a-233, a-234, g-233, g-234, f-233, f-234, 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METRO North



Nadal eases injury concerns with dominant early display
Pg.18 SPORT

ISLAMABAD
Sunset 07:12pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 04:51am
NEXT 24 HRS
Minimum 28°C
Maximum 42°C
Outlook Sunny



RUNNERS set off from the starting point as they participate in the first ever 'Islamabad Night Run' on Saturday night. More than 700 participants and their families attended the event, which was organised by the running community in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority. The route of the race was Constitution Avenue, and the runners passed by the city's landmarks including Parliament House, Prime Minister Secretariat, D-Chowk, President House, Supreme Court and Foreign Office. — White Star

CDA chief orders completion of all new sectors in four months

Says appointment of consultants for all projects should also be ensured

By Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: The engineering wing and other associated departments of Capital Development Authority (CDA) were on Saturday directed to complete ongoing development works in new sectors within four months—a task which seems very tough keeping in view the civic agency's record of sector development.

"An important meeting regarding sector development was held at CDA headquarters on Saturday under the chairmanship of Chairman CDA Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Hashmi," said a statement.

It said the CDA chief was briefed on the ongoing development works in C-14, C-15, C-16, I-12 and I-13. He was told that 50pc development work had been completed in C-14 and C-15, 45pc in I-12 and 30pc in I-13.

"The CDA chairman directed that the ongoing development works in all the sectors should be completed in four months and all impediments hindering sector development should be removed so that the development works are not disturbed," the statement said.

The CDA chairman directed that the development works in C-14 should be completed by September

2024 and the possession should be given to the allottees. Similarly, the construction work in I-12/3 and I-12/4 should be completed and handed over to the allottees within three months.

"Apart from this, payments should be made after the third party validation of the development works," Mr Hashmi said. He said the appointment of consultants for all projects should also be ensured.

Commenting on the CDA chairman's direction to complete ongoing development works, an officer said work continued in C-14 and I-12 at full pace and it could be completed in four months. However, until the issue of the affected people (those whose land had been acquired by CDA and who were entitled to get compensation in the shape of cash and plot) was resolved, no progress could be made on the development work in C-15 and I-12.

He said Railway Property (RailP) award of the sector was announced in 2016, but the CDA did not issue plot allotment letters to the affected people. In the meanwhile, another RailP award was announced in 2023 without the issuance of allotment letters. He said until the issue of the locals was settled, they will continue creating hindrances in the development work.

"Those who are genuine affected persons, they should be given their rights without any further delay and those who are trying to get compensation benefits fraudulently, action should be taken against them," he said.

According to the officer, I-12 is a stigma on the performance of the civic agency as this sector was launched in 1989 and the same year the CDA sold around 4,000 plots to citizens with a commitment to provide them developed plots in a year. But after 35 years, the development work in the sector remains incomplete. In the meeting, the chairman was told that the 45pc work was completed in this sector.

Development work in C-16 has not properly been started. Last year, after starting partial work in one of the sub-sectors the CDA halted it as issues of land affected were undecided yet.

At present, the CDA has 13 acquired residential sectors and size of them are stalled with no signs of development. In addition, there are nine other sectors that have not been acquired.

The CDA could not develop any new sector after I-12 which was completed in 2008. In 2005, the CDA launched I-15 and sold plots, but people are still waiting to get possession in the sector. However, work in this sector along with I-12 is near completion.

In 2008, the CDA, through a land-sharing formula, acquired several other sectors—D-13, E-13, F-13, H-16, C-13, C-14, C-15 and C-16. Out of them, development work is in progress only in C-14 and C-15 and no signs of development in other sectors.

As per the city's master plan, I-13, I-15, I-16, I-14, H-17, D-14, D-15 and D-16 are also supposed to be developed by the civic agency.

World body concerned about poliovirus surge in Pakistan

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for polio eradication has shown concerns about the deteriorating situation of the disease in Pakistan.

Data shared at a TAG meeting held in Qatar showed that Pakistan's situation was worse than the war-torn Afghanistan.

TAG is an independent body charged with advising and making recommendations to the ministry of health and partners on polio eradication programme policies, strategies and operations. It held meetings with the health departments of Pakistan and Afghanistan from May 22 to 25 in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

An official of the polio programme who attended the meeting, wishing not to be quoted, told Dawn that TAG was concerned on the poliovirus surge and the current programme trajectory in both the countries, more so in Pakistan.

"Although the detailed report of the meeting will be released in two weeks, we faced an embarrassing situation as all the gains by Pakistan in 2021 have been lost and the virus has re-emerged in three blocks—Qasba, Karachi and Peshawar-Khyber," he said.

According to a document used for the briefing at the TAG meeting and available with Dawn, outside the core reservoir districts, 44 got infected since the last TAG meeting held in June 2023 in comparison with eight infected between previous two TAGs—with almost six times jump.

The document showed that during the same time in Afghanistan, the infected districts were only doubled from eight to 18 compared to the sixfold difference in Pakistan.

While showing major risk of the reservoir becoming endemic again, the document mentioned Pakistan's blocks of Peshawar, Quetta/Punjab, Quetta/Khuzdar and Karachi. However, Afghanistan's only Kandahar/Hilmand block was mentioned in the document. The official said the meeting was chaired by Dr Jean-Marc Olive (TAG chair) along with members.

"The Afghan health minister led the Afghan

Continued on Page 14

Parliamentarians to monitor campaign against dengue larvae

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: To monitor the anti-dengue drive in high-risk union councils, the district administration has formed a team of parliamentarians to check indoor and outdoor surveillance to eliminate dengue larvae in their respective constituencies.

Deputy Commissioner Dr Hassan Waqar Cheema told Dawn that the parliamentarians would play a major role in mobilising the local community to adopt safety measures and monitor the work done by the civic bodies.

He said allocation of dengue high-risk union councils (UCs) in Rawalpindi district had been finalised for the purpose of effective dengue prevention and control.

"The parliamentarians' active participation and coordination in these assigned UCs will play a crucial role in achieving the desired results," he added.

Dr Cheema said as parliamentarians, their role in the allocated UCs was to actively engage with the community and raise awareness about dengue prevention and control measures.

He said they would organise awareness campaigns, seminars and workshops to educate residents about the importance of maintaining clean and mosquito-free surroundings, proper waste management and the identification and elimination of mosquito breeding sites.

For monitoring and reporting, he said it was essential that the respective MPA or MNA closely monitored the implementation of dengue prevention measures in their respective union councils, regularly visit the designated areas to assess the progress, identify any gap or issue and ensure that the required actions were promptly taken.

He said by engaging parliamentarians, the provincial departments and district administrations would be able to tackle challenges and take actions for effective monitoring and evaluation.

There were 27 high-risk union councils identified by the District Health Authority and experts believed that the dengue virus would spread in these areas if preventive measures were not adopted.

As per allocation of high-risk areas, Chakdala Cantonment Board Ward 10 has been allocated to MPA Malik Iftikhar, Rawalpindi Municipal Corporation (RMC) UC-45 Chamanzar Colony to MPA Zaibun Nisa Awan, RMC UC-23 Dhoke Kashmiran to MPA Raza Abdul Hamid, UC-26 Atand Colony to MPA Asma Naz, UC-22 Qayyumabad has been allocated to MPA Asma Naz, UC-27 Muslim Town has been given to MPA Raza Abdul Hamid, UC-8 Fauji Colony and UC-7 Pirwadi has been allotted to Ziauddin Shah, UC Kalyal and Dhama Syedan to MPA Imran Iqbal, Dhoke Muzali and Kotla Kalan has been allocated to MPA Asma Hassan, UC Chak Jalandar and Giza has been given to MPA Tahira Mushtaq, RCB Ward 10 to Malik Iftikhar, Saeey Kala to Mohsin Ayub, Waz Cantonment Ward 7 and 8 to Farhat Abbasi, UC Jalala to Mohsin Ayub Khan, Khatula, Kallar Syedan and Darial Manzoon has been allotted to Raza Sagheer Ahmed.

Historic Gandhara exhibition returns to Pakistan after one year

By Jamil Shahid

ISLAMABAD: After showing at renowned galleries in China for more than a year, the Gandhara Art Exhibition has returned to Pakistan, and 10 historical artworks are now on display at the Islamabad Museum, including a stunning 2nd-3rd century AD relic depicting Lord Buddha's princely life that was locked away in storage for 17 years.

The green schist artifact, found mostly in Swat Valley, was locked away in storage after returning from shows in Europe in 2007.

"Last year, when China selected this object, the artifact was taken out of the store. We decided to put it on display after 17 years," said Director of the Islamabad Museum, Department of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM), Dr Abdul Ghafoor Lone.

The stone artifact depicted Buddha's palace life before enlightenment.

It showed the young prince with his wife, heavenly figures playing music, and subjects dancing.

The Gandhara Exhibition was held in connection with the cele-

bration of the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China.

As many as 65 artifacts were borrowed from the National Museum of Pakistan Karachi, 10 from the Islamabad Museum, another 16 from Taxila Museum and 82 pieces of art were borrowed from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) museums—Peshawar Museum, Hund Museum Swabi, Dir Museum, and Swat Museum.

The artifacts were sent to the Palace Museum Beijing, China in January 2023, and the exhibition inauguration was held on March 15, 2023. After three months at the Palace Museum in Beijing, China, the first touring destination of the Gandhara Art Exhibition was the Gansu Provincial Museum from September 8 to December 8, 2023.

The second touring destination was Shenzhen Museum, Guangdong Province, China, from December 24 to March 24, 2024.

China has been borrowing artifacts from Pakistan under an agreement since 2010. It allows ordinary Chinese people to learn about cultural and religious diversity in Pakistan.

"People in China can learn that Pakistan is not just a Muslim country but home to a significant Buddhist heritage. This in turn encourages tourism to Pakistan, where tourists can experience an unparalleled collection of Buddhist collections," Dr Abdul Ghafoor said.

The 10 pieces on display at the Islamabad Museum also included grey and black schist objects from Peshawar and Mardan.

Some of the pieces on display had been confiscated from treasure hunters, including the solid gold 5th to 4th century drinking bowl with an image of Dionysus, the Greek God of wine and pleasure.

A 2nd to 3rd century artifact from the Varis (Variscus) Collection included a magnificent relic depicting a scene of lion hunting with a hint of Greek influence.

The piece was discovered in Swat by an Italian exhibition during a survey in the 1960s.

The remaining artifacts belonging to the NMP Karachi, Taxila Museum Taxila, and museums in KP have been returned to their respective institutions.



ARTIFACTS on loan to China return to Pakistan after a year and go on display at Islamabad Museum. The rare objects were part of Gandhara Art Exhibition that gained worldwide appreciation.

PRAYER

Fajr 05:23
Zuhr 12:09
Asr 05:05
Maghreb 07:13
Isha 09:53

Starting time is Islamabad

REFLECTIONS

KNOW IT WELL, SON, THAT THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF LIVELIHOOD: ONE WHICH YOU ARE SEARCHING FOR AND THE OTHER WHICH FOLLOWS YOU (WHICH HAS BEEN DESTINED FOR YOU). IT WILL REACH YOU EVEN IF YOU DO NOT TRY TO OBTAIN IT. 55

— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)

75M1427

Filtration plant inaugurated in G-10 Markaz

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Ahsan Zafar Bakhitwari on Sunday inaugurated a water filtration plant in G-10 Markaz.

Capital Development Authority Director General Saadur Khan Zaidi, President AH Pakistan Anjumam H Tajwar, Ajmal Baloch, former ICCI president and secretary general of United Business Group Zafar Bakhitwari also attended the ceremony.

According to a press release, the cost of the facility has been borne Ahsan Zafar.

Earlier he had also provided the same facility in G-11 Markaz. Work is underway to provide this facility in other corners of the capital, which will be inaugurated in the next few days.

Speaking on the occasion, the ICCI president said provision of drinking water was a great service to humanity therefore he himself was overseeing these projects, adding that after G-11 and G-10, this project would be implemented in other commercial centres as well.

He said his focus was not only on the urban centres of Islamabad, but also in other suburban areas, including Feroze and Nazim Khan.

He said the business community itself should come forward to solve community's problems.

Over 13,500 power pilferers detected, says Iesco

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (Iesco) has so far caught 13,535 power pilferers and imposed fines of Rs699 million on them. Moreover, 1,196 of them were handed over to police.

Iesco Chief Executive Officer Dr Mohammad Anjum said an indiscriminate operation against electricity thieves and defrauders was going since September last year.

He said in the light of government and the Ministry of Energy Power Division directions, teams during different operations detected more than 13,000 connections of show and tampered meters and direct supply lines.

He said the teams also recovered more than Rs1.08 billion from 121,206 running and dead defrauders.

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COURT NOTICE

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In the Court of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court, Karachi, the undersigned, a Bench of the Hon'ble Justices, has taken notice of the following:—

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Girls ride heavy bikes during the female bikers show titled 'Fierce, Fearless Female Bikers' in Rawalpindi on Sunday. — Online

Livestock emergency declared in Attock after two die of Congo virus

By Our Correspondent

TAXILA: The Attock district administration imposed a livestock emergency after two persons died of Congo Crimean Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF).

Section 144 was imposed in the district, under which holding of cattle markets had been banned and inter-district movement of cattle prohibited for 30 days ahead of Eid-ul-Adha.

A meeting of the technical advisory committee, comprising all stakeholders, including officials of the local administration, health and livestock departments held under the chair of Deputy Commissioner Rao Amir Raza.

It was decided to ban holding of cattle markets in Goshal in Attock, Kamal, Jaisal and Gali Jaisal in Pindi-Jaisal, Badli, a complete ban on the inter-district and inter-provincial movement of cattle would be imposed.

Later, Deputy Commissioner Rao Amir Raza, along with assistant commissioner Hameedullah, paid a surprise visit to the livestock department checkpoint on the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Punjab border at Jhelri Kas on Hazara Road and monitored the possible movement of cattle from KP to Punjab.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Engineer Anis Khan also paid a surprise visit to the livestock checkpoint in Attock Road on G.T. Road to review the arrangements taken by the Attock administration.

District Health Authority Chief Executive Anas Inam said the latest wave of the disease was detected on May 1, when a 58-year-old patient named Mohammad Imran from Baro was brought to a hospital in Rawalpindi with high fever and bleeding from the mouth.

He later died in the hospital.

The second patient was a 50-year-old woman named Khair Khatoon, who came from Jaisal on May 17 and did not survive.

The National Institute of Health (NIH) later confirmed that both patients were suffering from the Congo virus.

Responding to a question, Dr Inam said Congo virus was lethal with only a 10pc chance of recovery. He said the virus was transmitted from animals to humans and among humans. Symptoms include bleeding from the gums, nose and stools, as well as high fever.

Attock Livestock Department Additional Director Dr Abdul Hameed said the department had established checkpoints at all entry and exit points of the district to enforce the ban on the movement of cattle in the district.

The Punjab government has dispatched a nine-member committee comprising experts from the health and livestock departments to examine the causes and study the cases of the affected persons to finalize a strategy to minimize the further spread of the deadly disease in Attock district as the mass movement of cattle was expected ahead of Eid-ul-Adha.

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Ahsan Zafar Bakhitwari on Sunday inaugurated a water filtration plant in G-10 Markaz.

Capital Development Authority Director General Saadur Khan Zaidi, President AH Pakistan Anjumam H Tajwar, Ajmal Baloch, former ICCI president and secretary general of United Business Group Zafar Bakhitwari also attended the ceremony.

According to a press release, the cost of the facility has been borne Ahsan Zafar.

Earlier he had also provided the same facility in G-11 Markaz. Work is underway to provide this facility in other corners of the capital, which will be inaugurated in the next few days.

Speaking on the occasion, the ICCI president said provision of drinking water was a great service to humanity therefore he himself was overseeing these projects, adding that after G-11 and G-10, this project would be implemented in other commercial centres as well.

He said his focus was not only on the urban centres of Islamabad, but also in other suburban areas, including Feroze and Nazim Khan.

He said the business community itself should come forward to solve community's problems.

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (Iesco) has so far caught 13,535 power pilferers and imposed fines of Rs699 million on them. Moreover, 1,196 of them were handed over to police.

Iesco Chief Executive Officer Dr Mohammad Anjum said an indiscriminate operation against electricity thieves and defrauders was going since September last year.

He said in the light of government and the Ministry of Energy Power Division directions, teams during different operations detected more than 13,000 connections of show and tampered meters and direct supply lines.

He said the teams also recovered more than Rs1.08 billion from 121,206 running and dead defrauders.

"During the operations against electricity thieves and defrauders Iesco detection and recovery teams received full support from FIA, Anti-Corruption Cell, Police and other institutions. Iesco officers and staff are using all their skills in this national campaign," he said.

Five drug peddlers arrested

Capital police launched a special 'Nasha Ab Nahi' movement to eradicate narcotics and keep youngsters safe from the curse of drugs, a police public relations officer (PRO) said on Sunday.

He said during the last 24 hours, the police apprehended five drug peddlers and recovered a huge cache of drugs from their possession.

Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Aulqueer police arrested two suspects and recovered 1kg heroin from their possession. The Industrial Area police rounded up a man after recovering 50 grams of hero from his possession.

Similarly, the Neer police arrested a man and recovered 100 grams of hashish from his possession. Sahai Masudi police nabbed a person and recovered 500 grams of heroin from his possession.

The IC said that the police were conducting targeted operations on a daily basis.

"Nasha Ab Nahi" is not just a campaign but a movement aimed at eradicating drugs from society and rooting out drug dealers.

Police have urged citizens to report any suspicious individual or activity related to narcotics through the emergency helpline 'Pataz-15' or via '911-15' app.

delegation. All national and regional teams were there. From Pakistan, member coordinator to PM on Health, Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bhuttai and Secretary Health Nadim Mubashir could attend the meeting. Director General Health Dr Ahmad Kazi virtually attended the closing session on behalf of the government.

However, national and four provincial coordinators attended the meeting. WHO Global Polio Director Aidan O'Leary and Director Polio Dr Hamid Jafari also attended the meeting," he said.

The representatives of all Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) partners, including WHO, UNICEF, Rotary, CDC, BMGF and Gavi were also present.

It is worth mentioning here that on May 25, Pakistan reported the third polio case of the current year.

The latest victim was a 12-year-old girl, a resident of Killa Malik Hafid, District union council of Killa Abdullah.

It was the third case from Balochistan province this year.

Over 50 incidents of street crime reported in Pindi

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: More than 50 incidents of street crime were reported during which gold jewellery, cash, 36 motorcycles, mobile phones and other valuables were either looted or stolen by some unidentified robbers from different parts of the city, police said on Sunday.

Muhammad Anjum, a resident of Attock, lodged an FIR with Rawal police, saying that he and his family were attending a wedding function in a mosque in Bahria Town when two persons entered the female portion and stole the bridegroom's mother's purse, containing four mobile phones and gold jewellery worth Rs500,000.

In another incident, Waqar Ahmad, a resident of Bahria Town Phase 8, was deprived of two laptops and three mobile phones worth Rs200,000 after some burglars broke into his house in his absence.

Qasir Nawaz, a resident of Lalorah, lodged an FIR with Dhamial police, saying that some burglars broke into his house and stole Rs100,000 and gold jewellery worth Rs800,000.

Muhammad Kamran, serving as an accountant in an ice cream distribution company, lodged an FIR with Manara police station, saying that four unidentified gunmen entered inside and held all employees at gunpoint.

He said they were tortured by the robbers, who searched for mobile phones, CCTV and DVDs after locking the hostages in a room.

Alta Hossain, a milk shop owner, was robbed of Rs21,000 and a mobile phone by a gang of six robbers in the Gant police area.

World body concerned about polio virus surge in Pakistan

Continued from Page 13

Last year, six polio cases were reported in the country, four from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and two from Karachi.

Dr Malik Mukhtar in a statement said it was incredibly tragic that another child was affected by polio in Balochistan.

"Polio is a terrible illness that changes not just the child's life but also the whole family. The government is bringing the polio vaccine to citizens' doorsteps in multiple polio vaccination rounds. I urge families to understand the risk this disease poses to children and make sure that they vaccinate all their children under the age of five when the polio worker shows up to their homes," he added.

Coordinator for the National Emergency Operations Centre for Polio Eradication Dr Shahad Bteig said: "We have already conducted four polio vaccination campaigns this year, including two nationwide campaigns to boost children's immunity and we will be conducting another campaign in June."

A polio expert, wishing not to be named, said all the reports and data were already showing that the core reservoirs of Karachi, Quetta block and Peshawar-Khyber had become safe havens for the virus.

World body concerned about polio virus surge in Pakistan

Continued from Page 13

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OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT & SESSIONS JUDGE, SOUTH WAZIRISTAN

TENDER NOTICE 2023-24

Office of the District & Sessions Judge South Waziristan at Tank intends to purchase, subject to availability of funds, the under mentioned office equipment, Hardware, IT Equipment & Plant & Machinery on per-single stage, one envelope basis. Sealed tenders are invited from well reputed firms or bidders reflected on Active Tax Payer List of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

Sr	Name of Item	Tender No	Required Bid Security	Procurement Method	Date of Opening
1.	Office Equipment, Hardware, IT equipment and Plant & Machinery	Tender Notice 2023-2024	02%	Single Stage Single Envelop	11.06.2024

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- Further information, if required, can be obtained from Office of the District & Sessions Judge, South Waziristan at Tank during office hours on landline no. 0953-511311.
- Interested parties may send their bids in sealed cover latest by 11-06-2024 at 02:30 AM which will be opened on the same day at 11:00 AM in the conference room of District Court, South Waziristan at Tank. The bidders or their authorized representatives may participate.
- The tenders must be according to Bid Solicitation Documents (BIDs).
- Bids offered by the firms/bidders shall be valid up to 30th of June 2024. In case of any fluctuation in market price, revision in bids offered shall not be made.
- A detailed list of specifications of required items can be obtained from the office of undersigned during working hours including Saturday, which is also available on day.
- The detailed list of specifications of required items in soft can also be obtained by email by forwarding your request for the same to official email: seesessionscourt.southwaziristan@gmail.com.
- 2% of total bid amount as Earnest Money/Security deposit should be attached with the tenders in the shape of the pay order/banked draft in favour of District & Sessions Judge, South Waziristan at Tank. Tenders with cross cheque and without call deposit shall not be entertained. The Earnest Money of the unsuccessful bidders, however, will be returned after approval/liquidation of the tender.
- The competent Authority has the right to reject all bids under Rule 47 of the Open Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (OPRA), Procurement Rules 2014, and may increase or decrease terms after assigning valid reasons.
- Incomplete, ambiguous, and conditional bids shall not be entertained.

Muhammad Asghar Ali
Additional District & Sessions Judge,
Chairman of Purchase Committee South Waziristan 0953-511311

Address of Bid Submission/Opening: District & Sessions Court, Inside Political Compound South Waziristan at Tank. Office #0953-511511; seesessionscourt.southwaziristan@gmail.com

After Jaranwala, Christians in Sargodha face the mob

By Saima William

Once again, a Christian family faced the wrath of a mob, which burnt their home and factory over yet another accusation of blasphemy. The claims were the family denounced the holy Quran.

The incident in Sargodha is a heart-wrenching reminder of the unrelenting mob violence that continues to plague our nation. Mobsters vandalised property and attempted to lynch a man after accusing him of blasphemy. Social media footage showed a mob surrounding a bloodied man and others, including teenagers, wrecking furniture. Another video showed a large blaze outside a house.

A statement from the Minority Rights March also said that videos of the incident showed the mob lynching a 70-year-old man "on the instigation of a local cleric" while the man's home and factory were set ablaze.

Did this inspired person mentioned by media in the videos know at the time of the Jaranwala incident that he and his family would be next?

The videos of the attack clearly show officers of the Punjab police present there as silent spectators, which points towards their tacit approval and facilitation of the terrorists involved in the attack. Sargodha police claim to have arrested 15 people involved in the incident.

But the question is that 15 people were arrested in the Jaranwala case as well, and in dozens of previous cases of mob attacks on churches, Christian homes and colonies. Were any of the attackers punished?

The Pakistani government has repeatedly failed to stop these horrific incidents from occurring. How many more innocent lives need to be shattered before something changes?

It is time for the world to take notice and for the Pakistanis themselves to act decisively to protect Christians as citizens of Pakistan. We must stand together against this injustice and demand an end to this senseless violence.

What is more painful is that many people continue to claim on social media that Christians desecrate the holy Quran. This cycle of violence should end. The blasphemy laws in Pakistan have been misused for far too long, serving as a tool for personal vendettas and religious persecution.

Furthermore, there must be accountability for those who incite and participate in mob violence. The silent complicity of the police and other authorities cannot continue.



REV Simon Sobel, executive director of United Council of Churches, and other leaders from the Christian community protest against the Sargodha incident in Islamabad's G-7 sector on Sunday. — White Star

Those who fail to protect the innocent and uphold the rule of law must be held accountable.

The government must take concrete steps to promote interfaith harmony and protect the rights of all citizens. Educational reforms are needed to promote tolerance and understanding among different religious communities while media and civil society must also play a role in countering hate speech and promoting peace.

The voice of the marginalized and persecuted must be heard. We must amplify their cries for justice and stand in solidarity with them. The pain and suffering of Christian families in Pakistan are not just their burden to bear but a stain on the conscience of the entire nation. It is time for change, and it is time for justice. Enough is enough.

— The writer is a human rights activist. She writes @SaimaWilliam7

Vendors suffer as heatwave prevents shoppers from visiting weekly bazaars

By Kashif Abbasi



THE H-9 weekly bazaar gives a deserted look.



LIGHTS at a stall are powered by solar energy.



SOLAR panels installed on the roofs of the stalls in the bazaar.

The current heatwave has badly disturbed the business of vendors of weekly bazaars as shoppers avoid visiting these facilities due to the scorching heat.

"Due to the heatwave, our business has been badly affected nowadays as a majority of people avoid visiting the bazaars during the day," said Sarwar Khan, a vendor in H-9 bazaar. He said that his business has been facing downfall for the last month. "But I am hopeful things will improve after July," he said. In H-9 bazaar, stallholders, including those who deal in cloth and curtain businesses, said that overall business activities have been facing a decline. "The buying capacity of people is already very weak, and they are taking less interest in buying carpets, curtains, clothes, etc.," said Muhammad Usman, a vendor.

Similarly, Fiaz Hussain, who sells plastic pots and toys, said that his business had been facing constant decline for the last few years. Meanwhile, the stallholders have been using electricity either through generators or solar systems instead of connections. Two stallholders installed two generators outside of a bazaar, and they have been providing electricity to others for Rs200 per light per week, and for fans, they charge an extra amount. Similarly, a number of stallholders have their own solar panels. Stall holders said that earlier they made hectic efforts to get

electricity connections, but with solar panels and private generators, they are satisfied. "We are no longer interested in electricity connections as the government charges heavily for electricity; we are happy with solar and generator-produced electricity," said a stallholder. Earlier, the timing of the bazaar was from the morning till sunset, which was the reason the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) was not providing electricity connections. However, last year, the DMA allowed business activity in all bazaars until 8pm. In Islamabad, there are a number of weekly bazaars, with H-9 and G-6 being the most visited.

Moreover, a number of out-of-school children also work in the city's weekly bazaars to support their families.

"I have been doing labour work to help my family," said 12-year-old Shairullah, a resident of Chungi No. 26. He said that he had been working at this weekly bazaar for the last six years. A stallholder commenting on the issue of out-of-school children said that the government's campaign cannot succeed until and unless such children are given financial incentives. "These children are bread earners for their families, and why would they attend school when their family is facing starvation? If the government wants to make the out-of-school children campaign successful, it will have to think about the families of such kids," he said.



THOSE stallholders who do not have solar panels use this generator for which they are charged.



THE entrance to the Margalla Bazaar in H-9 sector. — Photos by Mohammad Asim



Alcaraz eases injury concerns with dominant early display Pg.18 SPORT

LAHORE
Sunset 07:02 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 04:58 am
NEXT 24 HRS
Minimum 29.0°C
Maximum 46.0°C
Outlook Mainly Sunny
AQI
Maximum (Yesterday) 174

METRO Central



A LION licks ice at Zoo Safari to get cooling effect. — White Star



EQUESTRIANS give bath to their animals at the canal. — Online

Millat Express locomotive derails near Sammasatta

SAHRAWALPUR: The Sargodha-to-Karachi Millat Express derailed at the Sammasatta railway junction late on Saturday, causing a delay of over an hour. According to railways and police officials, the train was stopped at Sammasatta railway junction for the repair of a mechanical fault in one of the train's passenger coaches. After the repair, which delayed the train for about half an hour, as the train steamed off at a slow speed, its engine derailed. Officials claimed that the derailment could have been caused by a change of signal points. A relief train was called in, but before it reached the site, railway officials and loco shed staff managed to put the engine back on the track and the train resumed its journey to Karachi after a delay of over an hour. During the engine repair, Sammasatta railway police officials patrolled around the train to ensure the safety and security of the passengers. The Multan divisional superintendent, along with his staff, arrived at Sammasatta and announced an inquiry into the locomotive's derailment. Also, two passengers traveling from Sahawal had a miraculous escape, though they suffered injuries, when they fell off the train at the end of the Sammasatta railway junction platform while traveling by Sialkot-to-Karachi Millat Express. According to railways and police officials, one of them was vomiting while sitting in the door of the train, supported by his companion. As the train, which had no stoppage at Sammasatta railway station, gained speed with a jerk, both fell out at the end of the platform and suffered injuries. Railway and police officials along with Rescue 1122 provided first aid and later sent them on another fast train to their destination in Karachi. — Correspondent

26 arrested, over 400 booked for mob violence in Sargodha

Violence victim also booked in blasphemy case registered on TLP activist's allegations

By Sajjad Abbas Niazi & Imran Gabol

SARGODHA/LAHORE: Urban Area police of Sargodha arrested 26 people for mob violence and attempt to lynch a Christian man the other day while registered a case against 44 nominated and 300/400 criminalized suspects. The case was registered on behalf of the man under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) 1997 and sections of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC).

man, a resident of Mujahid Colony, who was critically injured by the mob but survived the lynching attempt. He was booked on the report of an activist of the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan, identified as Muhammad Jahangir. About the incident, a resident of the locality, on condition of anonymity, told Dawn that some pages of the Holy Quran were found burnt on the cover of a water pump adjacent to the Christian man's residence but no one saw him setting them on fire. He described the man's family as humble and not known for such bad activities. On Saturday, the Christian man faced violence from a mob of religious people who wanted to lynch him. The mob violence case, registered by Station House Officer (SHO) Shahid Iqbal, states that locals, armed with sticks, stones and weapons, gathered in front of the man's house and attempted to break into it.

Despite efforts by the police, the Sargodha Peace Committee and other residents to calm the mob and resolve the situation through a dialogue, the mob set a shoe unit of the man's son ablaze and tried to enter his house from the adjoining rooftops. The mob destroyed electricity meters and outdoor AC units outside man's house and set them ablaze. SHO Iqbal and other police personnel at the scene rescued the man from the burning house. However, when they brought him out, the mob surrounded them and hurled stones at them and beat them with sticks, severely injuring the man. The FIR also alleges that women were also a part of the crowd, inciting violence. The case was registered under several sections of the ATA and PPC, including attempt to murder, obstructing public officials in discharging their duty, assaulting a public official and mischief by fire or explosive material with intent to destroy a house or cause death or hurt.

Following the incident, Punjab Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Usman Anwar and Home Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal visited Sargodha and inspected the crime scene. They appreciated the timely action of police and the members of the peace committee for maintaining peace and security. In response to the incident, Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Ramnath Singh Arora said that notice of the alleged blasphemy was contacted the Punjab Home secretary. Mr Arora appealed to the people of Sargodha not to take the law into their hands and assured them that the law enforcement agencies were holding an investigation into the incident. He emphasized that insult to any religion could not be allowed and everyone had a duty to report such incidents. Continued on Page 14

Cotton ginning season begins amid farmers concerns

By Amjad Mahmood

LAHORE: New cotton ginning season has started in the country, though partially, as one ginning unit south has become operational in Sindh and Punjab, while more are to come on line in the next few days. Reports say partial picking of cotton has started in some coastal areas of Sindh and in southern Punjab and arrival of raw cotton in the market is gaining momentum with each passing day. The volume is quite lower than that of last year during the same days. One ginning unit has become operational in Hyderabad and one in Barwala (Punjab) as the farmers are mostly worried and engaged about their recently harvested wheat crop ignoring cotton, while the government is delaying the announcement of cotton intervention price. Cotton picking is beginning

to gain momentum in lower Sindh areas and it is being offered a rate between Rs5,500 and Rs5,700 per 40kg. Reports from the field say that higher temperatures are obstructing efforts to sow cotton, while in the name of the so-called financial crisis in the sector, textile mills have blocked payments worth billions of rupees. A meeting between the representatives of the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) and All-Pakistan Textile Mills Association was held a few days ago which remained confined to exchange of suggestions for improvement in the current situation. Abid Zaidi, a cotton expert, regrets that APGMA leadership did not show seriousness in the meeting. In a statement, he said that the ginners rightly complained that the textile mills would impact cotton at intervention price. Continued on Page 14

Defying police actions, PTI workers continue challenging govt

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: Despite continuous police raids, harassment, and torture, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's (PTI) second and third-tier leaders are holding protests occasionally against, what they say, the "Terrorism" imposed by the Punjab government and the establishment. The PTI workers yet again on Sunday gathered and came out onto the walled city streets, carrying party flags and chanting slogans - "Hai Haq Hamara, Azadi" and "Kam Bachay Ge Pakistan - Imran Khan". As the protesters came out into the streets, local police raided and baton-charged them and allegedly arrested 10 PTI workers. When a media person asked the Gwatmandi station house officer why he was arresting peaceful protesters,

the policeman said, "This is our duty." Former PTI Lahore president Sheikh Justice Mahmood tweeted that the police had raided peaceful protesters in the walled city and arrested 10 party workers. "We strongly condemn Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's actions," PTI Lahore president Anwar Gajjar said the police raid and arrest of party workers were sheer terrorism. "The Form-47 government cannot make PTI founder chairman Imran Khan's followers afraid," he said. Meanwhile, PTI Punjab information secretary Shaukat Bano shared a video clip of Indian Premier Narendra Modi, in which he said he had seen the security in Lahore when he landed there without a visa. "The Sharif family should listen to Modi's message, in which he said he had landed in Lahore for a visit without a visa - on Nawaz Sharif's invitation to attend his granddaughter's marriage ceremony," he stated. Answering a question from the interviewer about Pakistan having nuclear power, Mr Malik stated that he had checked the power by personally going to Lahore. "I had gone to Lahore city without any security checks."

Hammad Arhar asked the ruling Sharif family to respond to Narendra Modi. "When will you respond to Modi, if not now?" he asked, adding, "You are threatening the people of Pakistan daily, but unable to respond to the provocative statement of the Indian premier." In his response to the Indian premier's statement, Mr Arhar said that Modi's anti-Muslim politics had strengthened the ideology of Pakistan and exposed his fake secular ideology.



STAFF repair railway line joints. — Dawn

Thal Express escapes accident near Muzaffargarh

MUZAFFARGARH: The Rawalpindi-bound Thal Express coming from Multan narrowly escaped an accident near the Mahmood Kot Railway Station, 20km from Muzaffargarh city, when some youths opened 15 joints of the track to steal iron. The incident happened at 8am when the locals found the thieves stealing the joints and damaging the tracks. They called the railway staff and made fire on the track to warn the driver who applied the emergency brakes of the train to stop it. Three young men managed to escape and one was caught by the locals who called the railways patrol team, including Muneer and Ghulam Mustafa, and handed over the suspect to them. The train continued its journey very slowly at the damaged portion as the department gave it clearance after repairing the damaged track. Inth station master Malik Muhammad Ayub said the case was referred to police who were looking into the matter. There is a practice by thieves who would steal the railway line joints as each joint weighed more than 8kg, according to a railways official. — Correspondent

PPP ready to talk to PTI for political stability: Gilani

Dawn Report

LAHORE: Acting President and Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani says they (PPP) are ready to discuss political matters and it is up to the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf to decide with whom it wants to talk. Gilani stressed the need to bring all stakeholders onboard to resolve the national issues. "The ball is in the PTI court to decide with whom it wants to hold talks," he said in a reference to PTI founder's statements that he would negotiate with the establishment and not politicians. Mr Gilani was talking to media after inaugurating a reverse osmosis water filtration plant in Lahore on Sunday. He said that the country was facing instability and all stakeholders needed to sit together and

devise a plan for steering the country out of this instability phase. "All politicians are required to be on one page," he emphasized. Calling for a dialogue and unity to make decisions in people's interest, he added that political instability had led to economic instability. Mr Gilani, who is a senior leader of the Pakistan People's Party, said that his party believed in public welfare and political dialogue and had always preferred to adopt a conciliatory approach to address national issues. He said that no PPP leader ever said that the party was not with the incumbent government. Rather, it's supporting the government in all matters and would continue to support its welfare initiatives. He said negotiations were going on with the PML-N for joining the government and a decision to become a part of federal and

Punjab cabinets would be taken after evaluating the available space. He said the PPP would also provide suggestions to make the upcoming budget programmes, especially farmers, youth and laborers. He said that his party had been supporting the government to provide relief to the people. The acting president highlighted that as a member of the United Nations, Pakistan was committed to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which was aimed at ensuring "availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" by 2030. He appreciated those who were working to provide clean drinking water to the masses and sharing responsibility for the same. He said that the provision of clean water was a global issue, which needed to be

addressed on a priority basis with global support. Responding to a question, he said that Pakistan had the capability to address threats on its eastern and western borders, as well as counter terrorism and extremism with national unity. Addressing a gathering of parliamentarians and other prominent political figures in Multan on Sunday, Mr Gilani said economic prosperity was linked to political stability in the country and the condition of the people could not be improved without economic stability. He said PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had presented a 10-point economic agenda and the current government should work on the agenda to provide relief to the masses. He said he would talk to the federal and provincial governments for giving big city status to Multan and completing develop-

mental projects, including ring road and other projects in Multan. He thanked the people of Multan for electing his son Ali Karim Gilani as MNA with a big margin when all the opponents had united against them. He also highlighted the widespread benefits of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) in South Punjab and advocated for its expansion. He said a discussion had already begun with the Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif to provide facilities for education, health, and transportation in South Punjab. Several parliamentarians and local PPP leadership including MNA Syed Ali Karim Gilani, Mahr-ul-Ulugh Sialvi, PPP general secretary Rao Sajid, MPAs Syed Ali Badar Gilani, Mian Kamran Akhmal, Rana Iqbal Siraj, Wasif Muzfar Raza were also present on the occasion.

Woman dies, two daughters injured in roof collapse

By Our Correspondent

TORA TEK SINGH: A woman died and her two daughters were injured when the under-construction roof of their house caved in on Sunday evening in Chak 67 JI in Faisalabad.

Ramesh 1122 said that the deceased was identified as Nazam Bibi and her injured daughters Lareali (18) and Hamia (8), who have been admitted to Allied Hospital.

CATTLE MARKETS

The Faisalabad district administration will establish seven weekly cattle markets across the district for Eidal Aaha, which will become functional 10 days before the festival.

Deputy Commissioner Atfalakh Noyyar Sheikh told the media on Sunday that these cattle markets will be set up at Niamaula on Samandri Road, Kharana Bypass on Satiara Road, Railway Ground in Jarawal, Chak 194 RB near UET Campus on Makrana Bypass, Road: Kharanwala Ground adjacent to the New Vegetable Market in Jarawal, Chak 423 GB opposite Punjab College on Sariana Road in Tanbhawan and Chak Jhama Sports Ground.

He added that no fees would be charged at the sale points for sacrificed animals, and the holidays of municipal employees would be cancelled for 10 days before and three days after Eidal Aaha.

He also said that illegal cattle markets would not be allowed and that all sale points should be sprayed to protect against Congo virus, with no animals entering sale points without being checked at livestock check posts.



LAHORE: Cyclists risk their life and limb on Queen Mary College Road. — White Star

Teachers oppose 'outsourcing' of 13,000 public schools to NGOs

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab Teachers Joint Action Committee has voiced strong opposition to the provincial government's decision to hand over government schools to the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) and Punjab Education Initiatives Management Authority (PEIMA) in the name of reorganisation.

The committee leaders, including Chaudhry Sarfraz, Rasool Warrich, Hans Lings, Kadif Shafiq Chaudhry, Chaudhry Sahar and Malik Anjad, termed the government's move tantamount to outsourcing the education system.

The committee pointed out that the previous government and the caretaker government did not recruit a single teacher in the last six years, leaving 120,000 teacher posts vacant. They criticised the decision to hand over schools to the PEF, especially when a couple of

the number of children in primary schools up to 100 despite the shortage of staff.

The committee leaders described the PEIMA and PEF as failed models with 12,000 educational institutions under their supervision deteriorating due to non-receipt of timely funds. They warned that giving the PEF and PEIMA another 13,000 educational institutions was an unwise move.

The committee suggested that if the government could recruit teachers on contract, it should allow and provide means for the local people to recruit teachers through the school councils, similar to the recruitment process in the after-school schools.

They urged the government not to outsource the education system in the name of reorganisation, questioning who could provide quality education for Rs600 in this severe inflation.

The committee called on the government to realise its responsibility and recruit new teachers, increase employees' salaries by

100pc and ensure leave encashment. They announced to hold a peaceful protest demonstration in front of the Punjab Assembly at 12 noon on May 29 under the auspices of All Government Employees Grand Alliance Punjab.

Earlier, the Maryam Nawaz-led provincial government announced plans to hand over 13,000 non-performing public schools to non-government organisations (NGOs) in the name of bringing reforms.

The chief minister presided over a meeting to review the School Education Reforms Programme and decided to introduce reforms in the non-performing government schools in the coming three months. The proposal to make a partnership with the private sector to oversee performance of 135 non-performing schools was reviewed during the meeting.

The CM also sought a final plan of action for providing extra glass flavoured milk up to class 5 in schools and expressed her concern over ghost enrolment of students in the schools.

FIA arrests Lesco official for bribe

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco) official, Zohab Dagar, was arrested by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for allegedly receiving a bribe of Rs100,000 from a consumer seeking restoration of electricity connection.

The official was caught red-handed, and the FIA team confiscated the bribe money, which was later confirmed to match the note numbers provided by the complainant. This incident is part of an ongoing operation by the FIA against corruption and overbilling in Lesco, which has led to the arrest of several senior and junior officers in recent days.

POWER/GAS THEFT: Lesco teams detected 84,561 connections where consumers were pilfering electricity in its five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Narwana Sahib, Kasur, and Okara) through an ongoing campaign, says a Lesco spokesperson.

The company has also registered 78,703 FIRs against electricity thieves at respective police stations, and 32,831 accused have been arrested. Lesco has charged a total of 98.57 million detection units worth Rs3.59 billion to all the power pilferers.

In the last 24 hours, Lesco found 479 consumers stealing electricity through various means, and 370 cases have been registered against the accused. Of them, 48 suspects were arrested during this period.

Among the seized connections, 56 were commercial, four agricultural, one industrial, and 458 domestic. All these connections were disconnected, and Lesco charged a total of 357,916 units as detection bill amounting to Rs11.408 million.

Lesco charged Rs26,400 detection bill to an electricity pilferer

on Sheikhupura Road, Rs414,000 detection bill to another power pilferer in Shearpur area, Rs268,000 fine in the form of detection bill to a customer in Bari Atari area, and a Rs200,000 fine to a power pilferer also in Kot Abdul Malik.

Lesco has also been working to recover outstanding dues from chronic defaulters. On the 228th day of its recovery campaign, separate teams recovered more than Rs18.13 million from 101 chronic defaulters in all five districts. So far, Lesco has recovered a total of Rs4.56 billion outstanding dues from 103,867 chronic defaulters.

The company has collected Rs633.59 million from 15,083 defaulters in Northern Circle, Rs 594.08 million from 13,641 defaulters in Eastern Circle, Rs 638.07 million from 11,790 defaulters in Central Circle, and so on for each circle.

Also, the Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) on Sunday disconnected another 143 connections, imposing a fine of Rs2.9 million.

The team conducted a raid at Shoh Kamal Road in Kamboh Colony, where they dismantled a direct bypass installed on the main gas line. The stolen gas was being used by a hardware and hotel. The arrest had also installed two gas compressors to siphon gas.

The bypass was removed, and a request for an FIR against the suspect has been filed at Wahai Colony Police Station. In Lahore, the team disconnected another 12 connections on illegal use of gas, and three on the use of a compressor.

The team also lodged two FIRs against gas pilferers. Similar actions were taken in other cities, including Multan, Sheikhupura, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, and Ghotwarwala.

Three held for demanding Rs2m ransom

RABIWALPUR: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested three people who demanded a ransom of Rs2 million from the family of an abducted man, Muhammad Sajid.

According to FIA officials, Ayub Chaudhry, Muhammad Qasim, and Sahir from Bahawalpur offered jobs to people in lieu after receiving large sums of money. The gang members took heavy amounts from Muhammad

Sajid of village Khanafeh Sharif in Bahawalpur. They took Sajid to Iran on Feb 28, 2024, where instead of providing him with a job, they kept him in illegal confinement. They shot a video of Sajid in confinement and sent it to his parents, demanding Rs2 million for his release.

The FIA team visited Iran, got the three suspects arrested and shifted Sajid and the suspects to Pakistan. — Correspondent

Ji announces drive to uphold constitution after Eid

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Rafiq Tarar has announced a national movement following Eid to uphold the supremacy of the constitution and law.

Speaking at a press conference in Mansehra, following the conclusion of a three-day session of the Ji Majlis-e-Shura, he outlined a comprehensive national agenda for the movement, crafted in consultation with the Shura.

Tarar emphasised the necessity of wide-ranging electoral reforms and the timely completion of the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project. He underscored the importance of electoral transparency, demanding that election results be compiled based on Form 45.

He categorically stated that the Ji would never recognise a government

formed through franchise elections, advocating for the restoration of the people's true mandate as reflected in Form 45. There is no need for the fixed election, he said.

Regarding government attempts to control social media, Tarar issued a stern warning, condemning measures such as the Punjab Defamation Act aimed at stifling freedom of expression.

He asserted that the Ji's movement seeks to liberate people from oppressive systems, emphasising the need for all individuals, including politicians, judges, generals, and bureaucrats, to operate within the constitutional framework as the only viable path forward for the nation.

Tarar lamented the deterioration of the industrial and agricultural sectors under different regimes, noting the skyrocketing costs of agricultural inputs, which have

become unaffordable for small-scale farmers.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN, MINISTRY OF INTERIOR
NATIONAL DATABASE AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY
(REGIONAL HEAD OFFICE SARGODHA)

TENDER NOTICE INVITATION TO BID

PROCUREMENT OF DESKTOP SYSTEMS
TENDER # RHO NADRA/S&G/32/2024

1. NADRA REGIONAL HEAD OFFICE SARGODHA CONSTITUTED AS SAR-E-ISHLAK AVENUE LINK PAF ROAD SARGODHA invites sealed bids from the Suppliers / Contractors / Firms registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments and who are on Active Taxpayer List of the Federal Board of Revenue for procurement of Desktop Systems at RHO NADRA, Sargodha. Bids should be delivered at RHO NADRA Sargodha at above address.

Sr	Description	Qty
1	Desktop Systems	100

2. Bidding documents, which are containing detailed terms and conditions, method of procurement, procedure for submission of bids, bid security, bid validity, opening of bid, evaluation criteria, clarification request of bids, performance guarantee etc. are available for the interested bidders at Admin Branch Regional Head Office SARGODHA AVENUE LINK PAF ROAD SARGODHA. The fee-refundable for bidding document is Rs. 15,000/- (Fifteen Thousand Rupees Only).

3. The bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the bidding documents, must reach at Admin Branch Regional Head Office SARGODHA AVENUE LINK PAF ROAD SARGODHA on 17th June 2024 at or before 11:00 am. Bids will be opened on the same day at 11:30 am.

A/Director Admin & HR
Ahmed Waqas Langah
REGIONAL HEAD OFFICE NADRA - SARGODHA
S-OSLHAK AVENUE, LINK PAF ROAD, SARGODHA / P. 048-878866

Van-truck collision toll reaches 13

MUZAFFARGARH: Two more persons who were injured in a van-truck collision succumbed to their injuries, taking the death toll in the incident to 13.

All the deceased and injured belonged to the same family of Bani Lash Mulkar. On the other hand, Chuski Sarwar Shehool

police registered a case against the truck driver and took him into custody.

On Sunday night, a family was travelling in a van when it was involved in an accident at Chuski Sarwar Shehool where 13 people died on the spot while nine others were injured seriously. — Correspondent

SI arrested for firing on teen

LAHORE: A sub-inspector was arrested for his alleged involvement in opening fire and injuring a teenage boy in Gulshan-i-Ravi two days ago.

A victim, Farhan, lodged a complaint against SI Muhammad Fiaz that he was standing with a motorcycle at a road to wait for his friend when a speeding car rammed into him.

He said his friend and uncle approached the scene and stopped the policeman from torturing him. The policeman was threatening him with dire consequences and opened fire at him.

He said the fire first hit the motorcycle and a passerby teenager Farhan in the leg and the policeman again resorted to aerial firing and fled the scene in his car. The injured boy was taken to a nearby hospital where he was said to be stable.

Gulshan-i-Ravi police registered the case against SI Fiaz. Meanwhile, DHC operation Faisal Kamran took notice of the incident and directed the police to arrest the suspect.

The police on Sunday afternoon arrested Fiaz. — Staff Reporter

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders based on item rates / percentage rates above or below an approved estimated (EMT) amount are hereby invited for the work mentioned below from the Contractors / Firms registered / licensed with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) for the current financial year 2023-24 in the relevant category mentioned each in accordance with PPTA Rules 2014 (with up-to-date amendments).

Tender documents can be obtained from the date of publication of invitation of bids in the newspapers from any of the below mentioned offices upon written request:

- Chief Engineer, Punjab Buildings Department, Central Zone, Lahore
- Commissioner, Faisalabad Division, Faisalabad
- Superintending Engineer, Buildings Circle, Bahawal
- Deputy Commissioner, Okara
- Executive Engineer, Buildings Division, Jhang
- Assistant Commissioner, Jhang

The application for purchase of tender shall be online letter head of company with a copy of valid CNIC of the contractor or authorized representative of the firm with authority letter must be accompanied with the following documents (mandatory requirements):

- Valid Registration of applicant (Company / Firm) with PEC in relevant category or above having specialist under seal on CE-09, CE-10, EE-04 etc. depending upon the type of project.
- Certificate of registration of income tax.
- Copy of PEC license, Identity Card of Contractor / Managing Partner / Director of the firm along with registered power of attorney from concerned legal office.

The tender documents shall be issued to those firms who fulfil the above mentioned criteria up to 10:00:00 AM.

Tenders and amounts shall be filed in figure as well as in words and tender should be signed as per general directions given in the tender documents. No rebate on tendered rates will be acceptable.

Tenders will be received in the office of Chief Engineer Central Zone Punjab Buildings Department, Lahore and Commissioner, Faisalabad Division Faisalabad and will be opened simultaneously on fixed date and time by the respective Tender Opening Committee at the above venue in the presence of intending contractor or their representatives.

Conditional tenders and tenders not accompanied with earnest money @ 2% of the EMT shall not be eligible for EMT / Bank Draft / Cashier's Cheque of any Scheduled Bank in favour of Executive Engineer, Buildings Division Jhang and allowed copies of registered performance bond and power of attorney. In case of firms will not be entertained.

Any of the total bids can only be reported on the basis of evaluation criteria. Though

- The procuring agency may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal. All the tendering process will be observed under PPTA Rule 2014.
- The procuring agency shall upon request communicate to any bidder the grounds for its rejection of all bids or proposal, but shall not be required to justify those grounds.
- The bidding documents will be issued to the contractor after date of publication on per PPTA Rule 2014.

Last date for submission of applications / issuance of tender 10-06-2024
Tender received on 12-06-2024 at 1:00 (PM) and open at 1:30 PM

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost / 2% EMT	E.S. No. / Date	Tender Fee Rs.
1	CONSTRUCTION OF 08 NEW CLASSROOMS IN SCHOOLS 6 DISTRICT JHANG, PUNJAB EDUCATION AS THE DEVELOPMENT OF PACE (P-CO) FUNDED BY GOVT PUNJAB EDUCATION SECTOR PROJECT (PSPSP)			
1	GPE Jahan Talab AF Sheh District Jhang	3200000 64000	EE No. 5425-27-08 dated 23.05.2024	100000
2	GPE Sheh Waryam Pombana Talab Sheh District Jhang	3200000 64000	EE No. 5425-27-08 dated 23.05.2024	100000
3	GPE Aghar Aghar Talab AF Sheh District Jhang	3200000 64000	EE No. 5425-27-08 dated 23.05.2024	100000
4	GPE Jhak Dughat Talab Talab AF Sheh District Jhang	3200000 64000	EE No. 5425-27-08 dated 23.05.2024	100000
5	GPE Peco Ara Sheh Talab 10-Hazrat District Jhang	3200000 64000	EE No. 5425-27-08 dated 23.05.2024	100000
6	GPE Peco Ara Sheh Talab 10-Hazrat District Jhang	3200000 64000	EE No. 5425-27-08 dated 23.05.2024	100000
7	GPE Ara Talab 10-Hazrat District Jhang	3200000 64000	EE No. 5425-27-08 dated 23.05.2024	100000
8	GPE Malindi, Malindi District Jhang	3200000 64000	EE No. 5425-27-08 dated 23.05.2024	100000

Superintending Engineer, Buildings Circle No.2 Faisalabad (JHR-02) P. 4820

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER Buildings Division Jhang P. 4820



Alcaraz eases injury concerns with dominant early display Pg.18 SPORT

PESHAWAR
Sunset 07:18pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 05:02am
NEXT 24 HRS
Minimum 27°C
Maximum 43°C
Outlook Sunny

Row over HMC hospital director's appointment affects patient care

Health minister terms replacement of Dr Faisal by BoG illegal

By Asim Ali

PESHAWAR: The tug-of-war between health minister and Board of Governors (BoG) over appointment of new hospital director has been adversely affecting patient care at medical teaching institution Hayatabad Medical Complex.

On Saturday, the BoG of the hospital appointed Dr Sher Zaman Khan as director replacing Dr Faisal Shehzad but health department asked the latter to continue his work.

The health minister said that the step was against the government's directives barring the BoGs of all 10 medical teaching institutions in the province from taking major decisions.

"We have already banned postings, transfers, promotions, terminations, procurements and awarding fresh tenders at the teaching hospitals and the BoG's orders cannot override that. Therefore, the hospital director has been asked to work as usual," Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah told Dawn. He said that such haphazard moves were bound to impact the performance of the hospital and the government would not allow it.

"Dr Faisal is still hospital director of Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC) as per law," he said.

Ghulam Qadir Khan, the chairman of BoG of HMC, said that the decision was approved by the board unanimously because Dr Faisal Shehzad was refused extension in deputation by health department and therefore was repatriated to it on completion of his period.

"He was given opportunity to get department's permission to stay on the post but he didn't," he said.

The BoG of HMC in its meeting on May 22 approved repatriation of Dr Faisal Shehzad to health department and appointed another senior administrative doctor, Sher Zaman, as hospital director.

The health department, however, noted that boards were barred from taking any major decision and asked it to withdraw the notification. But the BoG feels that it is autonomous to take such decisions.

"As a result, HMC has two personnel working on the key positions of hospital director, who is also the principal accounting officer and hence responsible for all the finances. Parallel orders are being issued," sources said.

They said that there was utmost confusion and unrest in the institute with the managers and employees contemplating which orders to pursue. "The tug-of-war between the board and government is damaging the flow of services in the institute," they added.

A similar decision taken by BoG had already been rejected by health department, a week ago, arguing that there was ban on transfers and the repatriation was illegal.

The BoG's order to replace hospital director was termed illegal in a notification and it was asked to submit an application for relaxation of ban on transfers. It also asked the BoG to comply with its directives and submit a report within three days. Dr Faisal continues to work as per the health department's instructions.

The HMC administration in a notification said on Saturday that as per decision of BoG, Dr Faisal Shehzad was repatriated to his parent department on May 22 and he should relieved as hospital director of HMC. It said that he could not hold or chair any meeting. The board being the competent authority has given acting charge to Dr Sher Zaman. All managers and hospital staff are advised to follow the instructions of new director and disobeys illegal orders of his predecessor.

Dr Faisal is a BPS-20 management cadre doctor.

The current BoGs of teaching hospitals have been appointed by caretaker government and their replacement is round the corner as the incumbent government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf wants to appoint its own people as members of the boards. "The BoGs members are well aware of their removal so they are taking such decisions," said sources.

They said that despite the fact that those were voluntary positions, many BoG members were using official vehicles, petrol and drivers and had occupied offices in HMC in violation of the law.

"The government will not accept illegal decision of BoGs," said health minister.



A VIEW of the beautiful Jannat Waterfall in Lahore Kass, located in the suburbs of Kharspur, Ayubia. The waterfall has still not caught the eye of many people and it can serve as one of the many tourist destinations situated in the picturesque Abbottabad District. — Photo by Tanzeer Shafiq

Officials on deputation can be sent to parent dept anytime, rules PHC

Bench rejects plea of educationist against repatriation from PEP

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court has ruled that an official on deputation can be repatriated to his parent department anytime without assigning any reason prior to completion of his normal tenure.

A bench consisting of Justice Ijaz Awan and Justice Shaukat Ahmad issued the order while rejecting plea of an assistant professor, challenging his repatriation to higher education department from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Frontier Education Foundation, where he was posted as deputy director (administration) on deputation in 2021.

"We lay on the right of a 'deputant' to complete his normal tenure is concerned, the same has never been recognised by courts. It is well settled by now that deputant has no right to remain on a post as deputant, he can be repatriated at any time without assigning any reason," the bench observed.

"In terms of Civil Servants Act, either federal or provincial, a civil servant is liable to serve anywhere throughout the province or Pakistan, as the case may be, he cannot claim posting of his own choice at a particular post," the bench observed.

The court further stated: "In fact,

we have seen that the expertise of such civil servants are spoiled when they are specialists in teaching and are posted against an administrative post, and experience has shown that such deputants often opt for deputation to other departments when they were complete their normal tenure."

The bench ruled: "The deputation is an administrative arrangement between the borrowing and lending departments for utilizing the services of an employee in the public interest and exigency of services against a particular post, and such deputants cannot be allowed to remain on deputation for an indefinite period or stipulated period by his own whims and wishes. The law on this point is very much clear."

The petition was filed by Shabul Gul, who was initially appointed as lecturer (BPS-17) in higher education department on the recommendation of KP Public Service Commission in 2012 and was then promoted to the post of assistant professor (BPS-18) in December 2022.

His counsel stated that the petitioner was posted as deputy director (admin) on deputation through a notification on October 12, 2021, in KP Frontier Education Foundation.

He said that the petitioner had filed a complaint against an acting managing director of the foundation for misusing his authority and committing certain irregularities. He added that an inquiry was conducted by provincial inspection team wherein the director and some others

were found involved in certain irregularities.

The counsel claimed that the director firstly transferred the petitioner from the post of deputy director and then repatriated his services in April 2024 to his parent department, where he was posted as assistant professor of political science at a government degree college.

He contended that repatriation of the petitioner was based on mala fide and was without any justification. He said that although the respondent department had the power to repatriate the petitioner, yet such powers should be exercised in good faith.

The bench observed that Frontier Education Foundation was a corporate body created under KP Frontier Education Foundation Act, 1994, for promoting and financing the development of education in the private sector in the province.

"We have observed that in numerous cases instead of allowing promotion to employees of autonomous bodies and without adhering to recruitment rules of those autonomous bodies, the government sends civil servants on deputation against the promotion posts or the posts meant for initial recruitment," the bench observed.

The bench said when recruitment rules didn't permit filling of a post through deputation, sending a civil servant to such post was a source of heavy bearing for servants serving in the organization on one hand, and on the other it militated the statutory law of that organization.



Two including Christian killed in North Waziristan

By Our Correspondent

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: Two persons, including a member of the Christian community, were killed in what the police claimed targeted attacks here on Sunday.

The first attack took place near the Miral Road, where unidentified motorcycle riders opened fire on 39-year-old Ashtaq Masih, killing him on the spot. The assailants escaped after the attack.

The body was shifted to the Miral Hospital. The police said that the second attack also took place in the same area as unidentified motorcycle riders shot dead one Jail Banoo.

The police said that the body was shifted to a hospital, from where it was later transported to Bannu District, the hometown of the deceased. The police launched an investigation into both the cases.

Local officials said that Ashtaq Masih's wife was a constable and they were living in Tocha Scouts Street in Miral Road. They said that Mr Banoo was a motor mechanic.

The Christian community members later gathered outside the Miral Press Club along with the body to protest his murder. A local journalist and two others were killed and another sustained injuries in different attacks in the district during the week.

The police said journalist Karim Khan was killed in Tigr area when some masked men opened fire at him outside his house. Fayaz Khan, a local resident, was killed in Headkhal area of the district.

The police also said that another local, Inayat, was targeted after unidentified motorcycle riders opened fire at him.

Three women, girl die as vehicle falls into Tank ravine

By Our Correspondent

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Three women and a girl were killed and seven others injured when a vehicle going in a wedding procession plunged into a deep ravine in Tank district on Sunday.

The police and local residents said that the tragic accident occurred in Sanghar area of the district due to brake failure. Mostly children and women were onboard the vehicle.

The deceased were identified as Awwad Jans, Hazrat Bibi, Isam Bibi and an unknown girl. The bodies and the injured were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, Tank.

Separately, unidentified assailants opened fire on a motorcycle killing a man, identified as Hamid Baloch, 28, and critically injuring his wife.

The police said that the couple was coming to Dera from Bhakkar district of the Punjab. The incident occurred near Bagh-4-Sakoon Park on Durrani University Road in the limits of Gomal University police station.

The body and the injured were immediately shifted to a hospital, where the women also succumbed to fear injuries. The police started a search to trace the suspected killers.

Khar traders take to streets against colleague's murder

Demand early arrest of killers

By Our Correspondent

BAJAUR: Traders of Khar Bazaar on Sunday demonstrated against the murder of a shopkeeper on Saturday, and demanded the early arrest of his killers.

Social and political activists also attended the protest held at the main Chowk. The protesters, who blocked the road for about an hour, shared slogans against the police for failing to ensure security of traders.

Nawzillah was killed by unknown gunmen in Khar Bazaar on Saturday.

Bajaur Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Hagi Laili Shah, Khar traders' association president Hagi Asim Rahman, PML-N leader Anwarul Haq, Javed Khan and Sahib Rahman of Jamat-e-Islami also spoke.

The protesters described the brutal daylight murder in the crowded bazaar a failure of the police to ensure safety and security of traders and shoppers in the main trade centre of Bajaur.

They noted this was not the only incident of killing in the Khar Bazaar as several such truckers had happened in the past.

The speakers regretted that the police had yet to make any arrest.

They demanded an improved security environment in Khar and other major bazaar of the district. They also asked the local police chief to



TRADERS stage a protest demonstration in Khar Bazaar on Sunday. — Dawn

ensure the early arrest of those involved in the murder of Nawzillah, who was killed by unknown assailants in front of his shop.

(PROTEST) Rejecting the proposed plan of imposing taxes in Malakand division, JI local leaders on Sunday announced to attend the planned sit-in at the Swat Motorway toll plaza on June 2.

Addressing a news conference, JI Bajaur deputy chief Qari Akbar Majid, general secretary Muhammad Hanous, Farmanullah, Abdul Mannan, Hagi Dawlat Khan and others said that like rest of Malakand division and tribal districts, the people of Bajaur had also rejected the federal government's plan of imposing taxes in the region.

They said there was no justification

of imposing taxes in Malakand division and tribal districts as these regions were the most backward, where most people were living an abject life.

The Jamaat leaders said Malakand division and tribal districts were badly affected by militancy and war on terrorism.

They said the Malakand and tribal districts should be given relief like the people of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The JI leaders asked the provincial government, the local leaders of PML-N, PPP and PTI to play their role to stop the federal government from imposing taxes in Malakand division.

The Jamaat leaders said a large number of party activists would participate in the planned sit-in.

Shangla police arrest man for assaulting minor boy

By Our Correspondent

SHANGLA: The police on Sunday arrested a man for assaulting a minor boy in Kektor area of Kara tehsil here.

The accused was recently released from jail where he was lodged in a similar case in February.

District police officer Inam Khan said the accused, identified as Saeed Agha, had picked a minor boy on his bike to a stream, where he allegedly assaulted him.

Shangla police station SHO Saeed Mahmood Khan told Dawn by phone that the accused had been arrested, while the victim was sent to the District Headquarters Hospital, Aghori, for medical examination.

He said the accused was a habitual abuser and had been arrested in a similar case in February. He was later released after paying up with the victim's family.

The SHO said they had lodged an FIR against the accused under the Child Protection Act and began further investigation into the case, saying the charge of assault would be confirmed after the medical report that was likely to be received today (Monday).

Meanwhile, Shangla district and sessions judge on Saturday rejected the bail plea of three accused, who were arrested for attempting to assault a schoolboy earlier this month in Mares area of Rishan tehsil.

A statement issued by the DPO office on Sunday said with efforts of the investigation team, the judge rejected the bail plea of the accused for second time in the case and sent them to jail.

Separately, a suspect arrested in the murder case of his brother has confessed to killing him.

The accused, Muhammad Salim, had strangled his brother in Dandol area in February to marry his wife.

SHO Muhammad Arif Khan said body of Muhammad Salim of Mamsayra was found in his pickup van on February 22.

Father of the deceased reported to the police his son was probably murdered by his in-laws with the help of his other son.

SHO Arif said after the complaint, the police arrested the accused from Mamsayra. He asked the police after interrogating the accused and wife of the deceased, reached the conclusion that he was killed by his own brother as he wanted to marry his wife.

He said Salim confessed he strangled his brother with the help of his sister-in-law and her brothers, Abdul Majid and Ali Akbar.



YOUNGSTERS jump in a swimming pool at Khushal Park on a hot day in Peshawar on Sunday. — White Star

CDA chief orders completion of all new sectors in four months

Says appointment of consultants for all projects should also be ensured

By Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: The engineering wing and other concerned departments of Capital Development Authority (CDA) were on Saturday directed to complete ongoing development works in new sectors within four months - a task which seems very tough keeping in view the city agency's record of sector development.

"An important meeting regarding sector development was held at CDA headquarters on Saturday under the chairmanship of Chairman CDA Chaudhary Muhammad Ali Rashidhara," said a statement.

It said the CDA chief was briefed on the ongoing development works in C-14, C-15, C-16, E-12 and E-13. He was told that 50pc development work had been completed in C-14 and C-15, 45pc in E-12 and

50pc in E-13. "The CDA chairman directed that the ongoing development works in all the sectors should be completed in four months and all impediments hindering sector development should be removed so that the development works are not disturbed," the statement said.

The CDA chairman directed that the development works in C-14 should be completed by September 2024 and the possession should be given to the allottees. Similarly, the construction work in E-12 and E-13 should be completed and handed over to the allottees within three months.

"Apart from this, payments should be made after the third party validation of the development works," Mr Rashidhara said. He said the appointment of consultants for all projects should also be ensured.

Commenting on the CDA chairman's direction to complete ongoing development works, an officer said work continued in C-14 and E-12 at full pace and it could be completed in four months. However, until the issue of the affected people whose land had been acquired by CDA and who were entitled

to get compensation in the shape of cash and plots) was resolved, no progress could be made on the development work in C-15 and E-13.

He said Built-up Property (BuP) award of the sector was announced in 2016, but the CDA did not issue plot allotment letters to the affected people. In the meanwhile, another BuP award was announced in 2023 without the issuance of allotment letters.

He said until the issue of the locals was settled, they will continue creating hindrances in the development work.

"Those who are genuine affected persons, they should be given their rights without any further delay and those who are trying to get compensation benefits fraudulently, action should be taken against them," he said.

According to the officer, E-12 is a stigma on the performance of the city agency as this sector was launched in 1989 and the same year the CDA sold around 4,000 plots to citizens with a commitment to provide them developed plots in a year. But, after 35 years, the development work in the sector remains incomplete. In the meeting, the chairman was told

that 45pc work was completed in the sector.

Development work in C-16 has not properly been started. Last year, after starting partial work in one of the sub-sectors the CDA treated it as an issue of land affected people unregulated plot.

At present, the CDA has 13 acquired residential sectors and nine of them are stalled with no signs of development. In addition, there are nine other sectors that have not been acquired.

The CDA could not develop any new sector after D-12 which was completed in 2008. In 2005, the CDA launched E-15 and sold plots, but people are still waiting to get possession in the sector. However, work in this sector along with E-12 is near completion.

In 2008, the CDA through a land-sharing formula acquired several other sectors - D-13, E-13, F-13, H-15, C-13, C-14, C-15 and C-16. Out of them, development work is in progress only in C-14 and C-15 and no signs of development in other sectors.

As per the city's master plan, H-13, H-15, H-16, H-14, H-17, D-14, D-15 and D-16 are also supposed to be developed by the city agency.

Swabi people brave extended power outage in sizzling heat

SWABI: A fault in the Right Bank Canal grid station suspended electric supply to many areas of Swabi district from Saturday night till Sunday. The residents said they passed through a sleepless night.

Javed Khan, a resident of Mansori Bada, and Asim Khan of Panjgur village said mosquitoes kept biting them, especially the elderly and children, the whole night due to power blackout.

An employee at the grid station said double circuit of 132KV line had been broken, suspending electric supply to various regions. "Officials at the grid station were forced to start forced load-shedding because the error log panel was not on other 132KV circuit," said another employee on condition of anonymity.

The affected areas were Mansori, Karail Sher Khan Kalay, Salim Khan, Gadsan, Amara, some colonies of Farhida Dam, and some localities of Tapp, Swabi and Razar tehsils.

"The forced outage was conducted by the grid station staff and not by Peshawar Electric Supply Company," said a PESCO official. Officials at the grid station said a technical team arrived at the grid on Sunday morning, removed the fault and restored the power supply.

KILLED: A man was killed and two others, including a child, were injured when rival groups traded fire in Sang Khani village on Sunday, police and rescue officials said.

A Rescue 1122 official said two emergency medical teams along with six ambulances reached the spot, provided first aid to all the seriously injured people and shifted them to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital in critical condition.

Later, one of the injured, identified as Mansaf Khan, succumbed to injuries. The two injured were identified as Javed Khan, 35, and minor Saad Khan, who is the son of the deceased. — Correspondent

Food dept to instal vending machines for wheat farmers

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa food department has said that FIRs would be registered against those trying to fraudulently sell Punjab wheat to it.

The department also announced plans to establish a separate window for the convenience of local farmers. It said that vending machines would also be installed in Maridan, Dera Ismail Khan, Malakand, Swabi and Nowshera districts.

The food department said that now only 100 metric tonnes of wheat would be purchased from a farmer instead of 500 metric tonnes as announced earlier. — AFP

Chitral villagers seek construction of road

By Our Correspondent

CHITRAL: The residents of Mawzi, Yarkhoon and Breghil sub-valleys have demanded of government to provide proper road facility to their areas, which have always been neglected.

Addressing a news conference here on Sunday, the leaders of Tahrak-e-Mawzi-Breghil Road (TMBR), Syed Mukhtar Ali Shah, Liaquat Ali, Sahib Irfan, Haji Kamal, Akbar Akbar Shah and others said that all the sectors of development in the area were affected by the absence of road facility.

They said that the 120-km road from Mawzi to Breghil was basically a pony track of the British-era while no road project was initiated by government for which the people

yearned for the last 70 years.

The TMBR leaders said that road was the basic necessity for integrated development in all the other sectors and as long as the three adjacent sub-valleys were not provided with road facility, the backwardness of the area and poverty of its dwellers would remain intact.

They contended that the people of the area started a movement from the platform of TMBR and would bring their apathetic condition into the notice of rulers in a peaceful manner. They said that the vast area encompassing the sub-valleys could be transformed into a hub of tourism only if it was connected to a road.

They said Breghil valley hosted more than 35 glaciers and was the origin of the Chitral River and 35 bioactive

species with rich biodiversity coupled with Wakhi culture that made it a paradise of tourists.

"Agriculture and livestock sectors have been affected by the lack of transportation facility as apples, pears and grapes of Yarkhoon and yaks of Breghil could not be transported to market.

They said that health was the most affected sector due to the dilapidated roads where more than 50 per cent of women died on the way while being shifted for complicated deliveries to Bosti town due to the humpy roads.

"Patients and injured prefer to die at their beds over being shifted on the roads to hospitals while it takes almost 10 hours to reach the nearest hospital in Bosti from Upper Yarkhoon," they lamented.

Four injured in Waziristan accident

By Our Correspondent

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: Four persons were injured in a road accident here on Sunday. Officials said that a motorcar

going from Wana to Peshawar hit a rock while negotiating a turn in Ladha. Four persons including the driver were injured in the accident. The injured were shifted to district headquarters hospital in Wana

by a rescue team.

Officials said the injured belonged to Dattani tribe in Shah Kot of Wana area. They were identified as driver Loopman, Jan Muhammad, Sher Muhammad and Shah Mir.

Speakers call for joints efforts against drug abuse

By Our Correspondent

KHYBER: Speakers at a seminar in Bera here on Sunday stressed the need for collective efforts to eradicate abuse of drugs in society.

Zehra Foundation and Khyber Youth Organisation arranged the event at Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Model School that was attended by a sizeable number of youth activists and members of civil society.

Motivational speaker Akram Afridi talked in detail about the preventive measures against drug addiction. He urged youth to indulge in healthy and creative activities to avoid falling prey to addiction of any illegal drug, which could prove fatal for their mental as well as physical health.

He called upon parents and teachers to keep a constant watch on their children and students and monitor their activities while at school and home along with surveillance of their overall behaviour in order to timely detect any inclination towards use of nar-

cotics or any other hazardous drug.

The medical superintendent of Dugra Hospital, Dr Alamgir, said on the occasion that joint efforts were needed for a drug-free and prosperous society.

He stressed the need for preventing oneself and the whole society from the negative effects of narcotics while working together to effectively control the spread of illegal drugs.

LADAKH: The residents of Landi Kotai on Sunday demanded provision of six hours of electricity, transfer of all the grid station staff and a judicious distribution of electricity on different feeders.

In a meeting held at Landi Kotai bazaar, they accused the grid station staff of subjecting them to almost 20 hours of loadshedding in violation of the pledge the grid authorities had made with them about provision of six-hour electricity about a week ago.

They threatened to besiege the grid station and take control of all the power installations if their demands were not accepted within three days.

Young hikers explore diverse terrain of Swat's Jambil valley

By Our Correspondent

SWAT: A group of enthusiastic young students embarked on an adventurous hike through Swat's breathtaking landscape on Sunday, uncovering the beauty of several stunning waterfalls in Jambil valley.

The expedition, organised by a private college as an educational and environmental initiative, saw the students traverse diverse terrain featuring cascading waterfalls, lush green fields, cool shaded areas and dense pine forests.

The three-hour hike from Jambil bazaar began on a zigzag track that meandered through verdant fields and under the cooling canopy of shade trees. The path led the students past

gurgling streams and into the heart of a pine forest, where they chanted songs and revelled in the cool breeze, enhancing their experience of nature's wonders.

Their journey took them from one waterfall to another, each more enchanting than the last. The final destination was a magnificent waterfall known as Chare Khwa that cascaded down a wide, long rock, spraying cool mist over the nearby area.

This spectacular sight was nestled in a mysterious canyon surrounded by towering mountains and thick forest, creating a dramatic and awe-inspiring backdrop.

"This place is absolutely magical. Every corner of Swat is beautiful, but this hike was something special. The water-

falls, the fresh air and the greenery - it was all so refreshing," exclaimed Zain, one of the students.

Upon reaching the roaring waterfall, the students took a well-deserved break to enjoy their lunch. They basked in the waterfall's cool spray, marveling at the scenic and somewhat enigmatic surroundings.

This moment of tranquility was coupled with an educational segment where their teachers provided insights into the local flora and fauna and snippets of the region's rich cultural history.

"Our teachers told us so much about the plants and animals. It was fascinating to learn about the local culture. It is amazing to see how much diversity there is in Swat," said Saboor Khan,

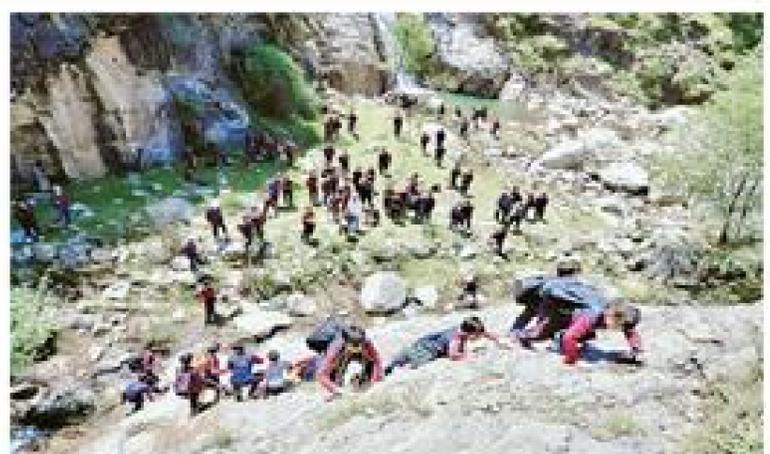
another student.

In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the students also participated in an environmental cleanup and tree-planting activity.

This hands-on involvement was meant to foster a sense of responsibility for preserving the area's natural beauty.

"We learned about the importance of caring for our environment. Planting trees and cleaning up made us feel like we were giving back to this beautiful place," said Amir Khan.

As the hike concluded, the students left with memories of Swat's enchanting waterfalls and a deeper appreciation for the environment and the importance of conservation.



STUDENTS climb a mountain during the hike. — Dawn

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KP BUDGET 2024-25

A new squabble but a smart budget

KP's finance team has introduced a few significant reforms to expand its tax and non-tax revenues by rationalising existing rates and imposing levies on various sectors

By Nasir Jamal

THE new Khyber Pakhtunkhwa budget for the next financial year seems to be a smartly crafted document that commits to producing a significant surplus of Rs100 billion while proposing a slew of populist and expansionary measures in line with the ruling PTT's election manifesto.

The estimate of the budgeted provincial receipts of Rs75 billion appears a tall order, given the fact that in the last five years, the sum of nearly Rs100 billion has been accounted for by the federal levy on oil and federal funds for the merged districts of ex-Fata may not materialise — fully or partially — leaving the authorities to drastically adjust expenditures, particularly the recent planned development outlay of Rs416.3bn.

The development budget constitutes a little over a quarter of the total expenditure of Rs265 billion for the next fiscal year. Any shortfall in its income would also affect KP's ability to produce a surplus at the end of the year.

In spite of these realities, one must concede that the authors of the provincial budget have kept from making irresponsible and irrational projections. Moreover, the province's finance team has also introduced a few very significant reforms to expand the provincial own tax and non-tax revenues by rationalising existing tax rates and imposing levies on various sectors of the economy.

Speaking with this correspondent, the Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance Muzamir Aslam asserted the new budget is designed to boost the province's own revenue mobilisation to over Rs200bn through tax and levy rate cuts and expansion of taxpayers' base, reduce or contain non-revenue current expenditures.

"The previous (coalition) government's decision to increase the tax rate on property transactions, for example, has almost halved the collection under this levy. So we have proposed to cut it down to 3.5 per cent next year from 6pc. Likewise, we have improved levies on different sectors to expand revenue base and collection," he said by phone from Peshawar. He says the provincial government is reducing its expenses

as the federal government is not clearing its dues like the net hydro profits and windfall levy on oil.

In his budget speech, KP Finance Minister Atah Alam Akid pointed out that the budget emphasis is on social protection, peace, employment opportunities, and economic development. He said reforms are being introduced in sales tax, property tax, tobacco tax and cess, among others, to improve revenue collection. "The government has decided to improve the tax net instead of increasing the taxes, and for that purpose several steps have been taken," he said.

"The budget 2024-25 is not just a budget document. Rather, it is a roadmap for the development and

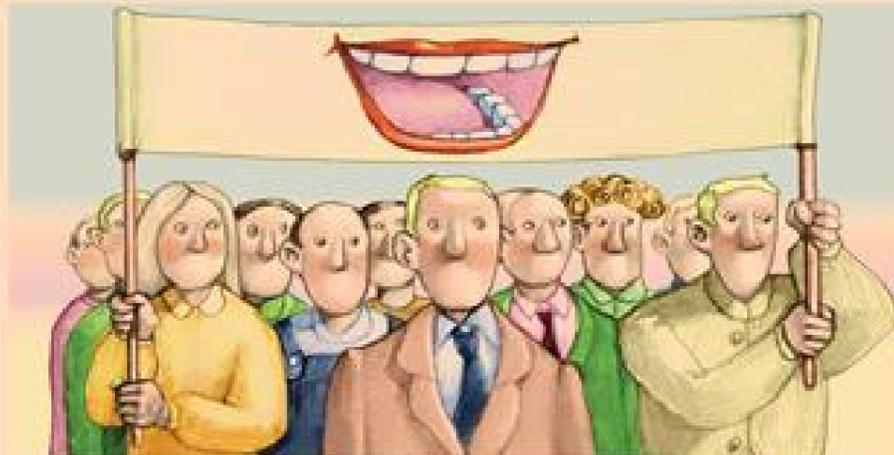
'In the broader context, we have helped the federal government by committing a surplus of Rs100bn — they should be thanking us'

prosperity of the province and reflection of the government's strong resolve to uphold social justice and gender equality," he said.

Among major initiatives announced in the budget includes a 10pc hike in salary and pension for government employees and pensioners, an increase in the minimum wage from Rs22,000 to Rs25,000 per month, allocation of Rs200bn for PTT's flagship Sehat Card Plus programme, provision of Rs200bn for wheat subsidy, Rs120bn for three youth employment programmes, and Rs100bn for transport subsidy for the Peshawar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

The provincial finance minister says the youth employment schemes would create 100,000 jobs for the youth. In addition, the government has set aside Rs100bn for the Ehsaas

Continued on Page 3



Trying the same old formulas

'Annual budget proposals from chambers are an exercise of registering wishes with little hope for material change'

By Afshan Suboqi

AS budget makers in Pakistan grapple with demands, possibilities and public aspirations, the business community, aware of the government's limitations, holds low expectations. However, this hasn't stopped them from inundating policymakers with their own proposals that project their priorities as national interest.

"With limited flexibility in national accounts (high expenditures demand and low resource mobilisation), and keen donor's oversight, the budget has become more of an annual ritual, lacking innovation or intent to challenge the status quo."

"Addressing the key pain points remains is not seen on the agenda, as the current crop of politicians has unmanageable chain reactions. They prefer playing it safe, using tried and tested donor-derived formulas, making the budget a mere follow-up exercise," commented an observer.

The conduct of the business community is not much different in this regard. Each year before the budget, they present their wish lists to the government, tanning their interests as those of the entire country.

Analysing the budget proposals from various business forums reveals the diverse and regionally distributed shades of interests within Pakistan's business class — trading house demands are more prominent in Sindh than in Punjab.

In Karachi, the thrust of demands of key constituents of the city chamber, the five industrial areas bodies — Sindh Industrial Trading State Association (SITSA), Karachi Association of Trade and Industry, Karachi Association of Trade and Industry, Federal B Area and North Nazimabad Association of Trade and Industry, priorities security and infrastructure, along with concerns about high production cost and harassment by state and non-state elements.

Furthermore, budget proposals from the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and

Industry and the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry focus heavily on sales tax and duties.

The corporate sector, meanwhile, emphasises fair and simple taxation, documentation, digitalisation, privatisation and further liberalisation to create a more conducive environment for investment and industrial growth.

Sectoral bodies such as textiles, sugar, cement, auto, fertilizer, power companies, and pharmaceuticals lobby the government before the budget, seeking continued concessions and reduced costs for government levies, credit, raw material and utilities.

They emphasise the potential of job creation and tax contributions, warning of risks if their demands remain unmet. In addition to submitting formal memorandums to the relevant official forums, they run media campaigns to pressure the government and gain public support.

Commenting on the private sector budget proposals, Ehsan Malik, CEO of the Pakistan Business Council (PBC), stated, "Given the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) inability to offer relief to the over-taxed or tax under-taxed, annual budget proposals from chambers are an exercise of registering wishes with little hope for material change."

"This is especially true this year with the FBR restructuring and demanding International Monetary Fund (IMF) targets. There is also very little difference between this year's proposals and those of previous years. Our fiscal regime is stagnant, and the FBR, driven by IMF-imposed short-term revenue targets, has little choice but to increase taxes on those already taxed."

Mr Malik further explained, "The PBC is a business advocacy body, not a chamber or a trade association. It comprises major local and multinational investors with long-term economic growth commitments. Unlike sectoral trade associations, PBC's proposals are broad, aiming to expand the tax base, promote investment and

encourage wealth creation to generate higher tax revenues and create jobs.

"This year's proposals also highlight the urgency of addressing brain drain and capital flight, warning of long-term repercussions. In contrast, most other chambers focus on their member's immediate needs rather than broader longer-term issues."

An anonymous analyst noted the complexity of Pakistan's business landscape, highlighting that major manufacturing groups also own big trading houses. "In an import-dependent country like Pakistan, many industrial groups have diversified into trading, blurring the lines between commercial and manufacturing interests."

"Typically, these interests compete for favourable policies, but in Pakistan, the same law benefits are sought after, regardless of the policy framework. Making and forwarding pre-budget proposals more of a ritual."

He also noted, "Recent import restrictions and limits on remitting foreign exchange, aimed at stabilising the external sector, along with high logistics costs from global conflicts and a shift in public preferences for local products, created opportunities for the domestic industry. These factors benefited top business groups the most, compensating them for trade losses."

Abdul Azeem, Secretary General of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), noted, "Our members are foreign investors operating across Pakistan, contributing one-third of the country's tax revenues. As always, the OCCI 2024 budget proposals prioritise national considerations over regional ones."

"Our proposals aim to boost investment, attract foreign direct investment and create a level playing field. Key themes include broadening the tax base, adopting automation reducing the cash economy, and simplifying regulations to enhance compliance and make Pakistan a more attractive investment destination than its regional peers." ■

The Week...

An IMF mission and Pakistan have made significant progress towards reaching a staff-level agreement for an extended fund facility, the global lender says

Pakistan received only about **\$11.3bn** in foreign loans and grants in the first 10 months (July-April) of the current fiscal year, far behind the annual target of \$17.4bn

Precious metals, including gold, silver, and copper reach record highs after demand skyrockets in the wake of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's death

Nepal approves a seven-year plan for K electric to increase its generation capacity by around

3,200 MW envisaging a tariff reduction to 7.9 cents from 8.7 cents

Federal Board of Revenue claims that retailer's registration for the Tاجر Dost Scheme have reached 17,000 in six major cities

Nepal to consider government requested fuel-cost adjustment of

Rs3.5 per unit to extract over **Rs29bn** for electricity used in April from consumers

Scheduled bank investments reach **Rs27,28tr** in April — **Rs7.6tr** higher than the previous year — according to data by the State Bank

The PSX, in a new high, briefly touches the **76,000** milestone

Dollar inflows via Rupee Digital Account drop **6%** to \$171m in April from \$182m in March

Government raises **Rs96.88bn** via Pakistan Investment Bonds auction, albeit, at slightly reduced cut-off yields for three, five, and 10-year bonds

Balancing banking scales

Over the last five years, more than 30pc, or Rs 4.5tr, of all new deposits have been Islamic, as some big names in the conventional banking sector have aggressively shifted towards Shariah-compliant finance

ONE of the drawbacks of the modern economic system is how it rewards certain professions over others, completely detached from the underlying utility; for example, school teachers earn a fraction of what luxury bankers do. One of them commits their entire lives to building the future of coming generations while the other sits at a desk all day putting public money in "risk-free" government securities and pretends to be part of the high-finance community.

On a completely unrelated note, the advances-to-deposits of full-fledged Islamic banks in

parts make a killing without too much effort motivated Islamic banks to join the bandwagon. With high interest rates and the ever-growing fiscal needs of a cash-strapped government, the choice was quite clear: double down on risk-free securities and cut back on lending.

Unlike conventional banks, Islamic banks had a big advantage: there was no minimum deposit rate (MDR), so they could pay a much lower return (or whatever they want to call it) to customers. In Q4FY23, almost a quarter, or Rs2.7 billion, of all banking deposits were Islamic. Out of this, around two-fifths of the customer money was in the current accounts anyway — it is zero cost. Another Rs2.4b was in savings accounts where the prevailing remuneration was lower than the rest of the industry.

This gave Islamic banking an edge over the rest, so much so that everyone has started following suit. Over the last five years, more than 30pc, or Rs 4.5tr, of all new deposits have been Islamic, as some big names in the conventional banking sector have aggressively shifted towards Shariah-compliant banking.

Similarly, the Shariah factor in terms of new branches is even stronger. Between 2019 and 2023, Pakistani banks opened 2,714 net branches, of which 2,104 were Islamic. That's more than three-fourths of all new branches and

does not incorporate the 634 additional windows.

An ever-growing part of this network is simply being used to collect cheaper deposits and then use them to fund the government's fiscal needs. In the last five years, full-fledged

Between 2019 and 2023, Pakistani banks opened 2,714 net branches, of which 2,104 were Islamic

Islamic banks have increased net investments by Rs2.6tr, or twice as much as their financing. As a result, the investments-to-deposits (IDR) ratio has lighted to 63.5pc by 2023 from 21.4pc. This is an improvement compared to the overall industry's IDR of over 90pc.

Plus, the reason this IDR is lower is not because Islamic banks don't want to put more money in sovereign papers but that there aren't enough Shariah-compliant avenues available. With the government planning to make the finan-

cial system completely Islamic by 2027, that will obviously change, and the hedge fund managers will double down on capital deployment.

The challenge with banking, whether Islamic or conventional, lies in the dominance of the opportunity cost of treasury. The Shariah-compliant segment often faces more scrutiny, possibly due to concerns about the treatment of depositors. However, it's encouraging to see that the government has recognised this issue and has suggested the possibility of removing the minimum deposit rate exemption for these banks.

However, this adjustment will primarily help reduce the profitability gap between conventional and Islamic branches. The more significant challenge lies in the overall approach to banking. Beyond credit concerns, which can be influenced by interest rates and macroeconomic factors, there's a notable reluctance among institutions to facilitate the opening of basic accounts.

Just consider the fact that scheduled banks opened only a little over 124,000 net accounts during FY23. Consider that it is most likely that executives of the same institutions spoke at many conferences about the importance of financial inclusion. Transitioning Pakistan towards Shariah-compliant finance wouldn't change the industry's DNA. ■

FINANCE

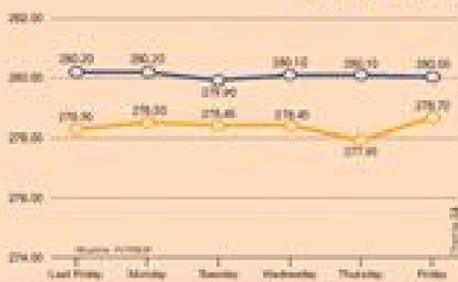


KSE 100-share index fluctuations



Rupee report

Weekly rupee-dollar parity



Economic challenges remain

Regardless of the much-needed respite, Pakistan's economy maintains a pessimistic outlook with low growth expected

By Mohiuddin Aazim

GOOD things have started happening in Pakistan's economy, but challenges remain and may even compound in the near future. The Pakistani economy contracted by 0.21 per cent in the last fiscal year. However, it began recovering in the first quarter of this year. The pace of recovery remained at 2.7pc in the first quarter, followed by 3.1pc and 2.1pc in the second and third quarters.

The government has estimated GDP growth for this fiscal year at 2.4pc — let's hope it turns out to be true. But that will not obscure the fact that a 2.4pc recovery is too slow to make any appreciable impact on employment and poverty levels.

According to the World Bank, 40pc of Pakistanis, around 96 million people, are living below the poverty line. Meanwhile, unemployment estimates vary depending upon the sources, but many analysts and economists agree on 6pc — meaning at least 6.6m Pakistanis are currently jobless.

Can we imagine how these financially struggling Pakistanis are making both ends meet with average inflation at 26pc in the last ten months of this fiscal year? No wonder the country continues experiencing waves after waves of social restlessness and extremism growing in every sphere of our collective life.

The current hybrid government must resist the temptation of assuming the status of a repressive regime and focus all its energy on ensuring that national politics and economic policymaking

become truly inclusive, with a supreme Parliament, independent judiciary, and media.

For many, this may sound too idealistic, but it cannot be any other way. The problem with the past hybrid regime was that it didn't realise that it was essentially transitional in nature. The problem with this hybrid regime, too, is that it has not learned a lesson from the recent past.

The root cause of all socio-political-economic problems is that we never allow democracy to work, the Parliament to become supreme and the judiciary and media to play their independent roles. The sooner the state realises this and lets hybrid regimes, born out of 'necessity', play a limited transitional role and allow true democracy to take root, the better.

Further delays will only complicate political problems and contribute to long-term damage to the economy, even if we see some short-term recovery and progress.

That said, the next fiscal year, beginning July 1 may pose even greater challenges than the country faced during this year. Revenue generation, containing inflation, keeping exchange rates stable, lowering interest rates to the desired level, and growing the industrial and services sector are a few.

Each of these challenges would remain stubborn even if the government sets the GDP growth target at just 3.7pc, as is expected, and even if it does not emphasise growth with massive jobs recovery and a dramatic cut in the poverty rate. Given that this fiscal year's recovery is

largely due to a huge 8.3pc growth in the agriculture sector, whereas the industrial and services sector only expanded by 1.2pc, what could one expect next year?

Agriculture would surely not grow as fast as this year for a few reasons: its high base, the proposed taxation of agricultural income, and the continued pass-

undocumented, low-paying businesses are in the services sector, followed by the agriculture sector.

At this stage, no one can deny the necessity of appropriately taxing agriculture or some segments of the services sector. For a long time, income from agricultural land, commercial and household properties, retailers, wholesalers, and even goods transporters had remained untaxed or under-taxed. Their once-strong political patronage is giving way to the International Monetary Fund's increasing demands for appropriate taxation.

Financial and insurance businesses, information technology (IT), and IT-enabled services — two significant components of the services sector — undoubtedly hold promise for growth. The government now has to come up with solid, innovative ways of promoting tech services, domestic and export growth.

The insurance sector can be expected to grow quickly next year as policymakers plan to expand crop coverage and other forms of agricultural insurance. However, the banking and financial sector's last-paced growth remains unpredictable because of very high taxation and uncertainty surrounding overall economic growth and the policies that may affect their net interest earnings from investing in government treasury bills and bonds.

What is encouraging, though, is that banks are now getting serious about offering liberal financing to small and medium enterprises, technology, and agriculture.

About 40pc of Pakistanis, around 96 million people, live below the poverty line, according to the World Bank

through of higher general taxation and higher energy prices onto agricultural inputs.

Meanwhile, the industrial sector can be expected to grow a little more, but not too fast, due to its low base, pass-through of general and industry-specific taxation, and continued energy price hikes. The same holds true for the services sector.

One additional factor that may hinder the growth of the services sector is that next year's proposed documentation and taxation drive is sure to hurt the sector more than others because most of the

AGRICULTURE



The wheat procurement conundrum

The state would be in a better place if restraint is exercised in government-funded procurement, at least for the current year

By Dr Azhar Abbas

THE country's headline inflation has started to slide down and is expected to touch 15 per cent. This has been possible mainly because of a significant drop in wheat and flour prices. However, the alleged and controversial decision to import around 3.5 million tonnes of wheat in early 2024 can be ascribed to the easing of inflation.

The current year's bumper wheat harvest of around 30m tonnes amidst a prior wheat stock has suppressed the market price of wheat, especially for farmers. In an era of the free market economy — supported by many economists and policymakers — the current price reflects supply and demand.

Considering the price support history for wheat in recent years, an exaggerated support price was announced last year, with a 7.7pc increase from the previous year, 2021-22. Although the minimum support price (MSP) was raised by 7.7pc for the year 2022-23, the per 40kg cost of production was reported to increase by 46pc — from Rs2,105 to Rs3,075, as per the Agriculture Policy Institute (API).

However, with an Rs3,900 MSP, the market price went as high as Rs4,500, yielding excellent profits for wheat traders and hoarders. The consumers, being in the majority vis-à-vis wheat producers and traders, had to suffer the heavy burden.

Nevertheless, it was then estimated that the per capita annual expenditure on wheat consumption would increase by around Rs4,000 if MSP was raised from Rs2,200 to Rs3,900. This is how an average urban or rural, non-farming consumer has to bear

increased wheat MSP. The margin between wheat's average cost of production (COP) and the announced wheat MSP was very little till 2020-21. Beyond the cropping year 2020-21, the divergence between COP and MSP started to widen, reaching a maximum in 2022-23. The divergence as a percentage of COP for this year stood at around 60pc, whereas for the rest of the years, it ranged between 1.6pc in 2016-17 and 31.5pc in 2021-22.

With such a massive increase in MSP in 2022-23, which was over and above 60pc of the COP, non-farming consumers were destined to pay a heavy toll on sacrificing their consumer surplus. At the same time, they would have been taxed, one way or the other, to subsidise the farming community in many ways — fertilisers, farm machinery, electricity for groundwater extraction gives highly underpriced surface water availability for years, laser levelling, farm credit and so on.

Considering farm credit only, the State Bank set a 26pc higher disbursement target for the year 2023-24 compared with the previous year's actual disbursement, from Ft. 78 billion to Ft. 236.

With all this support from the public sector, wheat production had been predicted to increase courtesy of the substitution of wheat for other crops — wheat was sown on around 23.7m acres as against the set target of 22.2m acres for 2023-24. The actual area under wheat in the previous year was around 22.3m acres, registering a nationwide 7pc growth in the wheat area.

From the farmers' perspective, they, too, enjoyed market-determined prices based on

Cost vs minimum support price					
Year	Cost of production (Punjab) Rs/40kg	Cost of production (Sindh) Rs/40kg	Avg. Cost of production (Pakistan)	MSP/ 40 Kg	Increase in MSP over previous year
2015-16	1,126	1,182	1,154	1,300	-
2016-17	1,126	1,123	1,126	1,300	0
2017-18	1,184	1,199	1,172	1,300	0
2018-19	1,284	1,270	1,277	1,300	0
2019-20	1,360	1,314	1,332	1,400	0.77%
2020-21	1,587	1,539	1,563	1,800	28.5%
2021-22	1,677	1,668	1,673	2,200	22.2%
2022-23	2,222	2,105	2,164	3,900	77%
2023-24	3,300	3,075	3,189	3,900	0%

Source: Wheat Policy Analysis for various years, Agriculture Policy Institute, Islamabad.

supply and demand during the years 2023-24, with no voice for government intervention by the producers/farmers' unions. Take examples of many daily-use items, such as onion, chicken, potato, cotton, etc., whose market prices remained significantly high for an extended period of time.

Wheat has undoubtedly been grown by a majority of the farming community this majority, along with other supply and value chain actors, benefited significantly thanks to the previous year's higher-than-average MSP.

On the other hand, the urban and rural non-farm families were frequently reported to have compromised their food security mainly because of inflationary pressures, wheat flour being one of the major drivers.

For 2023-24, the government opted for the same MSP as the previous year, but the divergence between MSP and COP of 2023-24 still has a weight greater than prior years (the years 2021-22 and 2022-23 had greater divergence, in percentage, than for 2023-24). This fact further supports the existence of a fair

margin for wheat producers. With the enforcement of MSP through state procurement, the cost of administering the policy, along with logistics (harvesting, transportation, and storage), would further add to the government's fiscal burden, which would ultimately be borne by the masses and most likely by the urban middle and lower-middle class. Many agricultural producers would find options to evade any sort of direct taxation.

Another motive for the non-procurement of wheat is that a majority of the farmers practicing subsistence agriculture — having a paddy marketable surplus — would hardly be allowed to a higher market price. Here, the large farmers having sufficient holdings and influence can be the major beneficiaries of such a policy.

As many economists argue for a market-based price setting, the current wheat economy operating in the realm of supply-demand (although under an MSP regime or Rs3,900) can help stabilise food prices in the coming months, improving the purchasing power of the lower and middle class who can later afford relatively higher prices in the later part of the year.

In a nutshell, the state would be in a better place if a sort of restraint is exercised in state-funded procurement, at least for the current year. Next year's MSP needs to head the COP worked out by API or any other reliable organisation based on a representative sample.

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The blazing glory of basmati exports

Rice exports cross 5m tonnes in 10 months, earning \$3.4bn, owing to favourable weather, hybrid seeds, and the Indian export ban

By Anjad Mahmood

ALTHOUGH Pakistan is globally ranked ninth in rice production, it claims fourth position as a rice exporter after India, Vietnam, and Thailand. This financial year ending on June 30, rice exports from Pakistan may touch the 5.8 million tonnes mark, a fraction short of the magical 6m tonnes figure, mainly because of favourable weather, availability of farm inputs, and the Indian ban on non-basmati rice exports.

Data from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics suggests that rice exports crossed the 5m tonnes mark in 10 months (July-April FY24), earning \$3.4 billion, compared to 3.2m tonnes exports worth \$1.6bn made during the corresponding period last year.

This phenomenal achievement has been made possible due to a 32 per cent volumetric increase in exports of non-basmati and a 24pc increase in basmati. On average, the basmati export price during the 10 months remained \$1,141 per tonne and non-basmati \$573 per tonne.

An official of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) says they expect a slight slowdown in rice exports due to diminishing stocks of

non-basmati. Therefore, it will be difficult to touch the magical figure of 6m tonnes in the next two months.

He says the country has an ample stock of Koral Basmati — the main basmati variety exported from Pakistan, 198, due to the lower Indian price (the average Indian basmati export price was \$1,115 per tonne). Its export got a rude shock, due to 26pc less Brown Basmati import this season by the European Union and the US.

Non-basmati Indian exports increased to less than 7m tonnes in volume this year from 16.4m tonnes a year earlier. Indian rice traders termed the export ban imposed by the Modi government as a political rather than a commercial decision. El Niño, loss of political fallout, inflation and general elections were put forward as the major reasons behind the move despite a more than historical, current buffer stock of 54m tonnes against the approved limit of 14m tonnes.

However, Indian basmati exports touched a new high of 5.2m tonnes from April 2023 to March 2024 (Indian financial year) despite strong tailwinds in the early part of the Kharif 2023 season, such as devastating floods in the Indian Punjab, and

strong headwinds, such as the compelling Ukraine war and Red Sea disturbances.

Pakistan basmati rice export during the corresponding period (April 2023 to March 2024) has been 0.73m tonnes which is 14pc of Indian basmati export, but Pakistan's per

'This can be called the second green revolution in Pakistan after the first in the 1960s by the introduction of Irri varieties in rice and imported wheat seed'

tonne earning was \$1,137, which is 3pc higher than Indian price.

Total global basmati trade from Pakistan and India touched new heights of almost 6m tonnes compared to 0.529m tonnes last year. Global basmati volume earlier never crossed the 0.33m tonne mark.

West Asia, comprising Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and Yemen, showed a remarkable 40pc basmati

imports during the period. Africa has also improved its basmati import over the last 10 years, though Pakistani exporters are not paying attention to the continent due to the poverty assumptions and low per capita income. From April 2023 to March 2024, basmati exports to Africa

increased by 20pc, reaching almost 200,000 tonnes at a \$1,058 per tonne rate. Founder and Chairman of the Agri Policy Research Institute Hamid Malik believes the country's phenomenal achievement in rice exports has been made possible due to globally growers' resilience, favourable weather, availability of inputs, new hybrid seed development by the pub-

lic and private sectors, support by the banking sector, and REAP's leadership in promoting and protecting the rice export sector through the legal battle on basmati geographical indications.

"If I single out one major factor for this phenomenal performance in the last 10 years, I will select the development of long-grain hybrid seed by Pakistan's private sector. This can be called the second green revolution in Pakistan after the first in the 1960s by the introduction of Irri varieties in rice and imported wheat seed."

He regrets that Pakistani exporters are failing to exploit the basmati market in Yemen and Iraq due to the lack of a formal banking channel. He says that a couple of local exporters had dared to tap the Yemeni market, but their payments got stuck there, discouraging others from chartering the country's waters, which relies heavily on Turk and Indian exports. He says that the basmati variety of rice is also gaining currency in Iraq, which imports at least 0.7m tonnes per annum from India.

Mr Malik seconds the view that rice exports will slow down due to deteriorating non-basmati stocks in two

months. Still, he believes that a robust demand from Indonesia, the Philippines, and West Africa will support its exports. "Basmati sector demand in West Asia will remain strong, and Pakistan may finish this fiscal year with 750,000 to 800,000-tonne exports, a possible increase of 25-40pc."

But there is a flip side to this situation that will be revealed from surpluses (basmati) stocks, which are much higher even for this year and next year of local consumption and a flood of hybrid rice next season, says Iqbal Sheikh, a rice exporter. If India lifts the non-basmati rice export ban after the election, it will be catastrophic for the Pakistani farmers, who are likely to grow more non-basmati rice than market appetite next season, he fears.

He calls for the development of local hybrid seed varieties instead of multiplying Chinese seeds. He argues that this factor should be included in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor phase II. He also calls for paying attention to the repercussions of record pesticide interceptions in our basmati shipments, especially in the EU and UK.

CORPORATE WINDOW



Pakistan's fiscal policy odyssey

A fair and unbiased tax policy backed by strong political will and improved monitoring, collecting, evaluating and spending mechanisms is the only way forward

By Dr Saud Ahmed

AS Pakistan faces mounting economic challenges, the government's ambitious proposal to raise Ft1.2 trillion to Ft1.3tr in the upcoming budget through new taxation measures signals a bold attempt to stabilise the nation's fiscal health.

However, the effectiveness of these measures is hampered by the inherent weaknesses in Pakistan's tax system, which is fragmented and unfair and leaves entire sectors of the economy under-taxed, exacerbating structural economic imbalances. The government seems to be adhering once again to the easier route of imposing more taxes on imports and withholding taxes, along with some good proposals, such as the rationalisation of tax rates.

The tax system is heavily skewed towards import and consumption taxes, with around 50 per cent of tax revenue coming from indirect taxes, while direct taxes constitute only about 25pc, primarily from advance and withholding taxes.

Income tax collection in Pakistan is reliant on only a few sectors and the salaried class. Sales tax, similarly, is largely collected from imports and domestic manufacturing rather than the entire value chain. This reliance on indirect taxes not only makes the system regressive but also worsens economic imbalances by disproportionately burdening the lower and middle-income groups.

One of the key proposals in the upcoming budget is to increase the difference in withholding tax rates between filers and non-filers of tax returns, aiming to improve compliance and broaden the tax base. Additionally, the government plans to raise import tax on the import of machinery and raw materials, which could generate significant revenue.

However, these measures risk escalating production costs, potentially dampening industrial investment and affecting economic growth. According to economic theory, higher import tariffs on inputs like machinery can reduce the competitiveness of domestic industries in international markets, leading to



a decline in exports.

Another critical aspect of the government's proposal is the rationalisation of income tax rates by removing the distinction between salaried and non-salaried individuals and reducing the number of tax rate slabs. This move aims to simplify the tax system and make it more equitable.

Unfortunately, implementing such measures requires a robust and efficient tax administration — an area where the Federal Board of Revenue has historically faced significant challenges with enforcement due to inadequate technology, limited resources, and bureaucratic inefficiencies.

The under-taxation of agricultural income, urban properties, and retailers further worsens the imbalances in Pakistan's tax system. Agriculture, which accounts for about one-fifth of Pakistan's economy, contributes a disproportionately small amount to tax revenue.

Large agricultural landowners, who form a powerful pressure group, often evade taxation. Effective taxation of agricultural income and urban properties is crucial in addressing

these imbalances and incentivising investment in more productive sectors.

The retail and wholesale sector remains largely outside the tax net despite its significant contributions to the GDP. This sector's tax contribution stands at a mere 4pc, highlighting the need for better incorporation into the tax network. The government's efforts to tax this sector more effectively have so far been met with limited success.

The lack of comprehensive documentation is a fundamental issue underlying Pakistan's inefficient tax system. Without proper documentation, it is challenging to accurately assess and tax economic activities, especially in sectors like agriculture and retail.

Expanding the tax base requires a concerted effort to document all economic transactions and activities. This can be achieved through the digitisation of records, mandatory registration of businesses, and stricter enforcement of existing laws.

As a way forward, tax policy must be fair and not skewed towards certain sectors or just the salaried class. Each segment and sector should be appropriately taxed to

ensure equity and efficiency in the tax system. Moreover, the government must improve the quality and delivery of services to the common people. Public money should not be used to provide unnecessary luxuries to politicians or government officials.

Citizens are more likely to comply and less likely to engage in tax evasion if they see tangible benefits from their tax contributions. So, the usage of public funds must be subjected to rigorous cost-benefit analysis and strict evaluation. This ensures public money is spent wisely and effectively, enhancing trust in the government's fiscal management.

Furthermore, the tax collection process should be decentralised. Local governments should be empowered to collect taxes within their jurisdictions, ensuring better compliance and accountability. Decentralisation can lead to more efficient and effective tax administration, as local authorities are more familiar with the economic activities in their areas and can tailor tax policies accordingly.

Finally, the implementation and will to enforce policy changes are crucial. Many past reforms have failed due to the lack of political will and effective enforcement. The government must demonstrate a strong commitment to implementing these new measures and overcoming resistance from vested interests.

As Pakistan stands at an economic crossroads, these new taxation measures represent a critical test of the government's ability to implement effective fiscal policies. The outcome will impact the immediate fiscal landscape and shape the long-term trajectory of Pakistan's economic health and development.

A balanced, well-considered approach that fosters compliance, encourages investment and protects the vulnerable will be key to ensuring that these measures contribute to a more stable and prosperous economic future for Pakistan.

The writer is an assistant professor and a researcher at the Centre of Economic Planning and Development, Minhaj University Lahore.

COMPANY NEWS



Lucky Core acquires Pfizer assets

LUCKY Core Industries Limited (LCI) has executed Asset Purchase Agreements with Pfizer Pakistan Limited and Pfizer Inc., per a recent press release.

The assets include a manufacturing facility owned by Pfizer Pakistan Limited located in Karachi, a portfolio of well-established pharmaceutical brands, namely Anacid, Ponstan, Ponstan Forte, Basogon, Dabacortol, Lysovit, Coraco-D, Mycristatin, and trademarks associated with solid pharmaceutical products.

LCI's Chief Executive, Asif Joona, commented: "This acquisition marks a significant milestone in our journey towards accelerating the growth of our Pharmaceuticals business."

Pak-France alumni event

THE Consulate General of France, in collaboration with the French Embassy in Pakistan, Campus France Pakistan and Pakistan France Business Alliance, hosted the second edition of "French Alumni Day" — connecting talents with global careers, as per a press release.

The event was organised to promote alumni's careers and show the role that their academic education in France played in their career choices, encouraging interactions between the Pakistani Alumni, French companies established in Pakistan, and other members of the Pakistan France Business Alliance.

The event was attended by Kamran Tessori, the Governor of Sindh, and various personalities from the business community, the education sector, and universities.

Synergy group's silver jubilee

SYNERGY Group, Founded in 1999 by Ahmed Kapadia, is an integrated marketing communication (IMC) industry company that recently celebrated its 25th Anniversary, according to a press release.

"Synergy Group's success over the years is a testament to our unflinching belief in the power of collaboration, innovation and limitless potential," said Mr Kapadia. "From our humble beginnings, we have always encouraged our teams to dare to dream big, experiment, learn, and grow together. The spirit of unity, teamwork and the challenge mindset has driven us to achieve remarkable milestones over the past 25 years."

OGDCL collaborates with IPRI

OIL and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), according to a press release, entered into a collaboration with Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) for an Endowment of Economic Security Chair.

The Chairman of the Board of OGDCL and CEO of Bank of Punjab, Zafar Masood, Managing Director and CEO of OGDCL, Ahmed Hayat LAK, and senior industry officials were present at the ceremony, where the role of OGDCL in terms of green financing was underscored, and the appropriate use of AI was highlighted.

Saudi Food Show 2024

ACCORDING to a press release, Pakistan participated for the first time in the Saudi Food Show 2024, held at the Riyadh International Convention & Exhibition Centre. The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) led the country's delegation to the event, one of Saudi Arabia's largest agro-food exhibitions. The show featured over 1,000 exhibitors from more than 97 countries.

During a media briefing, the CEO of TDAP praised Pakistan's rice sector, noting that rice exports are set to reach the \$4bn mark this year. Pakistan's basmati rice, celebrated as a national pride, is exported to 191 markets worldwide, with Saudi Arabia being an essential destination. Pakistan's participation in The Saudi Food Show 2024 strengthens the historic ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Zindigi's Haj initiative

THE Digital banking initiative of JS Bank, Zindigi, has partnered with 5th Pillar Family Takatol, a prominent provider of Takatol products and services, to make Haj and Umrah pilgrimages more accessible, as per a press release.

This collaboration brings together Zindigi's digital platform with 5th Pillar's established Haj and Umrah saving plans including the end-to-end value chain. This means customers will be experiencing a hassle-free, pilgrimage saving and traveling plan directly through Zindigi Mobile App.

The partnership between Zindigi and 5th Pillar Family Takatol represents a significant step towards making Haj and Umrah pilgrimages more accessible and convenient.

Engaging the ignored

Real transformation lies in taking digitalisation to the grassroots level to build a stronger and more responsive local government structure

By Jawaid Bokhari

SINCE is trying to improve its governance and public service delivery through interactive sessions of provincial cabinet members and senior officials with PPP workers and local council (UC) representatives chaired by the chief minister.

The usual pre-budget consultations with various stakeholders such as trade, industry, and big farmers' organisations have been extended to the grassroots level.

Efforts are being made to secure local inputs for next year's budget and development plan, as well as to implement decisions, clogged in the bureaucratic web in a timely manner. The need for such a bottom-up approach to resolving problems agitating the people appears to be a response to eroding social cohesion.

The political and social awareness of the PPP workers and UC representatives of various cities

The need for a bottom-up approach to resolving problems agitating the people appears to be a response to eroding social cohesion

and towns was manifested in the range of their demands.

When informed by local councils in one of these events that the transitional period for empowering UCs was still in progress in their areas, Chief Minister Mansoor Ali Shah directed local bodies secretary to complete the work at once and hand power over to the elected representatives so they could serve their people.

The piling up of problems prompted Mr Shah to announce that he would give more funds to UCs if needed and hold them accountable for their judicial spending.

A UC chairman in Karachi pointed out that a Rs100,000 monthly budget was insufficient. Most of the UC chairman informed Mr Shah that they did not have offices.

In regard to what could make the provincial initiatives more effective, it may be relevant to quote Abdullah Khalid, a researcher at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, on the need for digitalisation: "It is crucial to foster collaboration across government levels and enable the civil society to offer innovative solutions."

Sindh's devolution programme is being implemented in phases.

For example, the government recently approved the devolution of the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board to a division level by forming separate boards to be run by mayors to oversee garbage management in Karachi, Hyderabad, and Sukkur under a phased programme that includes other cities.

Mr Shah assured PPP workers of his immediate attention to address grievances like the water scarcity and infrastructure issues and to uplift the order-

privileged without discrimination.

At an interactive session on the FY25 budget held at the Chief Minister's House in Karachi, the participants drew Mr Shah's attention towards various civic and developmental problems people face in their respective areas.

Their complaints included a water shortage, poor sanitation, the absence of health and education facilities, dilapidated roads, a shortage of public transport, unemployment, and a drug menace. "Of the 35 villages of Keamari, 30 have no water or electricity," a UC chairman from district West exclaimed.

The chief minister informed the meeting that a sewage treatment plant at an estimated cost of Ft135 billion would be initiated in public-private partnership mode for industrial sewage of treated waste water. He was responding to a complaint that the city's wastewater and industrial waste were being released untreated into the sea, damaging mangroves and marine life.

In the Larkana Division, party workers demanded public interest schemes such as unsewered, non-paved, dual-carriage roads, People Bus Service and more.

So far, more than 70 check dams have been constructed, bringing parched lands under irrigation, the workers said. However, the water issue is still far from solved. In response to the issues raised by local PPP workers, Mr Shah directed the provincial irrigation minister to survey different areas in Tharparlor to identify where check dams could be built to harness rainwater in the rain-dependent arid region.

The party workers also complained that several reverse osmosis plants in Thar had gone out of order. Mr Shah directed the concerned provincial secretary to expedite the repair work under the already initiated umbrella scheme to repair all out-of-order plants.

Owing to prolonged power load shedding from Naxos to Mirs, the villagers complained they could not provide water to their cattle. The chief minister advised the energy minister to contact Hyderabad Electric Supply Corporation to resolve the issue.

Three women workers lamented that there was only one girls' college in Mirs and that the students had to travel long distances daily to reach the college, to which Mr Shah said he would ask the education minister to build a hostel.

The party workers of Magerkhes pointed out that the Jamrao and Mirsao canals needed to be lined to save water and control waterlogging. Desalting the Nara Canal was required to improve its water flow and help small growers receive water for their lands.

Citizens also suffer from weak law implementation. In a statement issued on May 19, the Hai Welfare Association described the conditions of women workers and peasants in rural Sindh as precarious, owing to lapses in enforcing laws to address women and gender inequality.

Real transformation lies in taking digitalisation (supported by legislative and financial empowerment of local bodies) to the grassroots level to build a stronger and more responsive local government structure, wrote Abdullah Khalid in his article, "Serving Digitally" published in Dawn.

"It is about building a future where every citizen feels heard, empowered and actively involved in shaping communities... where local governance is able to serve every citizen," the writer concludes.

Europe — the new hot spot

IN 2022, Pakistan was not even among Europe's top 10 countries of origin for irregular migrants, says a report by the National Commission for Human Rights in Pakistan. By mid-2023, however, Europe had become the 8th most prominent "what changed?"

For one thing, there is a new route. Pakistani authorities have said some migrants now leave via Dubai to Egypt or Libya and on through to Europe. In the first half of 2023, about 13,000 Pakistanis left for Egypt or Libya, double the 2022 number. More telling about 10,000 of these migrants have not returned as yet.

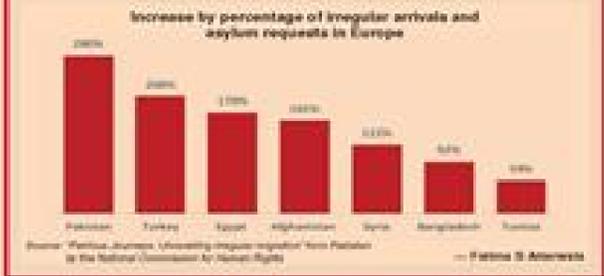
The last few years of political and economic uncertainty, terrorism, inflation and declining opportunities have created a conducive environment to risk losing all, as the tragic sinking of the boat in June 2023 shows, where over 300 Pakistanis lives were lost. The floods of 2022 have also played a role in creating an environment conducive to the hazards of illegal migration.

In the 1960s and 70s, people from

Gujranwala, Gujrat and Mandi Bahauddin migrated to Europe and settled successfully. Their success influenced others. However, the reluctance to offer legal migration options by countries led many to attempt illegal border crossings, which eventually led to the business of migrant smugglers.

In 2018, Pakistan introduced new legislation to prevent irregular migration. However, an unintended consequence was that these policies drove migrants towards riskier border crossing methods. According to the report, Pakistan is not only a source for unorganised migrants and trafficked individuals, it is also serve as a transit point and a destination.

The poorer class of irregular migrants opt for land and sea routes, often starting in Karachi. The ones with access to greater financial resources often possess legitimate passports and visas, opting for air routes. It is very difficult to prevent someone with a valid passport and visa from travelling, which may be why it is so challenging to have visas issued for many countries.



A new squabble but a smart budget

Continued from Page 1

Apra Ghar scheme, under which 5,000 houses would be constructed.

A new squabble

Nonetheless, the province's decision to break away from old convention and announce its budget before the federal budget has ignited a new, unnecessary controversy.

The federal government led by the PML-N has taken exception to the Ali Amin Gandapur government's decision, with the Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Feroze Malik, dubbing it part of the PTA's alleged attempts to sabotage Pakistan's ongoing talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a new large and longer loan to build its international reserves and stabilise its economy.

"They've done this before when the PDM government was trying to revive the agreement with the Fund. You are as well aware as I that the IMF loan is the only way to anchor current economic stability," he told the reporter by telephone.

"What was the hurry to push the

provincial budget the day the IMF mission had left, with the federal government still in the process of developing an economic roadmap in the light of the framework given by the lender? This is also against the spirit of federalism; it's a very irresponsible step," he concluded. He is of the view that the Gandapur government should have waited for the federal budget announcement.

Mr Aslam rejected federal criticism of the decision, saying the federal government has so far not determined the date for announcing its budget. "Even if the federal government presented its budget on June 7, there would be very little time for the provincial government to present and pass its budget due to Eclat Aza.

"We have not bypassed anyone, nor is there anything in the law stopping us from presenting the provincial budget before the announcement of the federal budget. In the broader context we have helped the federal government by committing a surplus of Rs100bn. They should be thanking us," he concluded.

Tracing & Tracking

Paying for babies

South Korea, which has the world's lowest total fertility rate — just above 0.7, far below the replacement level of 2.1 — is pondering a radical solution: baby bonuses of 100 million won each, or about \$70,000, reports Bloomberg

26%

Inflation in the US

A record high 41pc of Americans name inflation the most important financial problem facing their family, according to Gallup

41pc

Conflict resolution

Managers spend 20pc of their time on average managing team conflict, according to Harvard Business Review

20%



A MAN walks past a delivery van from a US-based food remittance company in a neighbourhood in Havana. Due to the crisis, Cuban emigrants choose to send food, sacrificing the vital cash remittances that the island requires. Currently, it is possible to send food and other essential products to Cuba from several dozen online platforms, based mainly in the United States, where more than 2m Cubans live, but also in Mexico, Canada, and Spain.—AFP

Data points



FARMERS shout slogans against India's Prime Minister and leader of the ruling BJP Narendra Modi, during a protest to demand minimum crop prices on the outskirts of Gandhinagar last week.—AFP

Networking with peers

A peer group is a group of professionals who meet on a regular basis to confidentially share their current issues and exchange insights that will help each member grow. Their benefits have been proven by successful leaders and workers for centuries. If you want to form a peer group of your own, take the following steps: 1) Recruit the right members. Try to form a group of six to 10 people with diverse personal and professional backgrounds. Make sure you each respect one another, and are committed to meeting regularly throughout the year. 2) Set guidelines. Agree upon how often you'll meet, who will organise the agenda for your meetings, as well as who will moderate and keep time. 3) Agree on values. Confidentiality, candour, empathy and balance are required for your group to establish an inclusive and productive culture. 4) Check in to keep up the momentum. Every few months, ask members for feedback to learn if the group dynamic is still beneficial for each member.

(Adapted from "The Power of Peer Groups (and How to Start One)," by Dan Richards, published by HBR Early Career)

Making ads powerful

If you're interested in the marketing industry, you can use the ADPLAN framework to create campaigns that will resonate with your intended audience. Here are the six factors: 1) Attention: When thinking about an idea, ask yourself: Is there something interesting that will cause people to stop and notice it? 2) Distinction: You should know what your competition is doing, but don't just try to beat them. Think about what messaging really aligns with your product or service. The goal is to have a clear voice and image. 3) Positioning: Great ads do more than entertain. 4) Linkage: If your messaging is focused on something else — like a shiny celebrity — consumers may not remember it. Ask: Is the ad really about the product? 5) Amplification: Does the consumer have positive or negative thoughts about your ad? 6) Not equity: Ask yourself if your ad campaign resonates with and reinforces the equity you have already built.

(Adapted from "What Makes Some Ads So Powerful," by Derek D. Rucker and Tim Calkins, published by HBR Early Career)

India's IT juggernaut

India has long been seen as the world's "back office". Tata Consultancy Services, an IT firm now worth \$170bn, undertook its first project for an American client in 1973, servicing the accounting software of a hospital in Detroit. The rise of "global capability centres" (GCCs), where multinational companies carry out complex tasks, from design to research, is increasingly making that view out of date. The question is whether GCCs will themselves be superseded, too, as India creates some world-beating global companies of its own. Back-office firms still matter to India. The IT sector is a juggernaut, generating about \$250bn in annual revenues, or 7pc of GDP. But GCCs are increasingly important, too. The country now hosts some 1,600 of them. Amazon's biggest office in the world is in Hyderabad. A 10th of Goldman Sachs's staff are in India, as are a 10th of the world's chip designers. New GCCs are opening at a rate of roughly one a week.

(Adapted from "What India's Clout in White-Collar Work Means For The World," by The Economist, published on May 23, 2024)

Trump's truth

Nearly two-and-a-half years after its launch, Truth Social is struggling to hang onto its small US user base, according to new data on the microblogging platform launched by former President Donald Trump's media company. So far in May, US daily visits to Truth Social were down from 3.5pc from April, and more than 30pc compared to March, according to digital intelligence platform Similarweb. The site's average number of monthly visits over the past year — just over 4m from May 2023 to April 2024 — plummeted more than 30pc from the prior 12-month period, from May 2022 to April 2023, Similarweb reported. The traffic has declined even as Trump — the most prominent Truth Social user and the majority shareholder of its parent company, Trump Media — has saturated the national news with coverage of his criminal trial and White House bid.

(Adapted from "Truth Social struggles to give its US user base, new data on Trump Media app shows," by Kevin Drueger, published on May 24, 2024, by CNBC)

AI-led chips boom

Leading designer of graphics chips Nvidia's revenue grew 262pc in the first quarter of its fiscal year to \$20bn, according to the company — its market value surged \$267

262%

US vs China

The Biden administration raised tariffs on \$10bn of goods from China as part of its long-awaited review of the tariffs levied by the Trump administration, according to the White House

\$18 billion

The Biden administration raised tariffs on \$10bn of goods from China as part of its long-awaited review of the tariffs levied by the Trump administration, according to the White House



LOS ANGELES | In this photo illustration, marijuana joints and buds, also known as "flower", are viewed on May 24, 2024 in Los Angeles, California. A new study by Carnegie Mellon University has found that marijuana consumption has overtaken alcohol as more Americans now use marijuana on a daily or near-daily basis than those who drink alcohol at a similar frequency.—AFP

Investing in rural skills development

With the impending supply increase in the labour market, the existing flawed skills development system must be revamped to train and upskill youths

By Khalid Saeed Wattoo and Dr Waqar Ahmad

PAKISTAN'S rural labour market is undergoing significant changes driven by population explosion, farm mechanisation, a rising labour force participation rate, and reverse rural-to-urban migration trends resulting from Pakistan's ongoing industrial slowdown.

It is well-established that as a country's economy grows and industrialises, the proportion of agriculture sector employment tends to decline in favour of manufacturing and service sectors. To a certain extent, Pakistan has also undergone this type of structural transformation over the last few decades. In 2001-2002, the agriculture sector accounted for 42 per cent of total employment, but by 2020-2021, this share had dropped to 37pc.

However, unlike in developed countries, where a shrinking share of agricultural employment typically indicates a reduction in the absolute number of workers, the opposite has happened in Pakistan. Despite the decrease in agriculture's share of total employment, the number of workers has grown significantly. Pakistan's total labour force jumped from 41.5 million in 2001-2002 to 71.6m in 2020-2021, and as a result, during the same period, the agricultural labour force grew from 17.4m to 26.6m — a phenomenal rise of 52.3pc.

The addition of such a large number of workers would make sense if Pakistan's cropped area had expanded, but it has remained relatively stable at around 23.5m hectares over the last 20 years, leaving little room to accommodate additional labour.

Farm mechanisation is on the rise, compounding this challenge. The sowing and harvesting — the most labour-intensive operations — of Pakistan's three major crops, wheat, rice, and maize (corn), have been mechanised. However, the level of mechanisation varies across regions and farmers.

In addition, other agricultural operations for these three crops and others are also becoming increasingly mechanised, with greater use of crop-specific and general purpose agricultural machines. Some large farmers have even started using drones for pesticide spraying — a major agricultural operation that used to be done manually or via tractors.

This rapid mechanisation is displacing the labour force. Adding to this challenge, a massive influx of new entrants into the labour market is expected in the coming years, given that 40pc of the country's population is under the age of 18.

Moreover, Pakistan's current labour force participation rate of all ages is just 32pc — the lowest in the region and significantly lower than in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. However, Pakistan's labour participation rate is rising as high inflation has eroded

families' real wages. This economic pressure is compelling more men and women to seek self- and wage employment.

Against this backdrop, Pakistan is grappling with a daunting crisis: while the agriculture sector — the nation's largest contributor to employment — is shrinking in its capacity to absorb labour, the rural labour market is experiencing an increase in supply, with an even greater rise expected in the future.

Hence, a comprehensive policy and implementation framework is required to divert surplus labour from the agriculture sector to the non-farm sector by offering vocational training programmes, entrepreneurial education, and financial grants or loans.

Moreover, given the reduced labour absorption capacity of the rural economy due to

farm sectors in the rural economy, or overseas job opportunities.

Under the prevailing social milieu in rural areas, convenience is one of the primary concerns for potential trainees, particularly women, despite the availability of road networks and transportation facilities. This is why several government-sponsored training centres in cities and towns struggle with dummy enrolments or high trainee absenteeism.

Given this situation, it is imperative to offer training programmes directly at the trainees' doorsteps, using semi-mobile training units. These units, stationed in rented or community buildings, can conduct one training event, lasting three to six months, in a village before moving to another village or union council. The International Labour Organisation has already



mechanisation, lack of agro-industries, and Pakistan's slow economic growth, there is also an urgent need to train youths for targeted overseas job opportunities. This entails identifying and analysing medium and long-term development plans and mega projects in the pipeline in countries that could serve as potential labour export destinations for Pakistan's youth.

Subject matter experts and policymakers generally agree that skills development enhances youth employability. However, based on the offered training programmes — their scale, scope, and the impact achieved so far — many believe that Pakistan's technical and vocational education and training sector has failed to adequately address the needs of rural youth.

The existing skills development system, which is largely supply-driven, has flaws in its concept, design, and training delivery mechanism that limit its capacity to train rural youth for the evolving agricultural landscape, non-

practised this training model in earthquake-affected areas of Pakistan.

Technology is rapidly evolving and has a limited shelf life, which makes it crucial to partner with manufacturers and service providers of machinery and equipment instead of investing heavily in capital items. Likewise, the most practical approach is to employ temporary instructors with extensive industry experience to lead those training programmes.

Many believe that without prompt and effective policy and programmatic interventions, the influx of unemployment in the coming years could lead to a spike in crime rates in rural areas. If left unaddressed, this could undermine social stability and erode public safety in these areas. —

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Freelancers rising fast

Professionals in AI and digital fields are more keen on exploring flexible, freelance work as opposed to conventional jobs

By Sara Dantia

TODAY, freelance professionals are highly valued, and they are well aware of this. They understand their importance, and it's time for businesses to establish fresh engagement standards.

With more top-tier professionals, such as myself, opting for freelance roles instead of traditional 9-to-5 positions engaged in a nine-to-five schedule for networking purposes, businesses are finding it challenging to attract and keep the talent required to innovate their products, processes, and systems.

A new approach to accomplishing tasks is emerging, combining in-house employees and freelance talent. Notably, the roles in organisations are evolving, requiring new skills to address these two groups' distinct needs, objectives, and interests.

For instance, a local company is working on integrating advanced digital and conversational artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities. However, their in-house team lacks the expertise and experience to overhaul the company's services, processes, and data security infrastructure.

The recruitment team has also struggled to attract top professionals from tech companies, even with attractive offers. They lack the necessary in-house talent and cannot convince highly skilled professionals to join full-time. Consequently, the company is turning to freelance talent.

The owner has acknowledged that a significant change is happening in how work is accomplished. However, there are concerns: How can Pakistani organisations prepare and effectively equip the team to handle the challenges that this new integrated workflow will bring?

The lesser skillset is required. So, it is safe to say that AI will not take your job. But those who know how to leverage it will.

And they won't take your job; they will take your work, rendering those who don't upgrade their skillset pointless. It is important to note that job and work are no longer synonymous. This is especially relevant for technology, communications and digital specialists. Individuals with the most in-demand skills are most likely to be freelancers.

Undoubtedly, there has been a major change. Professionals that organisations aim to attract in fields like technology, data science, machine learning, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT) now have a different perspective. They

seek more flexible work arrangements.

Talented Pakistani youths have long aspired to flexible work, but only recently have the typical drawbacks of freelancing been addressed. In the past, independent work was an unreliable income source heavily reliant on personal connections.

However, job-matching platforms like Upwork and Fiver quickly connect skilled candidates with employer needs. Some platforms, such as A.Team and People Analytics, cater specifically to engineers and data scientists. The technology now supports freelancers with virtual assistant, accountants, tax apps, and AI tools for managing emails and calendars.

This shift in the way work is done has forced organisations to change their methods, systems, processes, recruitment strategies, and banking and transaction processing as well.

Many Pakistani banks have had to offer freelance accounts, so people now have the option to create a specialised account tailored to their preferences. This allows them to receive their earnings directly into their personal bank accounts.

Freelancing has even presented itself as a viable work-from-home option in certain countries, like Dubai, where individuals working in media and creative sectors like journalism, photography, and content creation can take advantage of it. Against this backdrop, the Pakistani freelancing sector stands as a beacon of economic dynamism, with recent reports from the information technology ministry illustrating its substantial contributions.

With an estimated three million skilled individuals navigating the digital marketplace, Pakistanis are driving the country's freelancing surge. Among these professionals, graphic design and web development reign supreme as the most sought-after talents, reflecting the evolving demands of the global digital economy.

As the freelancing landscape continues to evolve, so does the earning potential for Pakistani freelancers.

American technological research and consulting firm Gartner predicts that independent workers, freelancers, temporary workers, and gig workers will make up 35-40pc of the global workforce by 2025. —

The writer is the head of content at a communications agency.