



BUDGET 2024-25

Uncertainty clouds budget presentation

- Meeting of the pivotal National Economic Council yet to be scheduled
- Premier, finance minister unavailable until June 8 to lead key consultations
- Annual Plan Coordination Committee meeting continues amid differences
- Budget Strategy Paper not shared with parliament due to political uncertainties

By Khadeeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The announcement of the federal budget for 2024-25 remains in unusual limbo, with key customary ingredients still missing, casting doubts on its presentation in parliament on June 10.

Sources said the critical National Economic Council (NEC) meeting, essential for reviewing the current year's macroeconomic situation and development programme and approving the next year's economic and development agenda, has yet to be scheduled. In fact, the government has yet to constitute the National Economic Council.

Also, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Muhammad Asrarullah will be on a four-day visit to China and

thus unavailable to lead key consultations until June 8. Thus, the first available date for an NEC meeting could be after June 8, provided the relevant documentation with provinces, the prime minister and the president are circulated through electronic means for constitution and notifying the NEC.

Under Article 155 of the Constitution, the president is ultimately required to constitute the NEC, led by the prime minister as its chairman and comprising the four chief ministers and one member from each province to be nominated by the respective chief minister and four other members, normally key federal ministers, as the premier may nominate.

Under this article, the NEC "shall review the overall economic condi-

tion of the country and shall, for advising the Federal Government and the Provincial Governments, formulate plans in respect of financial, commercial, social and economic policies, and in formulating such plans it shall, amongst other factors, ensure balanced development and regional equity and shall also be guided by the Principles of Policy set out in Chapter 2 of Part III".

Officials confirmed that the NEC had not been notified as of Monday night. Interestingly, the Annual Plan Coordination Committee (APCC) continued its meeting on Monday, although the Planning Commission had announced last week that the forum had recommended

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Inflation falls to 30-month low of 11.8pc in May

Records month-on-month decline of 3.2pc, largest in 47 years

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: The headline consumer inflation eased for the fifth month to 11.8 per cent in May, the lowest level in 30 months and significantly less than the record 38pc reading in May 2023, official data showed on Monday.

The decrease in the inflation rate is mostly attributable to a reduction in food inflation in both urban and rural areas. The fall is mostly caused by a sharp drop in the prices of wheat, wheat flour, chicken and vegetables like tomatoes and onions during the month under review.

The dropping inflation rate has provided a solid foundation for the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) monetary poli-

cymakers to reconsider the key interest rate, which has remained at the historic high of 22pc for seven consecutive policy meetings.

The country has been beset by inflation above 20pc since May 2022 as it navigated reforms as part of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) program.

The headline inflation is measured by a basket of goods and services called the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The index fell 3.2pc from the previous month, the second-largest month-on-month decline in the country's history, according to the research firm Arif Habib Ltd. The highest decline of 4.58pc was recorded 47 years ago, in May 1977.

Independent economists mainly attribute the low inflation rate to three factors: the high base of last year, no increase in the discount rate, and stability in global commodity prices.

They say the Pakistan Bureau of

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KARACHI: Supporters of Imran Khan hold his poster as they celebrate after he was acquitted in the cipher case, on Monday. —AFP

'Third time lucky' Imran, Qureshi get cipher reprieve

- Court seeks proof ex-PM had indeed retained confidential document
- PFI founder, ex-FM to remain in prison in connection with other cases
- Party jubilant; govt says court overlooked 'national security' concerns

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Imran Khan and ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Monday secured an acquittal in the cipher case, as the Islamabad High Court (IHC) set aside their sentence in the controversial case that had seen two arrests before being wrapped up by the presiding judge in haste, a week before the Feb 6 polls.

After Judge Abdul Hameed Muhammad Zubermain sentenced the PFI leaders to 10 years' imprisonment following their trial in Adiala jail, the duo filed appeals in the high court against the verdict, which were subsequently taken up by a division bench comprising Chief Justice Asim Farooqi and Justice Munirul Hassan Aurangzeb.

Cipher acquittal: Editorial on Page 6

The bench concluded the hearing on Monday, took a brief break of about 15 minutes and reconvened to announce the judgement. Before the announcement, PFI leaders advised activists and lawyers to observe decorum and remain silent before and after the announcement. However, as

the bench allowed the appeals and acquitted both the leaders in the cipher case, the court erupted with slogans.

The bench announced the following short order: "For the reasons to be recorded later, instant appeal is allowed and judgement dated 30.01.2024 is set aside; consequently, the appellant namely Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi is acquitted of the charges in case FIR No.06 dated 15.08.2023 under section 57 of Official Secrets Act, 1923 read with section 34 PPC, 1860 registered with Police Station Cantonment Terrorism Wing/PLA, Islamabad. He shall be released forthwith, if not incarcerated in any other case."

An identical short order regarding Mr Qureshi's petition was also released, but the due was not released from Adiala jail. Mr Khan could not be released as he is still completing his sentence in the 10-year case, whereas Mr Qureshi is booked in May 9 case. Meanwhile, the IHC administration, at the request of District and Sessions Judge Shaukat Arjmand, transferred the 10-year case to Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka, who issued

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'Independents' be allowed to pick party afresh, SC judge suggests

Question of what is a parliamentary party dominates discussion as full court takes up SIC reserved seats case

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah on Monday suggested that the controversy over the denial of reserved seats to the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) could be ended if the

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) grants another three days to those candidates, who had joined the SIC, to decide afresh whether to select some other political party.

"This will be end of the matter instead of getting into major interpretation of the election laws," observed Justice Shah — a member of the 15-judge full court.

The observation came when the full court took up a set of petitions moved by SIC Chairman Sahibzada Muhammad Hamid Raza, challenging the Federal High Court's (FHC) March 14 denial of reserved seats to the SIC.

Article 51(5) of the Constitution allows independent candidates to join a political party within three days of the publication of the names of reserved candidates in the official gazette.

On May 6, the apex court had suspended the ECP's judgement as well as the ECP's March 1 decision of depriving the SIC of reserved seats.

On Monday, the PPP, PMT-N and JUI-F approved the petition filed by the SIC.

Since several observations were being made by the judges

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ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP RESULTS & FIXTURES

SA BEAT SL BY SIX WICKETS

SRI LANKA 77 in 18.1 overs (A. Nopu 4-7); SOUTH AFRICA 10-4 in 14.2 overs (J. de Kock 20-16; Heineke 2-22)

SA BEAT ZIM IN GROUP

OMAN 100 in 19.4 overs (J. Thompson 4-21); NAMIBIA 100-6 in 20 overs (J. Frylinck 4-3)

UPCOMING MATCHES

ENG versus IND (7:30pm PST)
NEO versus NED (8:30pm PST)
See Sport Desktop for more coverage

Axe to fall on PWD for chronic 'failures'

By Syed Irfan Haque

ISLAMABAD: As the government aims to shut down loss-making departments as part of its drive to cut expenditures, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday ordered authorities to close down the Pakistan Public Works Department (PWD) due to "poor performance and corruption" over the years.

The department, less 7,000 employees, whose late handover to the balance after the PM's decision, but an official, on condition of anonymity, said they would move the courts against this decision.

According to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), PM Shehbaz issued these directives during a meeting held on reducing government expenditures. During the meeting, the prime minister observed that the PWD as a department had failed to achieve

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ON OTHER PAGES

KE seeks FCA as Nepra price hike in effect

As the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority on Monday notified Rs1.90 per unit additional cost in nationwide consumers for June, followed by 90 paise each in July and August, the Karachi-based power utility K-Electric filed up another fuel-cost claim for April on top of its existing Rs1.65 per unit petition for the past nine months pending before the power regulator. **Page 9**



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YDA's strike paralyses hospitals

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A partial strike by Young Doctors Association (YDA) activists at government teaching hospitals in Lahore left patients stranded and healthcare services crippled on Monday.

The strike demands provision of security for doctors during duties. Lahore General Hospital and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital were completely shut down, while Mayo Services, Punjab Institute of Cardiology, and Jinnah Hospital Lahore saw a thin presence of doctors.

Reports said that young doctors were divided over the strike call, leading to chaos at hospitals. Outpatient departments were locked, and patients were forced to leave without treatment.

In some cases, patients were made to wait in the scorching heat before being turned away.

Administration officials tried to keep OPDs running by deploying neutral doctors, but YDA members forced them to leave. Witnesses reported that YDA members even threatened attendants and relatives of patients who insisted on treatment.

The strike has disproportionately affected poor, elderly, and women patients, many of whom were brought in on wheelchairs or stretchers.

The association's office bearers said that the strike call was given for the provision of security to the young doctors as the incidents of violence were surfacing every other day at the state-run hospitals.



LAHORE: Ganga Ram Hospital OPD deserted due to a strike by young doctors.—White Star

Govt's reply sought to Imran's plea against fresh May 9 cases

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday issued notices to the Punjab government and other respondents on a petition of PTI former chairman Imran Khan against a decision of the provincial cabinet to prosecute him and other leaders of his party on charges of involvement in the May 9 riots.

A two-judge bench, comprising Justice Farooq Raziq and Justice Shahid Ahmad, directed a law officer to submit replies on behalf of the respondents by June 10.

Earlier, Advocate Sardar Latif Khan Khosa argued on behalf of the petitioner that the Punjab Cabinet on May 28 had approved the nomination of PTI leaders in additional cases of May 9 protests. He

said the decision was made in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of the petitioner's arch-rival Nawaz Sharif.

He said the federal and Punjab governments were scared of Imran Khan, sending his release from the false cases. He alleged that both governments wanted to implicate Imran in false cases. He asked the court to set aside the impugned decision by the Punjab cabinet for being illegal, without jurisdiction, mala fide and of no legal consequence.

The Punjab Cabinet had approved fresh legal action against the former prime minister and other PTI leaders for "building a false narrative against state institutions".

According to Punjab Information Minister Arma Bokhari, Mr Khan had consistently been building a narrative

against state institutions that's why the provincial cabinet had decided to take action.

PARVEZ: A special court on Monday allowed former chief minister Parvez Elahi a one-time exemption from personal appearance on the medical grounds in the case of illegal appointments in the Punjab Assembly.

Mr Elahi, who has been released on bail, did not appear before the court and medical reports furnished by his counsel said the doctors had recommended a complete bed rest for him.

The lawyer said the doctors also advised Mr Elahi to have some critical medical tests done, which were yet to be conducted. He asked the court to allow the former chief minister a one-time exemption from personal appearance.

The court allowed the request and

delayed the indictment of Mr Elahi and other suspects in the case till June 14.

Previously, the court kept delaying the indictment in the case for months due to non-production of Mr Elahi by the prosecution, citing medical reasons.

However, the PTI leader also skipped two hearings after his release on bail.

The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) had registered the FIR, alleging that illegal appointments of 898-17 posts were made in the assembly when Mr Elahi was the CM and co-sponsor Muhammad Khan Bhatti was his principal secretary in 2021.

The prosecution said the favourite candidates were appointed in the posts despite being declared failed in the written examination. The appointed candidates had also been nominated as suspects in the case.

Light rain brings relief but heatwave to return today

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The residents of Lahore experienced a brief respite from the scorching heat on Monday evening when strong winds, gusting over 100 kilometers per hour, swept through the city, followed by a light shower — with traces recorded in some areas and up to 1 millimeter in others.

However, meteorological officials tempered hopes of a long-term reprieve from the heat, predicting that the winds and rain would clear within the next two hours and the mercury would drop slightly before rising again by morning, with the heatwave expected to return.

"The partly cloudy conditions will clear in the next one to two hours," said an official from the Meteorological Department. While a week-long advisory offers some hope, predicting dusty winds in upper and central Punjab between June 4 and June 8, it also warns of a "flash drought" — a condition that occurs when low rainfall is accompanied by consistently high temperatures over a short period.

According to the Met office advisory, flash droughts develop and intensify rapidly, often within weeks or even days, leading to quick increases in evapotranspiration rates and depletion of available water in the top layer of soil. Although the country received slightly above-normal rainfall from January to May 29, 2024, the below-normal rainfall and soaring temperatures in May, particularly in southern Pakistan, may lead to flash drought conditions, the Met office warned farmers.

Sumbal's widow gets possession of GOR-I house

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Monday finally retrieved a GOR-I residence from a powerful retired bureaucrat and handed it over to the widow of former chief secretary Abdullah Khan Sumbal.

The widow of the late civil servant, Dr Arsal Momina, had been running from pillar to post to get the possession of the 16-Golf Road, GOR-I, despite the nod by former caretaker Punjab cabinet, as well as of the present provincial cabinet's standing committee.

The residence was occupied by retired bureaucrat and Deputy Chairman Planning Commission of Pakistan Jehanzeb Khan, as late Sumbal had allowed him to stay there. Abdullah Sumbal and his family used to live with his parents in Lahore Cantonment.

The Punjab government, on Nov 21 last year, had formally allowed Dr Momina to retain the GOR-I residence till Jan 21, 2030 — the date of superannuation of her late husband.

The Punjab government had on April 22, 2024, issued a notice to Mr Jehanzeb Khan, asking him to vacate the residence within three days.

The government had also issued a legal ejectment notice, which expired prior to the issuance of vacation notice.

The GOR-I residence was allotted to the widow of late Abdullah Khan Sumbal on July 20, 2022, with a direction that the allotment order for Mr Jehanzeb Khan stood cancelled.

Civilians trial will defame army: Alvi

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Former President Dr Arif Alvi says the army trial of civilians will eventually defame the army at home and abroad. "It is high time to heal the nation and distance itself from spreading bitterness," he suggested.

Speaking to media persons after a visit to the Punjab Assembly and meeting with PTI-backed MNAs on Monday, Dr Alvi said the PTI had three demands — supremacy of law, release of PTI founder chairman and return of mandate, who genuinely won general elections.

He said it had become inevitable to create peace in the wake of constantly heating up political temperature and added that the mandate of real winners

of general elections should be returned — for a better economic future.

He said the resolution of political conflicts would help create employment opportunities for millions of unemployed youths. He lamented that the health and education facilities were depleting and poverty increasing.

Dr Alvi said he had met party workers, who lamented in jail for eight months, despite the fact that there was no evidence of their involvement in any violent activities. In one case, he said, a party worker's two brothers were also arrested.

The former president lauded the judiciary for standing tall for the law and justice. He also commented that the Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report was a report of Pakistan and judiciary. He stressed that the army, politicians

and the civilians should learn from the commission report and stop tagging people as traitors.

He said it was PTI's right to distrust those judges who were showing prejudice against the PTI leaders and those should distance themselves from benches hearing PTI leaders cases.

Dr Alvi also expressed solidarity with the Palestinians and thanked Norway, Spain and Ireland for recognising Palestine.

He also acknowledged the South African government for taking Palestine's case to the International Court of Justice.

He said the Pakistan government was responsible to ensure security for the workers from China and stressed that the CPIC project should be completed in all respects.

Police claim 50pc drop in violent crimes

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The provincial capital has witnessed a significant decrease of over 50 per cent in heinous and violent crimes due to multiple strategies the police have adopted, bringing a major relief to the public.

In a press conference at Qila Qajjar Singh Police Lines on Monday, Capital City Police Officers (CCPO) Riaz Siddique Kamran said the elimination of several organised crime networks, the arrest of hardened criminals, improved challenge ratio, and effective operational strategy had contributed significantly to reducing street crime in Lahore, a city that had been reporting a constant crime surge for many years.

He claimed the provincial capital had marked a nearly 50pc decrease in property crimes. He said the data was prepared based on the number of calls to the police helpline 15 that citizens made to report business and other crimes, including robbery, dacoity, vehicle snatching, and theft.

The CCPO said crime calls related to

burglary had reduced by 64pc, and calls related to dacoity had reduced by 50pc. Similarly, he said the provincial capital had witnessed a significant decrease in vehicle theft by 51pc and vehicle snatching by 57pc.

The crime related to vehicle theft and snatching had posed a potential challenge for the police, he said, adding the CIA, the anti-vehicle lifting squad, and other formations of the Lahore police had played a key role in rounding up and eliminating several major networks in this respect.

"The Lahore police made frequent raids on the dens of criminals to weaken their organised networks and arrested many of them," he said.

The police arrested 2,790 proclaimed offenders of category "A", 10,264 of category "B", 18,678 court absconders, and 5,629 target offenders, he said.

About the investigation wing, which played a decisive role in bringing crime down, the Lahore police chief said the police had completed the investigations of a total of 474,000 cases that were lying pending since 2018.

"It was an extensive, exhausting, and

challenging job to complete the investigations of a huge number of pending cases," he said.

This exercise helped a lot in initiating court proceedings against repeat offenders for punishment to bring crime down in Lahore.

"The Lahore police also made a recovery of Rs1.54 billion from criminals and returned it to citizens/complainants during the first five months of 2024," he said.

He said the provincial capital police had launched massive crackdowns under the 'Drug-Free Lahore' programme to uproot an organised network of drug traffickers.

In the wake of these actions, the police lodged over 15,000 cases, arrested 4,000 drug traffickers, and recovered 1,024kg of charas, 315kg of heroin, 144kg of ice, and 430kg of opium from January 2023 to May 31, 2024.

Similarly, the police arrested over 14,000 suspects during the same period, recovered from them a huge quantity of illegal weapons and lodged cases against them.

Millers seek wheat policy

Say wheat quota promotes corruption in food dept

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A group of flour millers has demanded the government frame a comprehensive wheat policy before withdrawing its role from the grain business.

In a letter recently sent to the National Food Security and Research Ministry, Progressive Flour Millers Group president Majid Abdullah has said that doing away with wheat subsidy is a welcome step as it led to a mushroom growth in the flour milling industry. Elimination of the subsidy wiped out 50 percent 'inefficient' flour mills and introduced a healthy competition among efficient mills, he added.

Turning the subsidy a menace, he said the wheat quota was the root cause of corruption among the food department officials.

However, he supported a targeted subsidy through the Basmati Income Support Programme (BISP) for the low-income segments of society.

Referring to no procurement of grain this year by the Punjab government leading to crashing of the crop market, Mr Abdullah says if the provincial government has finally decided to pull out of the wheat business, it should first give a comprehensive wheat policy.

As part of the policy, he suggested, the government should do away with the minimum support price system, leaving the prices to dynamics of supply and demand forces.

Before abolition of the food departments, the flour milling industry should be strengthened, enabling it to take up the department's role by building its storage capacity, he suggests, demanding zero-duty-on-import of wheat for grain.

He says the flour millers should also be facilitated by banks to assume the new role. Export of wheat and its products must be allowed throughout the year, so that the industry has a window to do business internationally, he adds.

Gymkhana land lease issue echoes in PA again

Club pays Rs260m electricity bill per annum: house told

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The issue of lease of 150 acres of land to Gymkhana Club in the provincial capital again echoed in the Punjab Assembly on Monday as Finance Minister Magribat Shuja told the house that the facility that was leased out for just Rs45,000 per year, pays Rs260 million electricity bill per annum.

The minister told the house that the club had been given lease of land up to 2010 against its 1996.

He said earlier the lease amount was just Rs15 per acre.

He said that the club was also paying Rs260 million per annum as power bill.

He added that house was also being illegally sold at the facility.

Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan regretted that poor peasants had been given land in Christian desert at a rate of Rs25,000 per acre, while the elite class grabbed hundreds of acres of land in the urban centre against the payment of a paltry amount.

Treasury MPA Samiullah Khan suggested that a day should be fixed for general discussion on the Gymkhana Club.

Meanwhile, opposition leader in the Punjab Assembly, Malik Ahmed Khan Bhakshar, demanded setting up of a judicial commission to investigate the events of May 9, 2023.

Taking part in the general discussion on law and order during the assembly session requisitioned by the opposition, he said that any investigation conducted without a judicial commission into the May 9 incidents would remain controversial and unsatisfactory.

He asked how many PTI activists had been charged in May 9 cases, adding that six cases had been registered against him, though not a single case under Section 144 was made against him before May 9.

He said the law and order situation could be fine according to the government, but it was not so for the PTI, alleging that Punjab police inspector general had been given the target of torturing every PTI worker making a public move.

Earlier, finance and parliamentary affairs minister Mujtaba Shuja claimed that the law and order situation had improved as compared with the previous year's.

Opening general discussion on law and order, he highlighted the police role against corruption, drug mafia, electricity theft, kite flying and in providing security to Chinese citizens in the province.

He said the police had also conducted

a successful operation against dacoits of Ratcha (riverine) area, car and motorcycle theft, as well as inter-provincial smuggling.

He said that modern facilities were being provided to the police on the direction of the chief minister, while the network of the Punjab Safe Cities Authority cameras was being expanded to other towns of the province.

Opposition member Sheikh Imtiaz and treasury's Samiullah Khan exchanged hot words as the opposition resorted to shouting slogans and thumping of desks.

The speaker warned both sides against resorting to cross talk and using non-parliamentary language. "Make arguments in favour of your leadership, but avoid cross talk or violating the sanctity of the house by using abusive words."

Later, the chair prorogued the house for an indefinite time on completion of its agenda.

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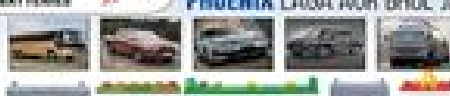
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Sindh sticks to its guns on water shortage

• Irrigation secretary says province faced 29pc shortage in early Kharif; blames Punjab for diverting flows into link canals, decision to fill reservoirs • Insists discharging water downstream from Kotri essential to meet drinking water needs • Irra disputes claim Mangla is witnessing record storage level

By Mohammed Hussain Khan

HYDRABAD: As a rift between Sindh and Punjab over the distribution of water through the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) continues to simmer, the former has reiterated its claim that the province faced a water shortage in the early Kharif season, despite ample storage available in the country's reservoirs.

This resonated with earlier claims made by Sindh in the last week of May, when it requested Irra to halt the transfer of water from the Indus zone to the Indus-Chenab (JC) zone, saying the practice had put lower riparian Sindh at a disadvantage. It had also questioned Punjab's decision to operate link canals.

In response, Punjab said Sindh had exceeded its Kharif share by up to 20pc, and accused the province of underreporting and shifting the blame.

Sindh, however, maintains that its viewpoint is backed by statistics, allocations, and the Water Apportionment Accord of 1991.

"Sindh utilised 3,540 million acre feet (MAF) from April 1 to May 20 against agreed allocations of 4,445 MAF with 23pc shortage," Sindh Irrigation Secretary Zahir Khoro told Dawn.

Dispute over water share

During the April 2 Irra Advisory Committee (IAC) meeting, the province's share was fixed at 28,805MAF for the Kharif season, whereas its allocation under the 1991 accord was 33,94MAF, so the province used only 3,540MAF (10pc of its allocated share) and 10pc of

the accord-based allocations until May 20.

Punjab had claimed that on May 21, the maximum share of Sindh under the Water Apportionment Accord was 98,700 cusecs whereas it had placed its intake of 140,000 cusecs, and against this demand, Irra was releasing 190,000 cusecs, which was more than double the actual share of Sindh.

"We are not placing intakes more than the share, but it is indicative of losses [as per Irra's standard operating procedures] calculated right from Chashma downstream to Kotri barrage. Therefore, the claim that Sindh placed 140,000 cusecs against accord-based share of 98,700 cusecs while Irra released 190,000 cusecs (double than actual share) is, prima facie, misleading," Mr Khoro said.

The allocation of the water share is made on a "10 daily basis" for each month under the 1991 water accord.

On May 13, Irra reduced shortage to "zero per cent" for the province (mainly Punjab and Sindh) for the early Kharif season (April 1-June 10). An Irra statement noted that since full intakes were being released in the system since May 13, any shortage at any barrage could not be attributed to Irra.

The full supply was attributed to two factors: high temperatures in catchment areas and ongoing work at Tarbela's Turbines. Unsurprisingly, Irra was available in the system, indicating a 30,000 cusec-discharge for Sindh and 16,000 cusecs for Punjab, in excess of their intakes below Chashma.

However, Sindh claimed that due a shortage in the flows, it had to use 3,540MAF out of its 28,805MAF share till May 20. This means that



A SHEPHERD passes through the dry bed of Indus river along with his herd of livestock near Jattabad, on Sunday.—Urmas Ali

4,732MAF (57pc) of Sindh's share still remained unutilised for two months of the early Kharif season.

Secretary Khoro said Sindh faced a 37pc shortage in the second 10 daily of May, whereas link canals were operated at the same time to transfer water from Indus Zone to JC (Jhelum-Chenab) zone in Punjab.

Sindh attributes this shortage to storage beyond planned levels in dams and operations of "non-conventional" link canals, saying it faced 23pc shortage till June 1 while its bargains faced 13pc overall shortage till June 2.

'Underreporting'

Talking about claims of underreporting, the Sindh irrigation secretary maintained that Punjab "always questioned" the assessments of "neutral bodies" in this regard.

"Recently, Pakistan Council of

Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), Irra members, and provincial representatives observed discharges Tamsa downstream twice, leading to "huge discrepancy between actual discharge and reported ones by Punjab," he said.

An Irra statement also noted the discrepancy, saying that it had sought clarification from Punjab over the recent discharge measurements taken by the PCRWR at Tamsa barrage.

But at the same time, Irra pointed out that spot-surveys checked had revealed "underreporting at different barrages on Indus", without specifying which province those occurred in. The statement said that a provincial response was awaited on the matter.

Discharge downstream of Kotri

The Sindh irrigation secretary said that Punjab's view of release

of 9,000MAF below Kotri as a violation of the IAC decision was "potentially illogical" as the release of monsoon excesses downstream Kotri ensures potable water supplies for Hyderabad, Kotri city, Lattified taluka, besides Kotri city.

Lately, hazardous total dissolved solids in the water have drastically increased due to contaminated discharge from Marchbar Lake into the river, forcing Hyderabad's civic agency to stop lifting water from its Kotri downstream facility in April, to avoid a repeat of the contamination seen in May 2008.

The secretary also rebuffed criticism that the release downstream of Kotri.

"[Around] 5,000 cusecs per day are needed below Kotri for drinking and environmental needs. A concentrated discharge of 25MAF was recommended at least once in five years to check silt intrusion through silt deposition," Secretary Khoro said.

Sindh Irra Member Ehsan Leghari also noted that the Kotri discharges could not be objected to on any grounds, if the 1991 Accord references were anything to go by.

He also contested Punjab's claim that the April 2 IAC decided to operate link canals. "The claim to transfer water through link canals to facilitate Mangla's filling is just incorrect," he said.

The irrigation secretary said the transfer of water from the Indus to the JC system was "wind-bagging" and shortages, even though ample water was available in JC to feed south Punjab canal commands.

Tamsa-Punjab link canal

The situation in the Tamsa-

Punjab (TP) link canal is rather strange. With Indus water, the TP feeds the JC system upstream of Punjab. On June 2, TP drew 12,000 cusecs for the JC system.

Interestingly, 16,000 cusecs were again released from JC downstream Punjab to feed for Sindh on June 2. "Isn't it evident that they [Punjab] had 4,000 cusecs of surplus water available in JC?" Khoro quipped.

Had these 12,000 cusecs not been diverted to TP Link Canal and released for Gadda to meet the shortage in Sindh and Balochistan, it could have avoided losses and a seven-day time lag. "Is there still any justification to lift water... through link canals," he asked.

Another irrigation officer said that in this practice, Punjab "recharges its groundwater aquifer". He said when this was being done in the early Kharif season, Sindh was facing a 37pc shortage.

Water levels in Mangla

Separately, an Irra spokesman contested the Sindh irrigation department's claim that Mangla had not seen the kind of storage levels currently being witnessed, in the past 60 years.

The level surpassed the current level of 1,800m in 2015-2016 and 2020 on the same date, the spokesman said, adding that Mangla dam was filled as per the parameters approved by the Irra Advisory Committee on April 2.

Meanwhile, the Sindh Irrigation Department's spokesman said that 2015, 2016 and 2020 could not be compared to 2024 as in those three years, Sindh faced almost no shortage from April 1 to May 20.

IHC questions spies' ability over failure to trace those who doxxed judge

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has questioned the premier spy agency's ability to deal with threats of "fifth generation war" after it failed to trace X accounts involved in the doxing of Justice Ishaq Raza.

The case was initiated after Justice Raza filed a complaint over a malicious social media campaign in which the personal information of his family, including their US Green Cards, were published on X.

An IHC larger bench comprising Justices Mubeen Akhtar Kazvi, Tariq Mehmood Jhanghri and Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan took up the case on Monday.

Additional Attorney General Barrister Muzammil Iqbal Daggal submitted a report from Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which stated that since the X account involved in publishing the judge's personal information had been deleted, the spy agency

could not take any action.

The report also highlighted issues related to foreign jurisdictions and cited the case of Adil Raja, who allegedly maligns institutions. He was still at large and no action could be taken against him since he was in another country.

Justice Ishaq questioned why intelligence agencies were incapable of dealing out facts "despite millions of dollars and unlimited resources at their disposal". The IHC bench expressed displeasure over the report and rejected it.

'Unlimited resources'

"Why is the agency not capable of coping with the challenges of the fifth generation war?" the judge asked while referring to the modern interpretation of asymmetric warfare, of which disinformation is a big component, according to experts.

The spy agency was subsequently directed to submit a fresh report.

AAG Daggal told the court that the Federal Investigation Agency

(FIA) was already conducting an inquiry and had identified social media accounts allegedly involved in the campaign against the judge.

The bench noted that after six IHC judges wrote a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council, "three malicious campaigns" were simultaneously orchestrated against them.

This was a reference to a March 25 letter in which the IHC judges, including Justice Sattar, accused the intelligence apparatus of interference in judicial affairs, including attempts to pressure judges through abduction and torture of their relatives and secret surveillance inside their homes.

The bench directed the FIA to conduct an inquiry against X handles, who initiated the campaign against Justice Sattar.

An FIA official who appeared in the court said several X accounts also shared controversial posts against the judge.

The bench directed FIA to identify and include such accounts in the inquiry.

Lawyers slam PTI's 'anti-CJP drive'

No one should be allowed to demean judges' reputation, say PBC and SCBA

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The PTI's demand that Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Ishaq should not sit on benches hearing cases related to the party invited the wrath of the legal fraternity, as Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) and the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) not only condemned the "tactic being used to put pressure on the CJP", but also requested the judiciary to not allow anyone to demean the reputation, dignity, and honesty of judges for petty political gains.

The apex legal bodies reiterated their unwavering commitment to uphold the independence of judiciary and rejected any tactic to malign the institution of the judiciary and undermine the principle of the independent judiciary in their nefarious designs and motives to target the CJP.

The PTI leadership had demanded CJP to resume himself from all benches hearing cases related to the party or its leaders, claiming that they had not been getting justice since September 2023 when the incumbent chief justice replaced Justice Umar Ata Bandial.

After the promulgation of Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Act, 2023, it was authority of the three-member committee comprising the CJP and two most senior judges to constitute bench, PBC vice chairman Haseeb Ali Sahar, executive committee

chairman Farooq R. Naik as well as SCBA president Shabaz Shaukat explained. Therefore, the wish of one political party was "unrealistic", they said. They deplored the tactic being used to pressure the CJP, calling it "unacceptable to the legal fraternity".

They said the PBC and the legal fraternity always supported and struggled for the supremacy of the Constitution, rule of law and independence of the judiciary, as enshrined in the Constitution. They pointed out that CJP Ishaq is a very competent, upright and independent judge who commands great respect amongst the legal fraternity and his integrity is above any doubt.

The SCBA said the judiciary, particularly the incumbent chief justice, had always played a crucial role in ensuring that justice is administered fairly and impartially, in accordance with the Constitution and the relevant laws of state.

SCBA president Shabaz Shaukat denounced the recent statement made by the PTI spokesperson demanding his removal from hearing these cases.

The demands such as separating the CJP from cases of a political party were unfounded and based on preconceived notions, it was pointed out. If the said political party or an individual had any objections, the appropriate lawful course of action should have been filing a petition, the bar association explained.

It stated that the entire legal fraternity, including the SCBA, stood firmly with the CJP and requested the judiciary to not allow anyone to demean the reputation, dignity, and honesty of judges, as well as of other institutions for petty political gains.

Over 1,700 foreigners apply for adventure tourism in GB

GILGIT: Over 1,700 foreign adventure tourists have applied for permits to climb peaks in Gilgit-Baltistan, with 175 eyeing to scale K2 this summer, according to a top-government official.

Meanwhile, an eight-member team of Pakistani and Italian female climbers will start their expedition to summit the world's second-highest peak, K2, this month.

GB Tourism Department Deputy Secretary Sajid Ishaq told Dawn that adventure tourism in the region was booming.

He added that of the 1,700 foreign climbers who applied, several have been issued permits while the remaining applications were being processed.

"The visa clearance process has also been sped up for foreign climbers, and many will apply for a visa on arrival in Pakistan," he said.

In the summer of 2023, over 2,000 foreign climbers and trekkers, along with around 9,000 tourists, arrived in the region.

The influx of tourists earned the region's government Rs450 million in permit fees for climbing.

Female climbers eye K2 summit.

The eight-member all-women K2 expedition team included four mountaineers from GB and as many from Italy.

The Pakistani climbers underwent rigorous training in the Alps mountain range in Italy and Rara skivillage in GB.

The expedition has been organised by EvK2CNR, an organisation focusing on research in mountainous areas, with the support of the Italian Alpine Club.

EvK2CNR President Agostino Di Palencia will be the expedition leader, while Pakistani mountaineer Samina Baig will be the climbing leader.

The expedition was launched in Italy recently at a ceremony attended by Italy's federal minister of tourism, Daniela Santanchè, Alpine Club of Italy President Antonio Montanari, Mr Palencia, and other guests.

An EvK2CNR official told Dawn that a project launch will also take place on June 18 in Islamabad, after which the team will start the expedition.

—Jamil Nagra

Villagers attack polio team, security escort

Protesters seek reopening of Afghan border

QUETTA: Two female polio workers, along with two security escort personnel, got a hiding by a large crowd in Chaman protesting against the closure of Pak-Afghan border, on Monday.

Officials said the polio vaccination drive, which began in 14 districts of Balochistan, was underway in the border town when people from three villages carrying sticks

gathered there.

The villagers attacked the polio team, saying that they would not allow them to administer drops to their children until acceptance of their demand for reopening of the Afghan border, the officials said.

"They have not spared even local female workers and beat them up along with Levies officials who were guarding the polio team," Chaman Deputy Commissioner Aftab Abbas Raja said.

He said Levies Force and police rushed to the area and shifted the two polio workers and both persons

ned to district hospital.

The campaign was, however, suspended in the area.

The deputy commissioner said that action would be taken against the attackers in accordance with the law.

The official said that the right to protest did not allow them to attack law enforcers and polio workers. As far as their demand was concerned, they could hold a 'peaceful' protest, as they had been holding for several months, he added.

He said no hurdle would be allowed to way of polio campaign.

—Saleem Shaukat

Ombudsman intervenes over rabies vaccine supply

NIH unable to supply 80,000 vials of already manufactured vaccine to hospitals due to cabinet failure to set its price

By Iqram Junaid

ISLAMABAD: While public sector hospitals have been facing acute shortage of anti-rabies vaccine (ARV), the National Institute of Health (NIH) cannot supply already manufactured 80,000 vials of the vaccine to public sector hospitals as the federal cabinet has not determined its price, causing problems for the masses.

Because of the delay in taking a decision by the federal cabinet, the people who mostly rush to public sector hospitals to get treatment in dog bite cases, have been facing problems and left with no other option but to procure Indian vaccine from the open market.

Finally, the Federal Ombudsman has intervened and directed the federal secretary of health, Mubeen Mubadda, to play his role in fixing the price so that already manufactured vaccines could be dispatched to public sector hospitals.

The ombudsman has further directed the government to fix the price of ARV on priority

basis by separating the same from other 47 drugs.

An official of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Drac) told Dawn that the authority did all the documentation for fixing the drug price along with 47 other drugs and forwarded the case to the ministry to get the approval for enhanced price.

An official of the NIH, requesting anonymity, said that bulk quantity of the vaccine has been imported from China and then parked in the NIH.

"The price of vaccine has almost doubled in the international market. Moreover, the devaluation of rupee over the last few years has also badly affected the cost of the vaccine. So we requested Drac to revise prices so that public sector hospitals could procure it. Drac has done its job and now the federal cabinet has to approve the price, but the matter has been delayed for the last few months," he said.

"We have 80,000 vials of ARV manufactured by Liaoning ChengDa company of China, which have been parked in the NIH, but government hospitals cannot procure it without fixation of its price. So the people have been left with no other option but to procure Indian vaccine from the open market," he said.

The Federal Ombudsman, he said, has time and again intervened for the fixation of Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of ARV and has directed the health secretary to play his role.

The letter of the Federal Ombudsman, seen by Dawn, stated: "I would like to invite your attention to the issue of non-availability of anti-rabies vaccine in public sector hospitals. A complaint was filed on 29th December 2023, expressing concern about the non-availability of the Anti-Rabies Vaccine (ARV) in Federal General Hospital, Chak Shahzad, Islamabad, for treatment of his child who was bitten by a stray dog."

"Considering the gravity of the issue, the complaint was treated on priority basis and thoroughly investigated by involving seven Federal Agencies. The complaint was closed on 28th Feb 2024 with certain directions," the letter said.

The letter further said that on May 20, a meeting for implementation was held with representatives of the Ministry of National Health Services, NIH, Drac, Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and Polytechnic (FGIP) Hospital.

"During the implementation proceedings the representative of Drac informed the meeting that the Drug Pricing Committee (DPC) of Drac has already recommended MRP of ARV for NIH from Rs891.65 to Rs1,983 per vial along with 47 other prices," it stated.

The letter further said that the federal cabinet's approval was required for fixation of the price.

"The NIH has prepared almost 80,000 vials

of Anti-Rabies Vaccine to date. Despite production, the NIH is unable to self-supply the vaccine to public sector hospitals due to the non-revision of its price by Drac which requires approval of the Federal Government. The shelf life of the ARV is 18 months and two-and-a-half months have already lapsed. As per 80pc the ARV is required to be supplied to the hospitals health institutions at least six months prior to the date of its expiry," the letter stated.

"As per recommendations of the Federal Ombudsman, the Ministry of National Health Services was directed to ensure uninterrupted availability of ARV for the general public and furnish monthly consolidated reports having the progress of all the Agencies to the Registrar's Office till such time the vaccine becomes available/accessible to the general public by the end of May. However, the Ministry did not comply with the recommendations."

"In view of above, it is reiterated to implement the findings of the Waqar Mubashir and finalize the issue of price revision of ARV on priority basis by separating the same from other 47 drugs keeping in view the directions of the Waqar Mubashir, emergent need of general public and shelf life of the ARV which is deteriorating day by day which may cause financial loss to the national exchequer," the letter said.

Winners of NA seats from Islamabad want cases transferred to another tribunal

By Mubair A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: In what marks the beginning of a legal quagmire, all the three declared winners of National Assembly seats from Islamabad have sought the transfer of election petitions pending adjudication before the only poll tribunal for the federal capital to "some other tribunal".

In a surprising controversial move, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), itself a party in the election petitions, has filed the identical petitions apparently drafted by the same lawyer but filed through different counsel for hearing today (Tuesday).

The development comes days after a controversial ordinance was promulgated to amend Elections Act to empower the ECP to appoint retired judges as election tribunals. Anjum Azeel Khan, Dr Tariq Fozil Chaudhary and Raja Khuram Shiekh — declared winners from NA-46, NA-47 and NA-48 respectively — in their petitions, copies of which are available with Dawn, have not only sought transfer of election petitions against them to some other tribunal, but have also played to stay proceedings before the election tribunal till the final disposal of their applications.

The legal predicament is that there is a single election tribunal in Islamabad and the ECP under the law cannot transfer the cases to a tribunal out of Islamabad and the Ordinance empowering it to appoint retired judges as election tribunals has been challenged before the Lahore High Court.

The applicants have expressed apprehensions that they will not get justice from the tribunal where their cases were pending. "The right of individuals to be dealt with in accordance with law is a universal code of justice," one of the applications reads and refers to Article 4 of the Constitution which guarantees it.

It also says that the right to fair trial was the corner stone of justice and refers to Article 10-A of the Constitution. It says there were some legal flaws and defects in the election petition, which were substantial and material in nature and warranted dismissal of election petition.

It, however, says the tribunal not only called upon all the respondents of election petition but also summoned the entire record of election from the authorities concerned the very first date of hearing. It says the petitioner of the election petition intends to deprive the applicant from his lawful right with mala fide intentions. The ECP's cause has been shared with the media some two weeks after a new audit found that the declared winners on all three National Assembly constituencies from the federal capital had actually secured less votes compared to the "runners-up".



VISITORS enjoy their leisure time along Upper Kachura Lake in Gilgit-Baltistan's Skardu district. — APP

10 electric buses arrive in Islamabad today, 20 expected tomorrow

Buses to run on two new routes from G-11 Nust station to Pims and from Pims to Quaid-i-Azam University, says official

By Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Finally, the electric buses are set to hit Islamabad's roads as 10 buses will be arriving in the city on Tuesday (today) followed by 20 more in the next 24 hours.

"A fleet of 30 buses will reach Islamabad in two days on Tuesday and Wednesday," said an officer of the CDA. He said these 30 buses will be operated from Convention Centre on two routes. The first route will be from G-11 Nust station to Pims covering G-10, G-9 and G-8 and the second from Pims, G-5, G-4, G-6, National Library, Bari Imam and Quaid-

i-Azam University.

The service to be started in a few days will be available from 6am to 10pm daily. Besides, 70 more buses will reach Karachi in a couple of days which after customs clearance will be transported to Islamabad. The last fleet of 60 buses will reach Islamabad later.

"Electric buses will reach Islamabad from Tuesday. This was informed in a meeting chaired by CDA Chairman Muhammad Ali Raza Khwaja at CDA headquarters," said a press release issued on Monday.

The CDA chairman said a strategy would be devised to give subsidy to deserving segments of society, including persons with disabilities and students.

The CDA has set up a temporary depot with six electric chargers at the Convention Centre to operate the 30 buses. However, the civic agency will face a crisis-like situation when it will receive more buses as there are no depots and chargers for them. The CDA has been in the tendering process for the

establishment of two depots since December 2023; however, the contract is yet to be awarded.

Sources said that in February technical bids were opened followed by opening of financial bids and National Engineering Cell turned out to be the lowest bidder. However, its bid was too higher than the estimated costs; therefore, the civic agency is yet to award the contract. There is also a likelihood that the civic agency may go for a fresh tendering.

It had last year planned three sites for construction of the depots — Zero Point, I-2 and Transit. However, work is yet to be started on anyone of them. "The delay in establishing the depots warrants proper inquiry," said an official.

The CDA has acquired 160 buses by a contractor, National Radio and Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC), which will operate the buses. The CDA will pay it Rs306 to Rs311 per kilometre.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, dur-

ing his previous tenure, had directed the CDA to launch new bus services on 13 routes. He had constantly pushed the CDA to start the service and as a result the civic agency engaged the NRTC to procure the buses from an international firm that made electric buses in China.

He had also inaugurated three metro bus services: Orange Line, Green Line and Blue Line. The buses plying on the three routes belong to the CDA and they are providing great relief to thousands of passengers daily.

After the closure of the Government Transport Service (GTS), no effort was made to launch any bus service in Islamabad. However, during the previous term of the PM/N government (2013-18), the Metropolitan Islamabad metro service was started followed by Orange, Green and Blue Lines.

Officials said when the new buses will start operation on the 13 new routes, rural and urban areas and almost all sectors of Islamabad will be connected with each other.

Islamabad, AJK, GB residents deprived of free healthcare

Health card service suspended after centre fails to clear dues

By Harim Jureid

ISLAMABAD: After the federal government failed to pay for the health card service, the residents of Islamabad, Azad Jammu Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan have been deprived of the healthcare facility as opposed to Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa residents.

Raja Zafar Khan, 41, is a heart patient based in Islamabad. He recently visited Pims for medical treatment but the hospital refused him treatment free of cost, saying he would have to pay for tests and other medical facilities. The hospital management told him that the permanent address on his ID card was Islamabad and the federal government had not paid its dues to State Life, resulting in the suspension of the service for the residents of Islamabad.

"I was shocked... in 2022 I had an angioplasty at Pims... and did not pay a single rupee," he said, adding

that it was unfortunate that the residents of the federal capital could not get free treatment unlike those based in KP and Punjab.

Since the start of the health care service in 2015, the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan has been dealing with it and in 2021 it won the contract again for the next three years (2022 to 2025).

When this correspondent contacted the health card helpline, a representative confirmed that the free treatment for residents of Islamabad, AJK, and GB had been halted because of the lack of funds. "However residents of KP and Punjab are getting the facility as their government have paid the amount," he said.

State Life Insurance Corporation Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Arshad said that the modified PC-1 authorisation was under process at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives which would likely be received in a week or so. Arshad Hospital head Khagesh Wajid Khawaja termed the development unfortunate. He complained that private hospitals were also compelled but only the KP government was allowing its residents to get treatment from private hospitals, as the service in

Punjab was restricted to state-owned hospitals.

"The service should be restored instantly as we have been getting hundreds of patients who are going back disappointed due to the suspension of the facility. It shows that a large number of people have been deprived of free medical treatment," said Mr Khawaja, who also heads the Pakistan Awami Qaswat party.

State Life Insurance Corporation CEO Arshad Khan informed Dawn that the programme's extension was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (NEC) on June 30, 2024, for the below-poverty population. "The modified PC-1 authorisation is under process at Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and likely to receive in a week or so, for [the] inception of service and funds allocation for clearance of State Life approved pending liabilities accordingly," he said in a written reply.

It is worth mentioning that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif launched the health card programme on December 18, 2015, for Islamabad's residents as the "first step towards making Pakistan a welfare state".

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR FOLLOWING VACANT POSTS IN SPECIAL SECURITY UNIT (SSU), SINDH POLICE KARACHI

S. No.	Designation of Post	No. of Post	Minimum Qualification	Minimum Experience	Remuneration (scale of all allowances)
1	Senior Trainer (Ex Armed Forces)	05	Commissioned Officers (Retired from Army, Navy and Air Force)	Candidates who have served in SSU or have worked as trainer at any tactical training facility of the armed forces will be given preference.	Rs. 250,000/-
2	Instructor (Civilian)	05	Graduate (Higher Qualification will be given preference)	Having background of the fields as mentioned in following para-1.	Rs. 250,000/-
3	Medical Officer	08	MBBS and PMDC registration	05 years experience as medical officer, preference will be given to experienced and qualified professionals.	Rs. 150,000/-
4	Junior Trainer (Ex Armed Forces)	12	SSU's & SSC's Trainers (Retired from Army, Navy and Air Force)	Candidates who have served in SSU or have worked as trainer at any tactical training facility of the armed forces.	Rs. 150,000/-

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- The candidate skilled in Judo Karate, Martial Arts, Taekwondo, Boxing, Driving Skills, Tactics, Weapon Handling, Physical Training, English Language, Etiquettes and Ethics, Leadership and Motivation, Swimming, Bomb Disposal Training, Religious Education, I.T Law and Discipline will be given preference.
- The tenure of contract based appointment will initially be a period of one year, with the possibility of renewal for up to three years contract.
- Senior Trainers must have a background in military with extensive experience in training & should possess relevant certifications or qualifications in training and tactical methodologies.
- Candidates must have a background with relevant qualifications and experience in their respective fields. Senior Trainers & Instructors should have expertise in specialized subjects. Medical Officers must hold a valid degree and have experience in related field.
- The appointment may be extended based on satisfactory performance and the organization's requirements. First appointment shall be on the basis of written test/interview/medical fitness and verification of documents.
- Candidate involved in any criminal case are not eligible for appointment. If any candidate is found involved in criminal case, his candidature may be cancelled at any stage.
- The remuneration for Senior Trainers, Instructors, Junior Trainers and Medical Officers shall be a fixed salary as per the organization's policies, taxes and other applicable deductions shall be implemented in accordance with the rules and regulations of the governing authorities.
- All the selected candidates will be entitled for medical reimbursement and all other compensation benefits as a permanent employee.
- The performance of all appointed staff members will be regularly assessed based on predefined criteria and standards.
- All appointed staff members must adhere to the organization's code of conduct, ethics, and professional standards. Any violation of the code of conduct may result in disciplinary action, including termination of the contract. Either party may terminate the contract with a notice period of 30 days in writing or compensation at the rate of notice. Termination may also occur in case of gross misconduct, violation of laws, or failure to meet the expected performance standards.
- All appointed staff members must maintain strict confidentiality regarding any sensitive information or operational details related to SSU. Breach of confidentiality may lead to immediate termination and legal consequences. Interested candidates are advised to apply online or to download the prescribed application forms from SSU Website <https://www.sindhpolice.gov.pk/ssu> and send all SSU membership, Government & SSU ID Card, National Identity Card, Karachi till 20-06-2024.
- The appointment and contractual relationship between the appointed staff members and SSU shall be governed by the terms of the proclamation where SSU operates.
- These terms and conditions may be amended, modified, or supplemented by mutual agreement between the appointed staff members and SSU as required.
- All candidates must attach attested copies of certificate, CNIC, domicile, PMDC, Educational / Experience certificates and a recent passport size photographs along with prescribed application forms and CV.
- In case compliance authority requires any features to reside in centers facility their suitable accommodation will be provided.
- Incomplete applications or applications received after due date will not be entertained.
- No TA/DA will be allowable for test and interview.

COMMANDANT
SPECIAL SECURITY UNIT (SSU)
SINDH POLICE, KARACHI

INE-KRC-1296/24

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SUKKUR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

No: SMC/Tax/154 of 2024

Sukkur Dated: 09-05-2024

AUCTION NOTICE

In compliance of the order passed by the Honorable High Court of Sindh Bench at Sukkur under G.P. No: D-24 of 2014 (1) Shop along with Basement (Ground & 04) Flats situated at G.P. No: C-6/1A, Mirza Road Sukkur are available for Open Auction on monthly rental basis.

The interested Parties / Persons / Firms are invited to participate in the open auction which will be held on 20-06-2024, 20-06-2024 & 20-06-2024 at 11:00 AM in the "Al-Mulhan Cultural Center Sukkur" on the terms and conditions which can be seen and obtained at the office of District Taxes, Sukkur Municipal Corporation during office hours.

The detail of Municipal Shop (for commercial purpose) and Flat for residential purpose situated G.P. No: C-6/1A Mirza Road Sukkur are as under:

Sr.	Unit	Est. Amount	Bid Security equal to 05% monthly rent
01	Shop along with Basement (Ground & 04) Flats	50,000/-	1,50,000/-
02	Flat 1st Floor	20,000/-	60,000/-
03	Flat 2nd Floor	20,000/-	60,000/-
04	Flat 3rd Floor	20,000/-	60,000/-
05	Flat 4th Floor	20,000/-	60,000/-

The bid security must be deposited in shape of Cash Deposit / Pay Order in favor of "Sukkur Municipal Corporation" from any scheduled bank of Pakistan other than the name stated above will not be entertained and not allowed to participate in Open Auction.

The Sukkur Municipal Corporation reserves the right to reject one or all bids of participants without assigning any reason, cause etc. The decision of Council/Competent Authority shall be final and binding upon all participants and not challengeable in any Court of Law.

MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER
Sukkur Municipal Corporation

027-4771101, 180024

اورنگی سید اے۔ ————— والقی سید

Move against pension benefits of PAF JCOs assailed in court

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: In line with the government's ongoing austerity measures, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has withdrawn "incentive promotion" for junior commissioned officers (JCOs), a scheme that gives them post-retirement financial benefits.

This decision, effective retroactively, has sparked legal challenges, with about three dozen former PAF warrant officers (WOs) and assistant warrant officers (AWOs) lodging petitions in the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

The petitions, submitted by retired Brigadier Wasef Khan Niaz, will likely be taken up by a single-member bench of the IHC later this week. The petitioners argued that they joined the PAF as airmen and, after basic training, worked with total dedication to reach the positions of AWOs and WOs.

One petition said that "during the service, a policy circular was issued whereby those JCOs and NCOs who had fulfilled the promotion criteria of the board but could not be promoted to the next rank for want of vacancy in service structure were to be granted incentive promotion to the next rank for financial effect/penitentiary benefits."

"However, the new rank was not to be worn by such incumbents, nor

did it have any effect on the period of service for that rank", the petition added.

According to the petition, the policy for incentive promotion was amended on May 15, 2021, and the required threshold for this promotion has toughened. However, the petitioners tried their best to achieve the required eligibility.

It said that on July 9, 2023, one of the petitioners obtained the age of superannuation, and his case fell within the ambit of policy existing at that time issued under the Air Force Order (AFO) of March 16, 2018.

However, the PAF recently virtually withdrew the incentive promotion for airmen and was not granted to them "in line with the policy", the petition said.

"When the petitioner approached the authorities through departmental applications, the same was not responded and the organisation remained non-committal about its reasons," it added.

The petitioners argued that since they attained the age of superannuation before the policy for the incentive promotion was amended, the revised policy could not be implemented retroactively in their cases.

They also pointed out that since no alternative remedy was available in the PAF Act or Pakistan Air Force Rules, the issue could be settled in a high court.



QUETTA: Participants of a protest march from Mashkai to the provincial capital held a demonstration against the closure of bus crossing points at Pakistan-Rail border, at the press club, on Monday.—PTI

'Independents' be allowed to pick party

Continued from Page 1

during the hearing, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Issa repeatedly requested them to let the counsel build his case and then pose questions.

At one point, the CJP apparently referred to his position against the presidential reference that was filed against him, and mentioned what he had stated once by asking the judges, "If my lords have decided the matter, then I rest my case."

But the CJP hastened to add that he was making the observation on a lighter note. "We are here to listen to the counsel, and then we will decide the matter."

However, Justice Mundi Akhtar described it as an unfair statement, saying the full court was conducting the proceedings and every judge was entitled to ask whatever he wanted. Nothing should be implied to the effect that the mind of the judges had been made up.

Justice Shah wondered whether candidates, who joined the PAF, had the option to join a party of their choice as they had been refused this opportunity earlier, so they might want to exercise this option now to join some other political party.

Why not PTF?

Justice Jamal Khan Mansokhail wondered why,

instead of joining the PK, these independent candidates did not join PTF when people had voted for them because they continued from the PTF platform.

He regretted that PTF had created an unnecessary hype on the denial of its election symbol that, which not only misguides voters but also its own party members.

He also wondered whether the candidates, who joined the PK after the elections, had presented any certificate showing affiliation with their original political party at the time of filing of nomination papers. If yes, then how could they now claim to be independent candidates?

Keeping in view Section 66 of the Elections Act, 2017, Justice Mansokhail also wondered whether the ECP declares the authority to declare a candidate independent when a political party had issued a certificate of its affiliation.

Justice Mansokhail asked senior counsel Farid Siddiqui, representing the PK, to explain whether a candidate could angel himself from a party after filing nomination papers from that party's platform and could the political party itself angel a candidate after he won the elections. These questions need answers, the judge observed.

Mr Siddiqui contended that once the ECP accepted

them as a political/parliamentary party, it cannot deny them the reserved seats.

ECP rule questioned

Justice Athar Minallah asked if the ECP assume the role of an adversary to a political party or if it has to ensure that each political party gets its due right.

The ECP is bound to fulfill its obligation, Justice Minallah observed, adding that even if the ECP had committed a wrong, it was the duty of the commission to rectify that mistake.

Justice Akhtar wondered how could the ECP fulfil its duty by violating provisions like Article 218 of the Constitution. He said when the PK had never contested the general elections, then it should not be there in the parliament but it was there.

"It seems to me logically there was an apparent illegality there."

The only way ECP could have put their names for the reserved seats would be by implicitly recognizing that behind them stood PTF and should recognize the number of seats won by them, Justice Akhtar said.

Mr Siddiqui argued that if the Constitution is silent, the leftover reserved seats cannot be allocated to any other political party.

The Supreme Court will resume the case today (Tuesday).

'Third time lucky' Imran

Continued from Page 1

notions to the state for June 26.

Two retrials

The IHC had remanded the cipher case to the lower court for retrial twice over irregularities, and it was the third trial that resulted in a conviction.

During arguments, the bench asked Special Prosecutor Syed Zulfikar Abbas Nagri how the presiding judge released a 77-page verdict shortly after concluding trial proceedings. Mr Nagri suggested that the case might be remanded to the trial judge to address any lapses and requested the bench not to acquit the two men.

Justice Farooq replied that the IHC heard the appeals for three and half months, therefore, there was no justification for remanding the case back to the special court for a retrial.

During an earlier hearing, lead defence counsel Barrister Salman Rafiq submitted a report by the foreign ministry that included the details of the cipher's movement.

The report revealed that almost every recipient, including the then army chief and the chief justice, returned the calls after the case was remanded against Mr Khan. While the special prosecutor Hamid Ali Shah was explaining the movement of the cipher from the ministry to the PM's Office, Justice Farooq questioned if there was any record available with the prosecution agency to prove Mr Khan retained the cipher.

Mr Shah replied that though special secretary Anwar Khan had testified before the court that the diplomatic cable was handed over to Mr

Khan and was never returned.

"We believe it to be hearsay," remarked the chief justice, adding that there was a possibility that the PM had asked the secretary that to return the cipher.

He said that the court had ample reason to believe that the PM received and perused the confidential documents, on the basis of which he made public speeches and Pakistan even sent a demarche to the US upon his instructions. "But how do we know it was not returned?"

Mr Shah replied the ex-PM never returned the cipher and during a public speech and an interview with a private television channel, he admitted that the cipher was in his possession.

At this, Justice Anwarullah remarked that the politicians make "such statements to mislead courts".

Reactions

The judgement was criticised by the government, which claimed that IHC did not examine the case in the context of "national security".

In a press conference, PM's spokesman for legal affairs Barrister Asad Malik said the prosecution would decide to file an appeal against the IHC verdict. He said that Mr Khan was nominated in the case for revealing confidential documents for vested and political interests.

The PTF termed the judgement a victory for the party, its spokesperson said the ex-PM would have been acquitted in the hidden case as well had the trial court judge not been "prevented from pronouncing the verdict". He said the outcome of "all 203 cases" against the PTF founder would be similar to the cipher case.

Uncertainty clouds budget presentation

Continued from Page 1

to the NDC a Rs1.221 trillion development budget of the federal government along with 3.6 per cent growth target for the current year.

Planning minister by-passed

Officials also confirmed that it was the first time that the APCC meeting, led by Planning Commission Deputy Chairman Jehanzeb Khan, had taken place without even informing the planning minister about its schedule or development and macroeconomic indicators.

The minister, who was on a visit to China and Malaysia, was reportedly flabbergasted to learn on his return that he had been completely bypassed, the sources said, adding that the APCC meeting on May 31 was also unusual as it missed some of the major sectors in the allocation of funds and project review. These sectors included the National Highway Authority, the Ministry of Finance, its development portfolio and the water sector, to name a few.

Therefore, some changes could not be ruled out by the time the NDC meeting is called, although the political head of the planning ministry appeared bold-faced for now. However, the rules of business required the planning minister to authorise and sign the summary of the presentation of the APCC recommendations to the NDC.

Moreover, aspirations of the governments of Azad Kashmir and

Gilgit-Baltistan had also remained unaddressed, as their development portfolios for the next year have been kept frozen at the current year's level of Rs11 billion each. The two leaderships were in hectic contacts with the ministers for finance and planning on Monday.

An official, who attended the second-round APCC meeting on Monday, said the sectors missed on May 31 were "skewed" on June 3, but the overall envelope of the federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) would remain unchanged at Rs1.221trn, as indicated by the Ministry of Finance.

The official said these agencies had been told that they could prioritise their development projects within their allocated budget. For example, the Higher Education Commission was told that its allocation would remain at Rs21bn for the next year against Rs21bn in the current fiscal year, but they should update in a day about their priority projects for inclusion.

Budget strategy paper

Interestingly, it is also unusual that the budget strategy paper (BSP) for the next fiscal year has not yet been shared with parliament, though it is more because of political uncertainties emanating from the legal status of reserved seats and because of the absence of standing committees of the Senate and the National Assembly, particularly those related to finance.

This will be the first time in

recent history that the BSP has not gone through the parliament, and there is no time left for the exercise. Customarily, the BSP, which envisages broad outlines of the budget allocations, is presented to these standing committees of the parliament.

It would be even more unusual for the federal budget prepared in consultation with the IMF to go directly from the federal cabinet to parliament and, if the Senate and National Assembly standing committee on finance are not constituted, to be passed without the expert review and debate of the parliamentary committees.

Someone in the Finance Ministry said they expected to present the budget to the federal cabinet and the parliament on June 10, but this appeared to be difficult given the latest situation on the ground.

Even if the NDC is constituted and called on June 8 immediately after the prime minister's return, it would be a very tight schedule for presenting the Economic Survey and the budget on June 9 and 10, respectively, they said.

They, however, pointed out that the macroeconomic plan and development agenda was not approved by the NDC in 2023 when three chief ministers had walked out and boycotted the NDC meeting presided over by the then prime minister Shafiq Chaudhry. And, the PSDP and the budget of the following year was selectively revised by the preceding PTF government.

Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority

NOTICE FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS/ HEARING

EGAS PRIVATE LIMITED-APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF LICENCE TO UNDERTAKE REGULATED ACTIVITY FOR SALE OF NATURAL GAS FLARE GAS FROM KABIR X-1 GAS FIELD

M/s EGAS Pvt. Limited (the applicant) has applied under OGRA's Natural Gas (Licensing) Rules, 2002 for grant of license for Sale of Natural Gas / Flare Gas via Compression, Storage, Transportation and Marketing of CGR at Kabir X-1, (Gharhi South Concession) District: Sanghar. The applicant intends to transport 0.9 T.D.MMGD of Natural Gas from Kabir X-1 field in District Sanghar operated by M/s Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) to its consumer i.e. M/s. Rafhan Maza Products, Kari Industrial Area District: Jhelum. The applicant further stated that the gas processing station including dehydration system and compressor station shall be installed at the field whereby the gas will be compressed to 200 bar and 60 the Cylinder Cascade trucks and transport to its consumer whereas a CGR equipped with loaded regulators and mass flow meters shall be installed.

After completion of the requisite data / information by the applicant, the Authority scheduled the initial application for Public Comments / Hearing under Rule 11 of the said Rules. Therefore, all persons and parties who are likely to be affected by grant of this license are hereby notified to the objections, written comments/suggestions and intervention requests addressed to Secret Regional OGRA, describing the manner in which such person/parties may be affected by the grant of this license and may also appear on the below mentioned scheduled Public Hearing.

The intervention request shall be filed alongside the P-1000* (draft) and should be filed by the date of commencement on or before the date of Public Hearing. Copies of the documents submitted by the applicant can be obtained on payment of prescribed charges of Rs.25 per page from the office of Registrar or can be downloaded from OGRA's website.

In regard to all above, OGRA has decided to hold Public Hearing in the public meeting as under given date, time and venue mentioned below:

Date: 24-06-2024 (Monday)

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Venue: OGRA Office, Marine Area, D-10/R, Islamabad

For any information required from the applicant please contact:

Telex Room,

Chief Executive Officer,

Head Office 200 Parkside,

Islamabad.

Telephone: 011-0224410, Fax: 011-0221086,

www.ogra.gov.pk

FOR/REG/1614/23 Dr. Abdul Basit Qureshi

Senior Registrar

Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority

Plot No. 37 & 38, Marine Area,

Islamabad (near G-4/24, Islamabad)

Phone: 011-0224410, 011-0224410, 011-0224410

www.ogra.gov.pk

Public Service Message:

پاکستان گیس ریگولیشن اتھارٹی

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Inflation falls in May

Continued from Page 1

Statistics (PSR) is measuring inflation from a high base of last year. The lower rate did not mean prices did not increase, but slowed down, in May.

According to the IMF and central bank projections, inflation is expected to decrease in the final quarter of the current financial year.

The average CPI inflation during the 11 months (July to May) of the current fiscal year now stands at 24.52pc compared to 26.16pc a year ago.

In May, urban inflation was 14.3pc year-on-year and 2.8pc month-on-month, down from 19.4pc and 0.4pc in March. Rural inflation was 8.2pc year-on-year and 1.7pc month-on-month, down from 14.5pc and 0.9pc in the previous month.

Food, core inflation

Food inflation for May stood at 2.2pc in urban areas and -0.1pc in rural areas, whereas non-food inflation was 23.6pc in urban areas and 17.2pc in rural areas. Food inflation has dropped to a single digit since October 2021, when it was at 9.4pc. Since then, food inflation has progressively increased, with the greatest level reported in May 2023 at 48.1pc.

Core inflation, which strips out volatile food and energy prices, slightly decreased to 12.3pc in urban areas compared to 13.8pc last month. In rural areas, core inflation was recorded at 17pc, down from 19.1pc.

Main contributors

In urban areas, the food items whose prices saw the highest month-on-month decline in May included tomatoes (-51.23pc), onions (-51.15pc), chicken (-35.28pc), wheat (-32.17pc), wheat flour (-20.12pc), fresh fruits (-8.06pc), fresh vegetables (-7.73pc), wheat products (-4.12pc), pulse masoor (-2.51pc), condiments and spices (-2.48pc), rice (-2.42pc), readymade food (-1.72pc), mustard oil (-0.73pc), dry fruits (-0.67pc), pulse moong (-0.59pc), fish (-0.22pc), ghee (-0.05pc) and ice cream (-0.02pc).

The month-on-month increase was recorded in prices of potatoes (14.73pc), meat (4.04pc), beans (3.91pc), eggs (1.69pc), vegetable ghee (1.27pc), cooking oil (1.26pc), pulse moth (1.06pc), gram whole (0.63pc), milk fresh (0.60pc), sugar (0.59pc), pulse gram (0.51pc), environment (0.50pc), milk powder (0.47pc), honey (0.38pc), beverages (0.33pc), milk products (0.19pc), banana (0.17pc) and bakery and confectionery (0.16pc).

In contrast, the items whose prices dropped included kaffir lime leaves (-9.43pc), electricity charges (-4.59pc), motor fuel (-3.19pc), communication apparatus (-2.35pc), construction input items (-0.53pc), solid fuel (-0.40pc), motor vehicles (-0.38pc), household equipment (-0.14pc) and motor vehicle accessories (-0.01pc).

Rs1.4bn okayed for payment of salaries in varsities

QUETTA: Balochistan government has approved Rs1.4 billion for the payment of salaries and pensions to employees, including professors, of the universities in the province. The Education Department has approved Rs700 million for the University of Balochistan, Rs390m for Baluchistan, Rs100m for Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Rs32.50m for Lorelai University, Rs77m for Ladakhi University, Rs77.25m for Turbat University, and Rs1.80m for Mir Chakar Khan Dard University Sibi. —Saleem Shahid

to reduce the expenditures, the prime minister was briefed about a report compiled by a committee headed by the planning commission deputy chairman.

The committee had recommended the abolishment of some government entities and the merger of others. The PM directed the committee to finalise its recommendations.

It has been learnt that after deciding to abolish PWD, the Ministry of Housing and Works has been directed to come up with a plan after PWD employees within one week.

A senior PWD official told Dawn that the department has "constitutional cover" and it could not be closed down through an ordinance. "At least a two-thirds majority is required to shut down PWD," he added. The official said PWD have employees have decided to move

TENDER NOTICE

Bids are invited for the following:

Tender No.	Description	Closing Date/Time
PDR&C/PT/27689/24	Designing and construction of MCC and CCR buildings at Zafar plant Gharhi South, Sanghar	25 Jun, 2024 1500 hrs.
PDR&C/PT/27691/24	Supply of element filters for gas turbine & diesel engine	26 Jun, 2024 1500 hrs.

All bids will be opened 30 minutes after the bids closing date/time.

Addendum & Extension in Bid Closing & Opening Date

Closing and opening date of the following tender has been extended as follows:

Tender No.	Description	Tender Published On	Revised Closing Date/Time
PDR&C/PT/27684/2024	Integrated services for construction of access road and well site and large operations for secondary well (Dolphin X-1) in Sanghar block, Sanghar, Pakistan	18 Apr, 2024	04 Jul, 2024 1500 hrs.

Bidders are required to take notice of the "Annexure-Addendum" uploaded on the eportal along with the complete ITB.

Bidders who have already submitted their proposals (bids) are required to re-submit the same as per the addendum.

All bids will be opened 30 minutes after the revised bids closing date/time.

Extension in Bid Closing & Opening Date

Closing and opening date of the following tender has been extended as follows:

Tender No.	Description	Tender Published On	Revised Closing Date/Time
PDR&C/PT/27689/24	Supply of trap steam, packet, assembly & bucket	09 May, 2024	25 Jun, 2024 1500 hrs.

Bidders who have already submitted/ sent their proposals (bids) may take them back and resubmit the same before the revised closing date and time mentioned above.

All bids will be opened 30 minutes after the revised bids closing date/time.

Tender notice / detailed instructions are available on PPLPA website at www.pplpa.org.pk. Tender documents are available online and bids are also required to be submitted online through PPL's e-procurement portal at <https://e-procurement.ppl.com.pk>. For details, see "Instruction for Bidders" Section of the tender documents. PPL reserves the right to reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal.

Commitment to Communities

Pakistan Petroleum Limited

'PM's China trip to be milestone in bilateral ties'

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong said on Monday that under the guidance of two leadership and strong support from the people of both countries, the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to China would achieve complete success and become a milestone in the development of China-Pakistan relations.

The ambassador in an interview with APP, a day before the prime minister's five-day visit from June 4-8 to China, said that all preparatory works had entered the final stage, and discussions on Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were in full progress.

At the invitation of Premier Li Qiang, Prime Minister

Shehbaz will pay an official visit to China. This is his first visit to China after assuming the office this year.

Highlighting the components of the visit, he said the prime minister would meet and have talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Premier Li Qiang and the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Zhao Lijiang.

"China stands ready to work with Pakistan through this visit to make greater progress in our all-weather strategic cooperative partnership and take new steps in building of an even closer China-Pakistan community with a shared future in the new era," the envoy remarked.—APP



DAWN

Cipher acquittal

YESTERDAY afternoon, Imran Khan and Shuh Mahmood Qureshi stood acquitted of the charge of compromising state secrets, 'Traitors' for a grand total of about four months and one week, the two have been vindicated by the Islamabad High Court of charges brought against them in the infamous 'cipher case', as it came to be known. While the detailed verdict is awaited, it is worth recalling that this was the most serious of the three convictions former prime minister Imran Khan had been slapped with in quick succession in the days leading up to the Feb 8 general election. Both Mr Khan and ex-foreign minister Mr Qureshi had been handed 10 years' rigorous punishment each for, in the eyes of the presiding judge, 'leaking' a secret code and thereby compromising the safety, integrity and credibility of Pakistan's secure communication system with its diplomatic missions abroad. The conviction had precluded Mr Qureshi's right to participate in the general election; Mr Khan had already been deemed ineligible by an earlier conviction in the Toshakhana case.

The verdict had been secured on the state's third attempt at prosecuting the case. Two earlier trials were aborted by the IHC after it found serious irregularities in the proceedings. Even then, the trial court's sentence was almost immediately slammed by the legal community; many had criticised the abnormal circumstances in which the trial was completed. This was the same case, it may be recalled, in which the court had denied the two defendants their right to appoint their own counsels or cross-examine the prosecution's witnesses, even though the prosecution had sought the maximum penalty of a death sentence. Even then, the biggest charge the two were found guilty of — compromising the country's secure diplomatic communication system — was undermined by the Foreign Office shortly after, when it affirmed through a statement that its communication system had been audited and found to be safe and protected. There was, therefore, near unanimity in the legal community that the verdict would be overturned; it was not a question of if but when.

In retrospect, Mr Khan and Mr Qureshi committed a historical blunder and caused an international diplomatic incident by using the cipher as a political prop; however, this was never reason enough to punish them under laws originally meant to prosecute traitors and foreign spies. That, as prime minister, Mr Khan chose to use sensitive diplomatic communications for selfish political reasons, imperilling diplomatic ties with the country's largest trading partner, should have been left as something for voters to ponder. Instead, our state, in its desperation to victimise another ex-prime minister, once again left them looking like more of a hero than they perhaps deserved to be. There are lessons aplenty in this saga but will our state ever learn?

China sojourn

AS the prime minister begins his five-day visit to China today, investment — particularly to reinvigorate the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor — will top the agenda. Shehbaz Sharif is due to meet the top tier of the Chinese leadership, including President Xi Jinping, and will visit various regions as Pakistan seeks to attract substantial Chinese investment. Of course, how many of these pledges materialise into much-needed dollars flowing into Pakistan, and the attendant infrastructure and jobs, remains to be seen. For the moment, the mood on both sides seems positive, and the challenges standing in the way of realising CPEC's second phase can be overcome if both capitals deal with these proactively.

Envisaged over a decade ago, CPEC has been touted as a 'game changer' by the state, while critics have termed it a 'debt trap'. A more dispassionate analysis suggests that the multibillion-dollar scheme has been beneficial to Pakistan, bringing online a number of power projects, as well as expanding the road network. Yet many promises remain unfulfilled; for example, the special economic zones have yet to open for business, while Pakistan is saddled with billions in Chinese debt. Therefore, Prime Minister Sharif's visit presents an opportunity to address these challenges. With regard to Beijing's concerns, the safety of its workers in Pakistan will naturally be near the top of the agenda. The March terrorist attack in Dera in which five Chinese nationals were killed exemplifies the security challenges Pakistan will have to overcome if it seeks to attract more qualified Chinese manpower and funds to take the next phase of CPEC forward. Unless the scourge of terrorism is neutralised, other foreign investors, too, will be wary about bringing their money and people to Pakistan. Moreover, some media reports point to Chinese concerns regarding bureaucratic bottlenecks and political instability that stand in the way of smooth project operations. Perhaps this is the raison d'être of the SIFC — to assure investors of continuity in policies. Pakistan should also be mentally prepared to deal with the geopolitical blowback of expanding CPEC, particularly 'feedback' from Western capitals unhappy about deepening Sino-Pakistan ties. It is difficult but possible to maintain an equilibrium between the West and China. Also, the benefits of new projects should flow to underdeveloped communities, specifically in Balochistan and KP, to ensure that growth is equitable.

Measles resurgence

THE alarming rise in measles cases across Pakistan signals a burgeoning public health crisis that demands immediate intervention. Latest reports show the disease wreaking havoc in cities in Punjab. With around 3,400 cases since January this year, the situation in the province is dire. Several fatalities have already been reported, with some pending confirmation. This trend is echoed nationwide, including in Sindh and KP, though the more significant outbreaks have been reported from north Punjab. Measles, a highly contagious viral disease, poses severe risks to children, especially those who are malnourished or unvaccinated. Complications include pneumonia, encephalitis, severe diarrhoea, dehydration, and blindness. The recent spike in cases among infants younger than nine months is particularly of concern, as the standard vaccination schedule starts after this age.

So what has led to such a spike? A key driver is low vaccination rates, which the WHO has consistently warned the world about. The Covid pandemic disrupted routine immunisation services worldwide, leading to a significant drop in vaccination coverage. Misinformation and the global 'anti-vax' movement added fuel to the fire. The result is a backlog of children around the world who are at high risk. In Pakistan, malnutrition has exacerbated the severity of measles and its complications. To address this escalating emergency, the government must intensify vaccination campaigns. It is encouraging that during the upcoming anti-polio campaign, the government plans to simultaneously check for measles cases and administer measles shots to children in some areas. This must be extended to all cities. Alongside, public health education campaigns are crucial to raise awareness about the importance of the jab and early intervention. Improving access to healthcare services in underserved areas and addressing the nutritional needs of children is equally vital. Of particular importance is accountability among health officials to prevent negligence. The government must act swiftly.

OPINION



BY ARIFA NOOR

A changing world

Equating criticism on social media with terrorism can distract attention from violent threats.

LAST week, the military leadership got together for discussions and brainstorming in what is called the 'formation commanders conference'. The series of meetings ended in a press release. We were told by more than one commentator that the press release which follows such a meeting is the policy statement of the institution. Even if it wasn't, any press release emanating from the institution is read widely and sincerely. This one was no different.

While the press release was wide-ranging, it also spoke of 'politically motivated and vested digital terrorism' against 'state institutions' aimed at including 'discrediting in the Pakistanisation, to sow discord among national institutions, especially the armed forces, and the people of Pakistan by peddling blatant lies, fake news, and propaganda'. Most commentators interpreted this as being directed at the use of social media by the PTI. No wonder, then, that this point was discussed in detail, along with other issues highlighted. Many read it as a warning to the party.

However, interpretations aside, it also sent some of us in search of the meaning of the term 'digital terrorism'. The manner in which it was used — spreading discrediting and discord among people and institutions through fake news and propaganda — seems different from many of the definitions available at forums which research terrorism or cyberterrorism or digital terrorism, where definitions vary, as they also do in the case of terrorism. Some of the definitions focus on attacks on computer systems and the use of viruses, others on the use of internet to conduct violence, while some may focus on terrorists using these technologies to carry out violent attacks. It may seem unnecessary exercise to split hairs but definitions do matter.

After all, Pakistani society in general and the Pakistan Army in particular know better than most the scourge of terrorism. Even at present, we are struggling with the challenge — according to one report, during the first four months,

the country reported nearly 250 incidents of terrorism and counterterrorism operations, while fatalities numbered around 280.

The fears are that the challenge may grow as we struggle to get a grip on it, as has happened in the past, where at one point the militants even controlled tracts of territory. Commentators are pointing out that the situation can deteriorate rapidly, especially as the country's leadership is grappling with a multitude of crises.

In this larger context, equating all shades of criticism and incorrect information on social media (however organised it may be) with terrorism can undermine or even distract attention from the seriousness of the violent threat we face in Balochistan and KP. After all, if the primary institution, which is the first line of defence, will term certain actions 'terrorism', the people are bound to believe it and think it is no different from the lives we are losing in the physical world. This can complicate matters because, in the past also, we have grappled with a time when half the challenge was to convince ordinary citizens of the threat that terrorists posed.

Second, it is also worth pointing out that those press releases are perhaps read and absorbed the world over. For who doesn't know that, more than the politicians and civilian governments, it is Pakistan's military that is headed internationally as the only 'modern', 'meritocratic' institution in a country which is crumbling faster than is safe or comfortable? For it to appear to set itself against the changes in the world is a bit worrying; at times, it appears the discord is with the use of modern communication strategy, such as social media, rather than an improper use. The criticism in the press release is being viewed in the larger context where X has been blocked in the country for months and the government is also planning to bring in some new legislation to 'regulate' social media.

What message will this send to the world? Surely, our message to the world should be one which is in sync with the modern world. This is

particularly important at a time when Pakistan is trying to encourage foreign investment and exports. While a focus on traditional exports is fine, some suggest the country needs to focus on nontraditional areas such as IT, where growth in past months has been healthy. But this will require better policies and more stability rather than internet outages or bans on platforms, permanent or temporary.

Similarly, young people need to be encouraged to enter the field instead of being discouraged. This seems a bit difficult in the prevailing environment, where government officials are sitting themselves against modern technologies which are changing the entire world.

Third, there has to be a better understanding of the context in which the criticism on social media is taking place instead of pointing it all with the same black paint. Is it the criticism of the state on social media or other conversations on X, YouTube and elsewhere, no one is denying there are issues which need to be addressed. But this needs to be done after much consideration and consultation, which will address the problems without asphyxiating the entire space. Our efforts to regulate social media should not be at the expense of its benefits and place in the present and future. This will not be easy to do if the dominant discourse is about equating the entire social media universe with evil or terrorism.

Other than being an integral part of the future, we also need to understand it is an intuitive tool for the younger generations. If they are expressing anger and frustration on it, one must try and understand the roots of the anger. And if this younger generation now overlaps with the support base of an aggressive political party, the need is even greater for reaching out. To simply create or confirm the confrontation will increase the distance between the state and younger generations. Surely, even in counterterrorism, it is best to weaken the 'monolith' the non-state actor appears to be. ■

The writer is a journalist.

INDIAN POLLS



BY JAWED NAQVI

India awaits an existential verdict



RESULTS for the Indian elections will be announced today. The needlessly nervous contest for 543 Lok Sabha seats in extremely punishing weather saw at least a dozen poll officials killed by heatstroke. That the voters still came out should be a testament to their faith in democracy.

The campaign had the prime minister ever more viciously targeting the Muslim community, describing them as infiltrators who posed a demographic threat to 80 per cent of Hindus. His office published spurious data in the middle of the elections to shore up the lie. He accused Muslims of spying Hindu women's mangamalas, and every Hindu's job and even huffaloes. He described the Congress manifesto as a Muslim League document. And since Muslims were infiltrators in his view and their population would sooner than later reduce Hindus to a minority, as per his claim, a larger and more dire message could be gleaned: that they were a threat that needed to be vacated at once.

The imagery of the accusation seemed lifted from the Nazi codex for spawning a racist ideology. Having said his hate-filled piece, Prime Minister Modi swore to his handpicked TV interviewers that he had never targeted Muslims, for if he did, he wouldn't be worthy of leading the country. Mr Modi's legendary about-face and doublespeak are too numerous to list.

He threatened the opposition with dire consequences for criticising his policies, the recent nerve for him being the persistent charge about his crony capitalist friends, a key opposition theme in the campaign. He didn't spell out how he would deal with the opposition, but did menacingly gnash his teeth to warn the young opposition in Bihar, the 34-year-old Tejash Yadav, that he faces jail after the polls.

In the meantime, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's three-week bail period ended on Sunday, and he is back in prison. The chief minister of Jharkhand resigned after being arrested before the polls, and he too is in jail, as are far too many left and liberal intellectuals of India. They are languishing in prison cells across the country with little hope of their so-called terror trials starting anytime soon. Unreported and invisible to the media, the farmers are continuing to sit in

protest in Punjab to press for the prime minister's unfulfilled promises to be met.

Mr Modi donned a range of attitudes, contrasting with Rahul Gandhi's plain white shirt. Their competition was amusing. After Rahul jumped into the Arabian Sea from a fishing boat, Mr Modi sat in meditation in a shallow sea — with his eyes closed in silence and his security providing a tube for him to breathe normally — but not without an underwater camera transmitting the event. Rahul had a swimming outing with some of the leading wrestlers in the field, and then got his beard trimmed by a street corner barber in Rae Bareilly. Mr Modi responded by announcing himself as an avatar of a divine deity, and therefore not to be confused with ordinary human beings.

Will India find its soul again as was envisaged by the founding fathers?

Having said his bit, he went off to meditate once more, sadrum-clad like Swami Vivekananda, to the southernmost tip of India, where the sea had set in contemplation in 1893. TV paraphernalia was in attendance. Mr Modi has never allowed it to miss his attention-seeking antics in the 10 years he has ruled India as a wilful and whimsical autocrat.

An existential question has been asked about today's coming verdict: would India find its soul again, as was envisaged by the founding fathers who gave it an enviable constitution, or would it wither into oblivion and be recast into an ideologically driven state inspired by the divine doctrine of Hindutva?

Everyone agrees that India won't be the same after June 4. If Prime Minister Narendra Modi gets a thumping majority, as exit polls claim against the more tempered estimates of the opposition, it could very much signal the final assault on Gandhi's and Nehru's and, above all, Ambedkar's idea of India. And the assault would

come from a more ardent right-wing Hindu nationalist disposition.

I deliberately mentioned Ambedkar, the Dalit member of the constituent assembly who handed the panel that drafted the constitution, the globally venerated book that is increasingly reviled by Hindutva advocates but which Rahul Gandhi flouted at every election rally. When Mahatma Gandhi asked Ambedkar to join the temple entry movement to allow Dalits into Hindu temples from where they were banished by the Brahmin priesthood, he flatly turned down the offer. It was for Hindus to decide how they wished to project their truth, Ambedkar said. But he would rather have his Dalit people get education and find good jobs, instead of wasting their energies on temple visits.

The constitution Ambedkar helped frame nudged Indians to seek his scientific spirit. Mr Modi's methods contravene the enshrined quest by playing on ignorance and superstition of large swathes of the masses that the Congress had failed to address, leave alone weed out, in its decades-long rule.

Rahul was focused on the rights of and justice for the exploited masses, above all women. Let's focus also on the duties for citizens mandated in the constitution, which Mr Modi mocks. "It shall be the duty of every citizen to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture." There's a particular focus precisely on safeguarding the environment, whereby citizens must "protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers, wildlife, and to have compassion for creatures". But perhaps, closest to Ambedkar and Nehru was the quest "to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform". And how Indians under Modi should "promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities; [and] renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women".

India awaits an existential verdict with plenty of hope but with a barking, four toes. ■

The writer is Dawn's correspondent in Delhi. jawednaqvi@gmail.com

OPINION



BY NASIRA HABIB

Tyranny of learning

SCHOOL education in Pakistan plays no constructive role in cultivating a civic sense in students. It fails to prepare responsible citizens. The social studies school curriculum claims a paradigm shift to an inquiry-based approach, focusing on 'student constructed' learning, instead of teacher-transmitted information. It also recognises that learning experiences must be relevant to students' daily lives.

The prerequisites of such an approach are relevant cultural context, understanding of students' prior knowledge, interactive teaching, active participation, and recognising the critical importance of their voices. However, these essential elements are missing in textbooks.

There has been no effort to locate the teaching of citizenship in students' socio-cultural realities in primary school textbooks. On the contrary, the text is context neutral and abstract. The language is dull, monotonous and difficult. Not only linguistically but conceptually as well, it is age-inappropriate. The content is confusing and the vocabulary and concepts far more advanced than their comprehension level. A chapter on general knowledge uses six sentences to educate six-year-old Grade 2 children on rights and duties, including the right to religious freedom. Without explaining human rights, a table gives four types of rights and five kinds of responsibilities.

The rights include the freedom to choose an occupation, the right to shelter homes for destitute people, and the right to electricity, gas, clean drinking water, a safe environment, housing, education, protection, and healthcare. Furthermore, the textbooks want children to 'define' a government and its rules and responsibilities.

The chapter on the role of the government and citizens for Grade 3 is no less pathetic. The curriculum expects seven-year-old children to link water shortages in some areas of Pakistan to the increase in population, a lower water table, absence of water storage facilities, poor water supply management and irrational water use. The textbook also asks them to give suggestions on how a government and citizens can collaborate to meet the needs of a community.

At the end of the lesson, they must know the qualities of good citizens, for example, being law-abiding, responsible, trustworthy, gender just, tolerant, and respectful of others' rights. The relevant chapters for Grade 4 take children further away from their reality and achieve new heights of abstraction. The chapter on citizenship describes at least 33 complex concepts in 26 sentences. Almost every sentence pre-

sents a new idea.

Students are required to memorise the definitions of an 'ordinary', 'dignified' and 'global' citizen. They have to endlessly repeat and commit to memory complex concepts like the caste system, international affairs, conflict resolution through dialogue, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, protection of language and culture, religious freedom, right of movement, speech and expression, payment of taxes, and changes in rights and responsibilities over time. In addition, 26 bullet points present an array of rights and duties for the three categories of citizens.

There is an absence of sensitivity to the textbooks pertaining to children's lived experiences, the extent of their exposure, location, access to technology, etc. The textbooks also appear to overlook teachers' ability to deal with such intellectually challenging concepts. The borrowed format of the presentation and layout of the text makes a mockery of the thought behind the format.

Such imposed and undemocratic education is a tyranny for learners. It loads them to using hollow words, having no democratic values and convictions, and lacking the courage to stand up for civic ideals. Poor governance, slackness in law enforcement, and rampant corruption reinforce their ignorance and disbelief in democratic values. People without a value system, logical thinking, and decision-making tools become conformists and follow the crowd.

We must teach democratic behaviour and form habits from the first day of school. Instead of talking about JS, MMR and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, education must be structured around everyday happenings involving children, inviting them to express their views, listening to them, and giving them ownership in decision-making, such as developing classroom rules.

School life presents many situations in the classroom, in the lab, in the library, in the garden and on the playground, which themselves relate to issues of rights and duties, justice and fair play, gender equity and responsibility, and need resolution. Such immersion would help children think and act democratically. Textbooks must facilitate these processes. Otherwise, they are counterproductive. ■

The writer is an educational environmentalist and ecological gardener. nasira@hij.edu.pk

The writer is an educational environmentalist and ecological gardener. nasira@hij.edu.pk



BY NASEER MEMON

Monsoon menace

WITH the approach of the monsoons, timely precaution is needed. The South Asian Climate Outlook Forum has anticipated above-normal rains in the region during the season. Rainfall and temperature outlook maps from the SACOF-28 report forecast heavy rains in all the provinces and extensive temperatures in Pakistan's snow-capped mountainous belt. This suggests looming flood conditions.

Sindh is the most vulnerable province as it is the final destination of glacial melt in the north and the hill torrents of southern Punjab and eastern Balochistan. A closer look at the temperature and rainfall maps of the report indicates the following perilous scenario for Sindh.

(1) Soaring temperatures in the north triggering snowmelt and consequent flooding of the Indus river.

(2) Excessive rainfall in southern Punjab unleashing hill torrents from Koh-i-Suleman, which will eventually join the Indus river to swell its flows.

(3) Abnormal rains in eastern Balochistan, which can produce gushing spate flows entering Sindh from the Kirthar Hills. This flow can exert stress on the Flood Protection (FP) Band and embankments of the Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD), turning Lake Manchhar into a threat.

(4) Heavy downpours in Sindh can choke malfunctioning drainage networks on both sides of the Indus and create ponds in case there are breaches and spill-overs. Sindh witnessed a combination of the first two scenarios in 2010, while an amalgam of the latter two was endured in 2022, causing calamity.

The next monsoon season is set to begin in a few weeks. The authorities remain in a state of slumber until disaster knocks. Precautions are delayed. They should realise that urgent actions can mitigate the repercussions.

A monsoon monitoring and coordination cell should be established at the Provincial Disaster Management Authority and equipped with technical, financial, logistical and human resources to enable swift action in case of an adverse situation. In 2022, a major disaster was unleashed due to record-breaking rains in eastern Balochistan in July and August. An enormous quantum of water entered Sindh along the foothills of the Kirthar range. The FP Band couldn't withstand the water sheet and was breached at five locations. The banks of the RBOD and Supri Band also collapsed, inundating vast areas in Kirthar, Mithankot and Dadu districts. The Sindh irrigation department should devise a communication mechanism that can be put to use by the department and its

counterpart in Balochistan to obtain timely updates on the rainfall and the consequent flows likely to veer towards Sindh. The FP Band and the banks of the RBOD need critical surveillance to avert breaching.

After entering Sindh, the floodwaters travel the length of the 277-kilometre-long FP Band before reaching Manchhar. The irrigation department has to ensure the timely emptying of the lake to absorb these flows. In 2022, delayed emptying resulted in breaches and relief cuts to save Sotawan town. Dozens of villages between Sotawan and Dadu were isolated. Dadu, Jolri and Mehran just about managed to avert a disaster, thanks to the concerted efforts of the local community and authorities.

Clogged natural waterways are a chronic cause of flooding. In a bid to appease a few political favourites, the government exposes millions of poor people to flooding risks. A study commissioned by the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority in 2012 outlined all blocked waterways and suggested a plan for the rehabilitation of the drainage network on the left bank side.

In January 2021, the Sindh High Court ordered the removal of encroachments from irrigation department lands by

June 30.

More recently, the court's Sukkur bench issued a verdict in February 2023, asking the government to improve the drainage of storm water from both sides of the Indus by reviving the natural waterways via the construction of new surface/storm drains in the remaining area. The verdict identified 31 obstructions in waterways from Balochistan to Manchhar on the right bank side, and advised the authorities to rectify matters. These efforts yielded no result.

Obstructions created by the Left Bank Outfall Drain against the natural flow of the Poran river caused havoc in Jhok in Mirpurkhas and put parts of Badin at risk in 2022. RBOD underpasses and regulatory infrastructure at every point need to be completed before the monsoons. Similarly, the Aral Weir canal, which has been adequately remodelled, was meant to drain the surplus flows of Manchhar to the Indus, but the old regulator on the Indus Highway has not yet been removed. It can potentially cause a bottleneck and make Sotawan and Dadu vulnerable as in 2022. Deviation due to delayed action can cost far more than investment in resilience. ■

The writer is a civil society professional. naseer2004@yahoo.com

FROM THE PAST PAGES OF DAWN

1974 | Fifty years ago

Inciting emotions

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Bhutto today [June 3] advised the Opposition ... to look at the developments that have followed the Rawalpindi incident soberly ... and not to try to incite emotions, which may affect the solidarity ... of the country. ... He said people everywhere wondered what had gone wrong with social order in Pakistan and they asked whether "we are so immature that we are unable to resolve our problems in a decent and democratic manner".

He said in spite of continuous suffering of the Pakistani nation, "we continue to pile up problems on problem ... to fight among ourselves ... with hatred, bigotry and animosity". The situation arising out of the Rawalpindi incident ... was not a new development, as the "problem" existed before Partition and led to the first Martial Law in the country in 1953. ... The Prime Minister said the categorisation of minorities had been defined in the Constitution, whose principles were agreed upon with consensus of all the parties and signed by the Jinnah-i-Islami and Mufi Mahmood. ... The [PM] referred to the oath prescribed for the President and Prime Minister incorporating belief in the finality of Prophethood. — Islamabad Bureau

1949 | Seventy-five years ago

Kashmir deadlock

LAKE SUCCESS: The United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan is expected to report continued deadlock in negotiations to end the Indo-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir. United Nations officials said that they believed it might ... be necessary to call another meeting of the Security Council. ... The Commission's report was expected to be made today [June 3] to Mr Trygve Lie, United Nations Secretary-General, following the receipt of replies from both Governments to its last three proposals.

Leading [UN] officials believed that if the Security Council were summoned for another review of the situation, it would be called upon to re-examine the Commission's terms of reference and ... scope of its functions.

Three courses might then be open, according to [UN] opinion: (1) Disband the Commission; (2) Continue the Commission with wider powers; or (3) Find a new formula which could combine functions with those of Admiral Chester Nimitz, Kashmir Plebiscite Administrator. It is felt here that they might consider altering Nimitz's status to give him the wider powers of a Mediator — on the lines of the late Count Folke Bernadotte in Palestine. — News agencies

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.



Fares remain static for no good reason

THERE has been a substantial reduction in the price of petrol and diesel, which has come as a breath of fresh air for the general public, but transport fares have not seen any dip at all, in buses, coaches, including those running on intercity routes, continue to charge the exorbitant prices that had been hiked when the fuel prices had gone up.

For once, the government has provided the much-needed relief to the common man in the shape of price reduction, but the benefit had remained limited to those who own motorcycles or cars. Those who depend on public transport, however, have continued to dish out the same fares. This is one of the reasons we see, as is shown in the accompanying image, seriously 'overloaded' motorcycles on the roads. People have no choice because the entire benefit of price reduction is being taken away by the transporter.

Transporters always raise fares rather sagely whenever there is an increase in fuel prices. They do not wait for official announcements; a mere word of mouth is enough for them to start overcharging the passengers. However, they are slow, almost reluctant, in reducing the fares when fuel prices drop, often citing various excuses. Over the last month, within which there have been two price reductions, the transporters have simply shrugged off the matter altogether.

Unfortunately, this reluctance to lower fares highlights a persistent obstacle in the way of ensuring that the benefits of reduced fuel prices are passed on to the public. The true benefit will only be realised when the government takes steps in this regard.

The government must issue revised fare schedules for public transport, and ensure strict enforcement. Just as increases in fuel prices lead to higher transportation costs and, consequently, overall inflation, the benefits of price reduction should also be reflected in terms of reduced transportation costs and fares.

Gulshah Ghavid
Turbat

BRT is a punishment

WHILE dilapidated roads and crumbling infrastructure across Karachi have been a cause of misery, the so-called 'development' work by the government has only been adding to the woes of the people. The delayed construction of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Red Line project is a case in point to show how the authorities have been punishing — yes, punishing — the people of Karachi using the language of development.

The revised deadline of June 2024 for the completion of the project is simply unfair and unacceptable. It will definitely exacerbate the suffering of millions of people who rely on this route for their daily commute. The worst part is that nobody really knows if the project will be able to meet even the revised deadline. There was some work carried out on the project initially, but then came the usual suspension of activity that is the hallmark of all 'development' projects undertaken in the city.

According to the government, work has been delayed due to inflation and the consequent increase in the cost of the project. Even if the reason is valid, who is responsible? Is it not the government's core responsibility to have a realistic cost estimation? And, if there is still some revision to be done, should it not be done without affecting the pace of work?

The stalled project is causing severe disruptions owing to dug-up roads, open drains and excessive dust in the area that has been posing serious health hazards, particularly respiratory problems as well as eye irritation.

The incumbent government must take immediate action to expedite the construction process and also provide alternative solutions to mitigate the impact on the people who are suffering for long.

Shameel Qureshi
Karachi

Empowering MSMEs

PAKISTAN has made significant strides on the financial inclusion front, but there remains a gender gap that needs to be bridged. By offering easy access to credit, savings as well as insurance products, microfinance institutions have empowered women, including those in rural areas, to pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions.

Helping Pakistan move forward on the road to economic recovery, the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) sector has emerged as a leading player, providing much-needed support and capital to budding entrepreneurs and existing businesses alike.

By embracing a truly holistic approach, microfinance banks in Pakistan have combined financial services with the professional capacity-building initiatives

at the institutional level and with the support of the State Bank of Pakistan to nurture a culture of learning and entrepreneurship among the underserved.

By extending a microcredit line and a comprehensive set of financial services, including bank accounts, fund transfers, internet and mobile banking, credit and insurance, to aspiring entrepreneurs and rural communities, MSMEs have been able to unlock a wave of innovation and enterprise, ensuring a more inclusive and dynamic economy.

The nation's journey towards inclusive economic growth demands concerted efforts from all the relevant stakeholders. Bolstering investments in financial literacy programmes as well as digital infrastructure are paramount, ensuring that both individuals and businesses can harness the full potential of microfinance as a truly powerful instrument of change.

Muhammad Aftab Akram
Karachi

A justified decision

GONE are the days when it was a pleasure to fly with the national flag carrier, the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). There have been three events in the last few weeks that should not have taken place at all. First, a body of a six-year-old boy was left behind at Islamabad airport by a Skardu-bound flight when PIA staff 'forgot' to do what was needed.

The bereaved family was carrying the body for burial in the native town. The family on board and also the relatives were to retrieve the body on reaching Skardu, but, unfortunately, it was left behind in Islamabad.

What is more saddening and irritating was the four-hour delay of flight owing to a change in plan by a minister who was to fly to Dight from Islamabad, but decided at the last minute that it was actually Skardu where he wanted to be. This change of plan meant keeping the passengers waiting till his arrival at the airport.

In another incident, a passenger was left in the airplane's washroom when all the passengers had disembarked. It has become an irritating norm that PIA flights depart late and, as such, arrive behind schedule at the destination, which causes a great inconvenience to the passengers.

In a separate incident, a Toronto-bound flight from Islamabad had to be diverted to Karachi because of a technical fault. It caused great anguish to all the passengers on board. With things being what they are, it is only logical for the current government to try to privatise the national airline. Privatisation, come to think of it, will at least give the airline a chance to bring back its lost glory, which is actually what we the nation want. Don't we?

Dr Saeed Jaffer
Karachi

Anti-tobacco steps

THE World No Tobacco Day was recently observed (May 31), with the campaign theme this year focusing on efforts towards protecting children from the influence of tobacco industry. In my university life, I remember having a conversation that has stayed with me since then.

As a student volunteer for a cancer hospital at the time, I once used to help organise awareness sessions for the prevention as well as early detection of cancer. One time, I was discussing



organising a session on anti-tobacco awareness, and a friend, who used to smoke himself, asked me why I thought children would choose a session to get lectured about what they already know is bad for their health.

Unsurprisingly, this highlights the challenge of connecting with our youth on the critical issue at a time when the tobacco industry is using newer tactics to make its products appealing to the younger generation, such as introducing flavours and using social media platforms that are popular among the youth. The latest trick being used is that of e-cigarettes. Even if these are considered a cessation tool for adults who already smoke, it should never be encouraged as an effective alternative to smoking among the young as it can actually lead them to start smoking. Indeed, there are many experts who do not recommend the use of e-cigarettes even as a cessation tool.

Distastefully, smoking increases the risk of at least 20 different types of cancers as well as disease related to the lung, kidney and heart. In Pakistan, oral and lung cancers are among the leading cancer types. According to data from Karachi, oral cancer is prevalent and this is attributable to the prevalence of chewing tobacco. The problem is that people are generally aware of the harmful effects of tobacco usage, but they do not know how to quit. We need to make tobacco cessation support more widely accessible across the country.

Mariam Khan
Lahore

► **CRITICAL QUESTIONS:** Anyone who thinks that the condition of masses has improved in recent times actually needs to check their optimism by answering a set of questions. Have the prices of electricity units decreased? Has it become easier for the common man to put two square meals on the family table every day without any difficulty? Has householding of natural gas come to an end? Honest answers to these questions will bring to surface what the facts really are. **Hameed Jadoon**
Karachi

► **BIRDS AND HEATWAVES:** As the meteorological department has predicted heat waves across many cities of Sindh and Punjab, people would do well to take care of the avian population as well. The birds remain in the open during scorching heat. People should mark spots on their rooftops and keep bowls filled with water so that the birds may drink and take a dip in the water to keep themselves protected against the deleterious effects of heatwaves. **Abdul Haq Bander**
Rahowar

► **UNENDING PROTEST:** Doctors and paramedic staff recently observed a boycott of their duties at Chaudhry Medical College and Hospital in Larkana, putting lives of many a patient at risk. The ongoing battle between the lawyer fraternity and the doctors after the death of an advocate's daughter who was brought to the healthcare facility for treatment led to a chaos at the hospital. The authorities should intervene in such cases. **Rahat Ali Musarat**
Larkana

► **SHATTERED DREAM:** This is with reference to the photograph showing raw sewage on M.A. Jinnah Road, with the manuscript of the Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah right behind the mess (Metro-South, May 17). In essence, the photograph perfectly summed up the whole tale of how miserably we, as a nation, have failed to keep the Quaid's final mental vision of cleanliness alive, let alone the elements of justice and freedom. **S. Nageem Agha Raza**
Karachi

External Ombudsman

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

Militant killed, cop hurt as attack on polio team foiled in Lakki

By Our Correspondent

LAKKI MAHWAT: A militant was killed and a policeman injured when cops escorting a polio team in Betawal subdivision of Lakki Marwat came across a group of miscreants, triggering a gun battle here on Monday.

A five-day anti-polio drive began amid tight security in the district with over 1,000 personnel deployed to guard polio workers.

An official said that the policeman came face to face with militants in Wargaray area of the tribal subdivision.

He said that the exchange of fire continued for some time as the assailants used automatic weapons, injuring a cop, identified as Bester Ali.

"The law enforcers returned the attack and neutralised a militant," the official claimed, adding that the cops seized an AK-47 assault rifle, bullets and hand grenades from the killed militant, and shifted his body to the District Headquarters Hospital, Tarpazi.

He said that after the attack, a heavy police contingent reached the site and launched a search for the remaining assailants in the area.

Later, district police officer Tahir Khan visited the hospital and enquired after the wounded constable.

Meanwhile, in Bannu, over 2,400 policemen have been deployed across the district to provide foolproof security to polio workers.

DPO Ziauddin Ahmed is monitoring the security arrangements for the ongoing polio vaccination campaign.

He paid visits to the centres established at hospitals, and checked the presence of policemen escorting the mobile teams.

Mr Zia asked the subordinate police officers to sensitize policemen to the security standard operating procedures and ensure they wore helmets and bulletproof jackets during duty hours.

Separately, the police arrested a proclaimed offender in injured condition in Wanda (Baloch area of Sana Gumbila) on Monday.

The police had received information about the presence of an outlaw, Shafiqullah, at his hideout in the rural locality, an official said, adding a police party was dispatched to the area to arrest him. He said the outlaw opened fire when he noticed police around his hideout.

In the retaliatory firing by the police, the outlaw was injured and later arrested with an assault rifle, ammunition, over two kilograms hashish and 480 gram ice drug.

The official said that the arrested suspect was a contract killer and was wanted by the police in murder and narcotics selling cases.

The police shifted the injured to the DHQ Hospital, and registered a case against him under relevant sections of law.



A MABOH regains Bab-e-Khyber in Jamrud as part of a beautification plan. A gateway of historic Khyber Pass, it was built in 1904 by the then military ruler, Gen Ayub Khan. —Photo by Ibrahim Shireen

KP govt to provide free solar system to poor households

CM renews call for withdrawal of cases against Imran

By Umar Farooq

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Monday announced the provision of free solar systems to families living below the poverty line in the province.

He also said his government would offer subsidised solar systems to lower-middle-class families, with half of the costs to be shared by both.

"Unlike the federal government that doesn't care about the poor, we have planned a landmark initiative of providing such facilities with solar systems free of charge," Mr Gandapur told the provincial assembly during a session chaired by Speaker Babar Saleem Swan here.

The chief minister said as part of its solarisation plans, the government would install solar systems in its offices, buildings, and educational institutions, as well as in water and sanitation service companies.

He rejected the opposition's criticism of the announcement of the province's budget ahead of the federal one, saying there were no issues with doing so.

Mr Gandapur said the province's projected budgetary allocations for the fiscal year 2024-25 won't see any reduction and instead would go up after the

federal government announced its budget.

He said the economic growth rate was 6.2 per cent during the last two years of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government in the centre but it plunged to just one per cent.

The chief minister raised questions about the federal government's spending amid high inflation.

"We [the KP government] aren't receiving funds despite the federal government's commitments. We have reservations about it and will highlight it," he said.

Mr Gandapur also called for a debate on the Rs220 billion in annual payments to independent power producers, insisting many IPPs didn't even produce electricity.

He said the centre had promised massive development funds to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's merged tribal districts after their merger with the province, but a meagre amount was given away for the purpose.

"Out of the promised Rs500 billion, our tribal districts have got just Rs100 billion. People question where the rest of the money has gone," he said.

The chief minister warned that if the centre didn't provide Rs100 billion to tribal districts, it should prepare for a "strong reaction."

He wondered how it was possible to maintain law and order without funds.

Mr Gandapur claimed that the province didn't even get a single penny from the funds for the fight against terrorism.

He said that the provincial govern-

ment provided Rs7 billion to strengthen the police, considering the improvement of law and order the biggest challenge.

The chief minister warned that he and his party's lawmakers wouldn't relax if the centre denied the province insights.

"If the federal government cuts higher education funding, the act will be tantamount to laying land mines for itself," he said.

Mr Gandapur said his party PTF's leader and former prime minister, Imran Khan, was jailed just because he spoke for the people.

He wondered who would be held responsible for the prolonged detention of Mr Imran after his acquittal in the cipher case.

The chief minister said unfortunately, the people who urged authorities to make the Hamoodur Rahman Commission report on the fall of Bhutto public were being called traitors.

"We have run out of patience," he said, complaining about the imprisonment of the PTF leader and the denial of the election symbol 'has' to the party.

Mr Gandapur renewed the demand for immediate withdrawal of all cases against Mr Imran for his release.

He said instead of admitting past mistakes and learning from them, authorities were committing more.

The chief minister wondered how many people would be allowed for defiance.

Earlier, lawmakers "condemned" the death of Mune Khan, a student of the

University of Malakand, in a road accident after the administration reportedly asked him to leave the premises at night for "playing rabab" in his hostel room.

They demanded the suspension of the university's vice-chancellor and provost, as well as the doctor of the Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar, who refused a bed to the student when he was taken there with serious injuries.

Higher education minister Mune Khan Afridi informed the house that he was dissatisfied with the probe report on the matter and formed another inquiry committee to come up with its findings.

He said the VC and provost could be suspended by the university's syndicate only.

The speaker asked him to call a meeting of the university's syndicate for the suspension of the VC and provost over the student's death.

The house also unanimously passed a resolution demanding regularisation of women teachers of the Elementary and Secondary Education Foundation.

In the resolution, MPA Iqbalullah complained that each of the women teachers of the foundation got Rs21,000 every month but had to pay rent and transport charges from that meagre amount.

Meanwhile, finance minister Afshar Alam Afridi presented a report on the biannual monitoring of the implementation of the National Finance Commission Award (July-Dec 2023) in the house.

Policeman shot dead in North Waziristan

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: A policeman was killed in a targeted attack in Shinwal tribal of North Waziristan district here on Monday.

The incident occurred in Almar village when unknown motorcyclists opened fire on Abdul Hashim outside his house. As a result, the policeman died instantly. The attackers managed to escape.

The police launched an investigation into the incident.

On May 26, two people were killed in a targeted attack by unknown persons in Miral. —Correspondent

Protesters want Malakand varsity top officials sacked over student's death

The student was expelled from hostel 'for playing rabab'

Dawn Report

PESHAWAR/LOWER DIR: Artists and youth staged a peaceful protest against the death of a student of University of Malakand, who had died

in a road accident after being allegedly expelled from the hostel over playing rabab on the campus.

The protest was arranged by Humayun Tolana, Development Coordinator and Forum for Inquiry, Knowledge and Review.

A statement issued here said that a large number of youth artists gathered outside Peshawar Press Club and artists played their rababs to protest the

death of Muhammad Mune Khan, a sixth semester student of University of Malakand.

Protesters were holding placards and banners inscribed with slogans in favour of Mune Khan. They also demanded the resignation of Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Mohammad Bilal Sothi, Hostel Warden, Prof Gulzar Jaleel, Kamran Farooq Sothi, Advocate Raheem Jan, Naibsan Omar, Farooq Khan, Haris Kamal, Advocate Arbab Ibrahim and Shabbir

Chagharmatti took part in the protest.

They said that all people responsible for death of Mune Khan should be brought to justice. They also demanded of the government to terminate from service the provost of Malakand University, hostel warden and chief provost. They must be barred from holding any government job in future, they added.

The protesters demanded that dynamic leaders should be appointed as vice-chancellors of universities who had a genuine love for literature and arts. They said that students should be allowed to organise cultural events.

They sought a transparent and impartial investigation into the circumstances leading to expulsion of Mune Khan from hostel and his subsequent death.

Meanwhile, despite closure of University of Malakand (UoM), hundreds of its students on Monday took to streets and held a rally against the death of Mune Khan.

Carrying placards inscribed with slogans of 'stand for justice and stand for Mune', protesters blocked Chakdara-Shamshad road to traffic and chanted slogans against the university administration.

The local administration diverted traffic to Sher GT road.

Protesters demanded immediate suspension of UoM Vice-chancellor Prof Rashid Ahmad, provost Dr Jamn Khan, chief

provost Dr Asim Khan and hostel warden Haris Khan for their alleged misbehaviour and mentally torturing the student.

They said that Mune Khan and his friends were served those cause notices for keeping rabab that caused severe depression to him and he died in a road accident. Scores of protesting students were also carrying rabab on the occasion.

Besides student leaders, the rally was also addressed by ANP provincial president Mir Hishar Hussain, MPA Humayun Khan, ANP provincial general secretary Ihsaan Shah Yusufzai, provincial president of Mardhor Khan Party Far Ali, JI youth wing district president Anwar Rahman, PPP district information secretary Advocate Ahmed, students' group chief Mune Khan, PPP Adani leader Nasrullah and others.

They alleged that Mune Khan, a student of journalism and mass communication department, was killed in a road accident because he was expelled from the hostel along with other friends in the night. They rejected the notification to resolve the issue amicably.

Taking notice of the issue, the UoM has convened a meeting today (Tuesday) of all deans, heads of departments and coordinator of women sub-campus in Buthkela.

A notification issued by the university registrar said that the agenda of the meeting would be shared on the table.



METROPOLITAN CORPORATION ISLAMABAD

#HumCDA

Directorate of Municipal Administration

RE-OPEN AUCTION NOTICE

FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF CATTLE MARKET IN SECTOR I-15 ISLAMABAD FOR EID-UL-AZHA 2024 IN ISLAMABAD

Reference open auction notice published by Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad in daily newspaper/ CDA Website and PPRA website dated 25-04-2024 for open auction the sites for establishment of Cattle Markets of Sacrificial Animals in Islamabad for the period of 13 days w.e.f 17 Zilhajj to 13 Zilhajj on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha for the year 2024.

2. Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad is going to Re-Open Auction under PPRA Clause 13 (i) proviso for Establishment of Cattle Mandi in Sector I-15 Islamabad, which will be held in the office of Directorate of Municipal Administration, MCI Fire Headquarter Building G-7/1 Islamabad on **Tuesday 4th June 2024 at 0200 pm.**

3. Only such interested bidders shall be entitled to take part in the open auction before the commencement of auction process shall provide:

- Company/ Firm Registration Certificate.
- Copy of CNIC
- Copy of NTN Certificate
- Bank Statement
- The reserve price for Cattle Mandi Sector I-15 Islamabad shall be the highest bid amount of last year i.e Rs.30.00 (M).
- Bidder shall deposit an amount of Rs. 10,000,000/- (10.00 Million) as earnest money in advance for Cattle Market Sector I-15 Islamabad in shape of pay order in favor of DDO/DMA/MCI.
- The possession of the site of Cattle Market Sector I-15 shall be handed over to the successful bidder subject to 100% payment of bid value on the same day in shape of pay order in favor of DDO/DMA/MCI.

4. Rest of the terms & conditions will remain un-changed as already published in newspaper dated 25-04-2024.

5. This issues with the approval of Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad.

RAI YASIR FARHAD

Director Municipal Administration

Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad

Fire Headquarter Building G-7/1 Islamabad

(Ph: 051-9252838)

PG 05 No. 7516/23



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL



TBE/03040644574 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of PPRA GOB. Request for Proposal for selection of Consultancy services invited on Electronic Public Procurement System (EPPS) form will require national/international firms (L1) / service provider meeting with eligibility criteria, viz having registration with FBR for Income Tax and SRA and who are on Active Taxpayers List (ATL) and are not black listed in any procuring agency or authority for preparation of Bidding of "Consultancy Services from Consulting Firm" Titled as **CONSULTANCY SERVICES REQUIRED FOR DETAILED DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION FOR RENOVATION / UPGRADE OF ROAD FROM ZHOBI TO NANA, LENGTH 84 K.M. DISTRICT ZHOBI** Detail as under:

S.No.	Description	ECG#	Bid Security
1	CONSULTANCY SERVICES REQUIRED FOR DETAILED DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION FOR RENOVATION / UPGRADE OF ROAD FROM ZHOBI TO NANA, LENGTH 84 K.M. DISTRICT ZHOBI	48.872.342	na%

Requirements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2024. Eligibility of Bidders: Sub-Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity. Turn-over of at least 40,000,000 PKR Amount in 3 Subsequent Previous Years. Presence in Active Tax Payer List, SRA Registration Certificate. The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. PECPAD Registration. ISO Certification. Must have 21 Project in hand at similar Geographical area with similar complexity. Green Challen of Rs. 1000. **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure (Bid Security). The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of specified above in the name of the undersigned from a scheduled bank. The FINANCIAL PROPOSAL shall be opened of those consultants whose technical proposal is considered and approved. The Selection of Consultants shall be made as per Evaluation Criteria method as mentioned in the "Data Sheet of this "Request for Proposal" document. The incomplete request for proposal or received after due date mentioned above will not be considered. The RFP Documents can be downloaded from PPRA Website (www.ppra.gov.pk) Last Date of bid submission: The tenders must be submitted latest by 21 June, 2024 till 12:34 PM. Tenders opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the undersigned at 01:14 PM Address: Office of the Executive Engineer Phone no: 0300200000 Email: mubeenulatafat@gmail.com

PG No. 3717-03-6-2024

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER-ROADS
ON PPAIR DEPARTMENT DISTRICT ZHOBI

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KE seeks another fuel cost adjustment

Nepra notifies Rs1.90 per unit price hike for June

By Khaleeq Khan

ISLAMABAD: As the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Monday notified Rs1.90 per unit additional cost to nationwide consumers for June, followed by 50 paise each in July and August, KElectric filed up another fuel cost claim for April on top of its existing Rs18.6 per unit petition for the past nine months pending before the power regulator.

In its fresh request to Nepra, KE presented its claim for fuel price adjustment (FPA) for April based on three different considerations. Under two benchmarks, the FPA for KE consumers is to come down by 74 paise to Rs1.18 per unit, while in the third case, an additional FPA of 44 paise per unit is to be charged to consumers.

Nepra has called a customary public hearing on the subject later this month, although it has yet to conclude cases for the past nine months (July to March) and had concluded the public hearing on May 9.

In all three claims, including those already pending with the Nepra, the KE has sought FPA adjustment with a cumulative impact of Rs18.6 per unit or about Rs200bn on a "provisional basis" under three different options to clear a backlog and avoid a sudden increase in burden on its consumers.

The KE is of the view that since its multi-year tariff (2024-30) was currently under regulator's deliberation, it has filed FCAs based on three scenarios with the request for the approval of any one of the three scenarios and a guide recovery mechanism for those 10 months to facilitate timely cost recovery and avoid further accumulation of adjustments to be recovered from consumers.

Under the first scenario, KE has proposed that the FCA be calculated as the difference between the actual fuel cost and the reference monthly fuel cost as per the interim tariff currently in place.

In the second option, KE has demanded that it be allowed to charge consumers the difference between the actual and reference monthly fuel cost as per the tariff petition filed by the power utility and currently under Nepra's deliberation.

In the third case, KE has proposed that the difference between actual fuel costs versus annual weighted average fuel reference costs being considered as per the tariff petition filed by KE and currently under Nepra's deliberation should be adopted.

The consumers of re-distribution companies (DSCs) have already paid an average of Rs1.89 per unit FCA for three months, the KE's team said.

Separately, Nepra on Monday notified Rs1.90 per unit charge to consumers in June followed by 50 paise each in July and August under the quarterly tariff adjustment (QTA) to facilitate power companies map up a rather Rs46.6bn from consumers.

These rates also apply to KElectric consumers under the uniform tariff policy, but this cost doesn't apply to consumers using fewer than 100 units per month and are in the protected lifeline category.

"The authority has decided to allow the instant positive quarterly adjustments of Rs46.613 billion pertaining to the third quarter of the FY2023-24, in a period of three months, i.e. June 2024 to August 2024, at the rate of Rs1.90/kWh, Rs0.70/kWh and Rs0.50/kWh for June, July and August 2024 respectively, to be applicable to all consumer categories, except lifeline consumers," the regulator announced last week and formally notified it on Monday in the official gazette.

The notifications have been sent to all the DSCs, including KE, for the application of Rs1.90 per unit additional cost in June and then 50 paise in July and August each.

Nepra has also completed the public hearing on the power industry's directive for about a 25pc increase in base national tariff, effective July 2024.

Business confidence improves, but remains negative

LAHORE: Business confidence in Pakistan has improved by four percentage points, though it remains negative, as reflected in the 25th Wave of the Business Confidence Index (BCI) survey conducted by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI). The survey was conducted across Pakistan during March-April 2024.

"The OICCI Business Confidence Index has shown some positive signs of economic recovery, rising to negative 14 per cent in March-April 2024 from negative 18pc in the previous survey of October-November 2023," OICCI President Rehman Sheikh said in a statement.

"This upward trend, albeit small, indicates a

more optimistic business environment, supported by improving economic growth, a stable exchange rate, and declining inflation," he said.

Going forward, the survey respondents have expressed anticipation of rising inflation, high taxation, and inconsistent government policies as key threats to business growth.

The OICCI said the survey results reflect feedback from about 80pc of BCI stakeholders.

The sectoral breakdown reveals that, compared to the last wave, confidence declined substantially to negative 11pc among firms in the manufacturing sector, indicating significant challenges confronting this sector.

—Khaleeq Hamam

US DOLLAR BUYING: \$277.18 SELLING: \$279.94	EURO BUYING: \$209.26 SELLING: \$202.15
GBP BUYING: \$282.21 SELLING: \$284.58	SAUDI RIYAL BUYING: \$27.27 SELLING: \$27.96
INDIA RUPEE BUYING: \$75.53 SELLING: \$74.20	GOLD 20.945 \$242,300 10.945 \$242,019

Real interest rate sets new record

Experts see 200bps cut in policy rate this month

By Shahid Iqbal

KARACHI: The real interest rate is now above 1,000 basis points in the wake of an unexpected fall in inflation to 11.7pc per cent in May.

The real interest rate is the difference between the nominal interest rate and the rate of inflation.

Higher real interest rates can raise borrowing costs and force people to curb spending and borrowing. It can slow economic activity.

On the other hand, higher rates can also improve the returns on investments.

However, the State Bank's cautious approach has proved harmful for economic growth despite low inflation. Financial experts said the figures for inflation in May were surprising.

"This is a blowout number... at least two per cent lower than what the market was expecting. A rate cut of 200bps is now a sure bet," said the CEO of Transmark.

"However, we believe this is a one-off and inflation for June will be around 13.5pc, an additional revenue-related measures like GST and removal of exemptions, along with related price surges, will bump up prices," he said.

Almost all financial experts were

agreed that an interest rate cut in the next monetary policy was now a certainty.

A lower interest rate will pump money into the private sector and activate the economy, provide cheaper money to the government and help check inflation, the experts believe.

Satishlal Tariq, the head of research and development at Pak-Korea Investment, said since the real interest rate is higher by 10 per cent, the central bank has to bring it down.

"The secondary market has already responded as the yield on government paper started declining," he said.

The cut in the policy rate is bound to reduce the government's borrowing load. In the first half of the current financial

year, the mark-up rose by 64 per cent. The government paid over Rs5 trillion as mark-up during the first 10 months of the current financial year.

"With the expected slowdown in inflation, real rates are now significantly positive (10.2 per cent) even on spot basis. We believe that SBP should start a monetary easing cycle this month with at least 200bps reduction in the policy rate," said head of research at Arif Habib Limited, Tariq Abbas.

With the expected interest rate cut, the real interest rate will be as high as 8.2 per cent and the SBP stance on monetary policy would still be right. Further cuts cannot be ruled out in the near future, he added.



HYDERABAD: Farmers are busy sorting and packing mangoes in wooden boxes in a field near Tando Jam.—APP

Highest monthly jump in three years takes exports to \$2.79bn

Imports stand at \$4.9bn during May, FBR issues Rs438.1bn rebates in FY24 so far

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan recorded its highest monthly growth in exports in three years with a jump of almost 17pc in May 2024.

The month-on-month growth rate of 16.7pc in dollar terms was the highest since June 2021, when the exports went up by 61.32pc.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics data released on Monday, exports increased to \$2.79 billion in May, a year-on-year rise of 27.08pc against \$2.19bn in the corresponding month of 2023.

May was also the first month that

exports grew after declining for four consecutive months this year.

Exports have been stalling since the start of the year in dollar terms with a growth of -8.30pc, -0.30pc, 7.40pc and -1.06pc in April, March, February and January, respectively.

Total exports in the 11 months of fiscal year 2024—July 2023 to May 2024—were \$28,007bn, up by 10.65pc from \$25,36bn over the corresponding period last year.

Trade deficit

According to the data, imports during May stood at \$4.9bn, resulting in a trade deficit of \$2.1bn—a yearly year-on-year growth of 0.54pc.

In the 11 months of FY24, the deficit narrowed by 15.25pc to \$21.77bn, compared to \$25.64bn in the same period last year.

Rising exports might bring some joy to the government which has set an ambitious target to increase exports to \$300bn by the end of FY28.

The IMF however doesn't share the Commerce Ministry's optimism as its projections for the next five years, during the first review of the previous \$100 Standby Arrangement, were way below the \$100bn mark.

The Fund anticipated that Pakistan's exports will gradually increase from \$10.84bn in FY14 to \$12.17bn in FY25, \$14.08bn in FY26, \$17.25bn in FY27 and \$19.46bn in FY28.

The Fund's target appears more realistic as according to the data, exports recorded an average monthly growth of 3.03pc during the 11 months of FY24 and with just one left before the fiscal year ends, total exports are expected to be around \$300bn.

There has been some positive indication in terms of rebates to taxpayers as the Federal Board of Revenue issued tax refunds/rebates of Rs438.1bn during the 11 months of FY24 as compared to Rs15.22bn over the corresponding months last year, showing an increase of 38.58pc.

Oil prices slump as OPEC+ mulls output cuts

LONDON: Oil prices slid on Monday as the Opec+ group of major crude producers signalled they would start to curtail output cuts later this year, with softer-than-expected US manufacturing compounding fears of weakening global demand.

The concerns pulled stock indices back from earlier highs, seen on the back of hopes that easing inflation could allow the Federal Reserve to cut interest rates later this year.

Oil slipped after Saudi-led OPEC and its Russian-led allies said on Sunday that they would maintain output

levels but begin to restore production from October, even as questions about China's economic recovery and a spike in US stockpiles drove investors to fret over demand.

This deal looks to draw a line under attempts to drive energy prices sharply higher for the time being," said Joshua Mahony, chief market analyst at Seape Markets.

Even the international benchmark, fell more than two per cent to below \$80 a barrel for the first time since February.—APP

Transporters need ministry's permission for Afghan trade

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The ministry of commerce has asked all transport operators to obtain a "temporary admission document" (TAD) by June 15 in order to carry out operations under the bilateral trade arrangement between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"No vehicle will be allowed to carry on bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan after June 15 without obtaining a TAD," a commerce ministry notification said on Monday.

During a visit by a Pakistani delegation to Kabul in March, Islamabad had agreed upon a plan to separate cargo movement and passenger crossings at border stations to continue unfettered bilateral trade and facilitate transit to Central Asian states.

As part of this arrangement, the two ministries of commerce agreed to implement the TAD mechanism with effect from May 1 this year to streamline and regulate the movement of cargo vehicles between the two countries.

At the same time, transport operators of Pakistan-registered vehicles have been advised to apply at the

director-general's office in Peshawar or Quetta for registration of their trucks to operate under the TAD mechanism.

According to the commerce ministry, the first vehicle from Afghanistan carrying coal crossed into Pakistan on Monday.

According to the procedure notified by the ministry, TAD applications for Afghan-registered vehicles will be received on all working days at the Pakistan embassy in Kabul and the consulate in Kandahar from 11am to 12 noon daily.

Likewise, applications for Pakistani-registered vehicles will be received at the Afghan consulate in Quetta and Peshawar. The TAD will be issued within five working days of receipt of applications.

The fee will be charged for issuing TAD of Vehicle only. However, the TAD pass for drivers and cleaners of that vehicle, will be free of cost.

The temporary admission document will be valid for one vehicle at a time and only for the carrier to whom it was issued. It will not be transferable to other carriers.

The fee for a TAD is \$100 and it will be valid for six months.

Six companies chosen to bid for PIA: minister

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has selected six companies qualified to bid to buy national carrier Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), the privatisation minister said on Monday.

The announcement came a couple of weeks after Pakistan had extended the date for submitting expressions of interest. A total of eight companies and consortiums had expressed an interest.

Air Blue, Arif Habib Corporation, Blue World City, Fly Jinnah, Pak Etihad (Pvt) Consortiums, and YB Holdings Consortiums emerged as the finalists, said a statement from the office of Abdul Azeem Khan.

"The pre-qualified companies can take part in the bids for the PIA," he said.

The government has previously said it was putting on the block a stake of between 51pc and 100pc in the loss-making airline as part of reforms urged by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).—Reuters

PSX closes lower amid pre-budget uncertainty

By Riaz Usman

KARACHI: The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) remained under pressure on Monday due to pre-budget uncertainty and profit-taking, as its benchmark KSE-100 index failed to sustain a bullish start and shed over 300 points.

The benchmark index began the session positively, hitting an intra-day high of 76,209.97. However, the 76,000 level proved to be a strong selling point, as profit-taking kicked in during late hours, leading to heavy selling pressure after briefly crossing this level during the day.

Abdus Mubeen of Arif Habib Corp said that pre-budget uncertainty and the terms of a new International Monetary Fund bailout package for tax reforms, hikes in power tariffs, and rupee depreciation spurred negative sentiments among investors.

"Weak rupee, falling

PAKISTAN STOCK EXCHANGE

THE TOP FIVE			
GAINERS		LOSERS	
Frete Pakistan	154.64	Baghpora Fibres	72.57
Saggar Eng	34.31	Hallmark Company	35.23
Pakistan Tobacco	15.62	Shahmard Sugar	32.54
Rafhan Maize	15.54	Mari Petroleum	19.67
Al-Abbass Sugar	14.46	Bata Pakistan	15.66

(Data refers to equity)

* Data is in million of rupees

INDICATORS	Month	Previous	Change
KSE 100-SHARE INDEX (Index)	75,875.28	75,875.49	▼ 0.03
KSE 30-SHARE INDEX (Index)	24,211.41	24,242.47	▼ 0.16
MARKET CAPITAL (in billion)	10,092.672	10,049.006	▲ 0.43%
TRADING VALUE (in billion)	18.434	20.574	▼ 1.14%

foreign exchange reserves, and concerns over unsettled dues of Chinese independent power producers (IPPs) also played a catalytic role in the bearish close," Mr Mubeen said.

The KSE-100 index reached a high of 76,210

points and a low of 75,495 points, finally closing at 75,875 points, marking a decrease of 303 points or 0.40 per cent.

The negative trend was influenced by the IT, banking, and fertilizer sectors, with companies such as RYL, FFC,

UPFIRE, MUEL, and ENGRO collectively shedding 219 points. However, there were some positive contributions from TRG, MTL, and PNL, which collectively added 76 points, brokerage house Topline Securities said in its post-market report.

Trading activity remained strong, with over 441 million shares changing hands, amounting to a total value of Rs18.4bn. PCCL led the volume chart with over 32.8m shares traded.

Companies registering the biggest increases in

their share prices were Nucleo Pakistan (Rs154.64), Sagor Engineering (Rs34.31), Pakistan Tobacco (Rs15.62), Rafhan Maize (Rs15.54), and Al-Abbass Sugar (Rs14.46).

Companies that recorded the biggest declines included Sapphire Fibres (Rs72.57), Hallmark Company (Rs35.23), Shahmard Sugar (Rs32.54), Mari Petroleum (Rs19.67), and Bata Pakistan (Rs15.66).

Stocks contributing significantly to the traded volume included Fly Jinnah (32.83 million shares), K-Electric (31.65 million shares), PPA Holding (25.57 million shares), Sherran Motors (18.67 million shares), and Air Link Communication (15.06 million shares).

Of the 427 active scrips, 200 advanced, 178 declined, and 49 remained unchanged.

Foreign investors were net buyers as they picked shares worth \$14.7m.

Four killed as floods batter southern Germany

REICHERTSBÜFEN: Rescuers battled on Monday to evacuate people from floods in southern Germany that have claimed four lives, as Chancellor Olaf Scholz called it a "warning" that climate change was getting worse.

Thousands of people in the regions of Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg had to leave their homes since torrential rain on Friday sparked deadly flooding. More evacuations were called overnight into Monday as the huge volumes of water caused flood defences to fail.

In Bavaria, around 800 people were asked to leave their homes in the area of Ebermannstadt after a dam burst on Monday. Residents around Manching-Pöchl, in the area worst affected by the floods, were told to shelter on the upper floors of their homes.

Speaking on a visit to Reichertsbüfen, in a flood-hit area north of Munich, Scholz said that such floods were no longer a "one-off". "This is an indication that something is up here. We must not neglect the task of stopping man-made climate change," Scholz told journalists. The floods were "a warning that we must take with us", he said.

The Bavarian state premier, Markus Söder, who accompanied Scholz on his visit, said there was no "full insurance" against climate change. "Events are happening here that have never happened before," Söder said, after a state of emergency was declared by districts across his region of Bavaria. Around 20,000 people in Bavaria alone had been deployed to tackle the consequences of the flood, he said.

Police in Baden-Württemberg on Monday said a man and a woman were found dead in the basement of their home in Schorndorf following the flood. The same day killed a 43-year-old woman in Schorndorf, Bavaria, whose body was found by rescuers earlier on Monday.—AFP



THE historic part of Heidelberg is flooded during high tide in the Neckar river.—AFP

Three arrested after coffins found at Eiffel Tower

PARIS: French police arrested three people on Monday after five empty coffins wrapped in French flags with the words "French soldiers from Ukraine" written on them were found near the Eiffel Tower on Saturday.

The public prosecutors have requested that the three individuals, who are from Bulgaria, Germany and Ukraine and who are all under 30 years old, be charged with premeditated violence. Prosecutors said leaving coffins at the foot of the Eiffel Tower was an act of psychological violence.

France could soon send military trainers to Ukraine despite the concerns of some allies and criticism by Russia, diplomatic sources told Reuters last week. French daily *Le*

Monde, quoting security documents, reported that the three men had been in contact with a man suspected of having sprayed red hands on the Paris Woods Memorial, a Holocaust museum, in mid-May.

In November, French prosecutors opened an investigation into whether two Moldovans who admitted to shooting Stars of David on the walls of Parisian properties did so at the behest of someone abroad.

Following news reports about the Moldovans being directed by an individual in Russia, the prosecutor's office said that someone from abroad had communicated via telephone with the pair in Russian.—Reuters

UN forecasts La Nina could help lower temperatures this year

GENEVA: The return of the cooling La Nina weather phenomenon this year should help lower temperatures somewhat after months of global heat records, the United Nations' weather agency said on Monday.

The impact is likely to be felt in the next few months because the warming El Niño weather pattern—which has helped fuel a spike in global temperatures and extreme weather across the world since mid-2023—"is showing signs of cooling", the UN's World Meteorological Organisation said in its latest update.

The WMO warned, however, that global temperatures would continue to rise in the long term due to human-induced climate change, which continues to make extreme weather worse and upend seasonal rainfall and temperature patterns.

La Nina refers to the cooling of the ocean surface temperatures in large swaths of the tropical Pacific Ocean, coupled with winds, rains and changes in

atmospheric pressure.

In many locations, especially in the tropics, La Nina produces the opposite climate impacts to El Niño, which heats up the surface of the oceans, leading to drought in some parts of the world and triggering heavy downpours elsewhere.

The WMO said there was a "60 per cent" chance of La Nina conditions in the period from July to September and a "70 per cent" likelihood during August-September. The chances of El Niño redeveloping are negligible, it added.

Every month since June 2023, when El Niño returned, has set a new high temperature record, and 2023 was by far the warmest year on record globally.

The WMO said the planet would continue to heat up overall from the use of fossil fuels that produce greenhouse gases.

Manmade global heating

"The end of El Niño does not mean a pause in long-term climate change, as our planet will continue to warm due to heat-

trapping greenhouse gases," WMO deputy secretary general Ko Barrett stressed.

"Exceptionally high sea surface temperatures will continue to play an important role during next months." Much of the planet's excess heat from climate change is stored in the oceans.

In the United States, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has already factored the expected La Nina into its forecasts for this year's Atlantic hurricane season. The NOAA said it expected four to seven major hurricanes in the Atlantic between June and November.

"The upcoming Atlantic hurricane season is expected to have above-normal activity due to a confluence of factors, including near-record warm ocean temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean, development of La Nina conditions in the Pacific, reduced Atlantic trade winds and less wind shear," the NOAA said on May 23.—AFP

Sheinbaum elected Mexico's first woman president

MEXICO CITY: Claudia Sheinbaum was elected Mexico's first woman president by a landslide, making history in a country plagued by rampant criminal and gender-based violence.

Flag-waving supporters sang and danced to mariachi music on Monday in celebration of the ruling party candidate's victory, in a nation where around 10 women or girls are murdered every day.

"I want to thank millions of Mexican women and men who decided to vote for us on this historic day," Sheinbaum told the cheering crowd.

The 61-year-old former Mexico City mayor thanked her main opponent rival Xóchitl Galvez, who conceded defeat.

Mexico's outgoing leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador hailed Sheinbaum's victory as a "historic event," while US President Joe Biden said he looked forward to working with her "in the spirit of partnership and friendship."

Sheinbaum, a scientist by training, won around 58.40 per cent of votes, according to preliminary official results from the National Electoral Institute, which estimated turnout at 60pc.

That was more than 30 percentage points ahead of Galvez, and some 50 percentage points ahead of the only man running, centrist Jorge Alvarez Maynez.—AFP



CLAUDIA Sheinbaum.—AFP

China accuses MI6 of using state workers to spy for UK

BEIJING: China on Monday accused Britain's Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) of recruiting a couple who worked for the central government to spy for the UK, adding to months of mutual espionage allegations between Beijing and Western powers.

The Ministry of State Security said in a post on its official WeChat that MI6 operatives convinced a man nicknamed Wang, who worked in a "core central state apparatus," to defect along with his wife, nicknamed Zhao.

"Recently, after careful investigation, the national security organs uncovered a major espionage case in which the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) instigated a couple, Wang and Zhao, who were staff

members of a central state agency of China, to defect," it said.

The ministry said British spies began cultivating Wang after he began a course of study in the UK in 2015, arranging dinners and tours for him in order to "understand his character weaknesses, interests and demands".

After learning that Wang "had a strong desire for money", they then approached him to provide well-paid consulting services that came to involve the internal workings of central state agencies, the ministry said.

MI6 personnel later revealed their identities to Wang and directed him to return to China to collect intelligence, convincing him to co-opt Zhao into doing the same.—AFP

India awaits election results after deluge of disinformation

Rahul Gandhi was a leading target of false information detected across political spectrum

NEW DELHI: India's six-week election was staggering in its size and logistical complexity, but also in the "unprecedented" scale of online disinformation.

The biggest democratic exercise in history brought with it a surge of false social media posts and instant messaging, ranging from doctored

videos to unrelated images with false captions.

Rajul Hansraj Nark, from the US-based India Hate Lab, said they had "witnessed an unprecedented scale of disinformation" in the elections.

"Conspiracy theories... were vigorously promoted to deepen the communal divide," said Nark, whose organisation researchers have speech and disinformation.

With seven stages of voting stretched over six weeks, AFP fact-checkers carried out 40 election-related debunkings across India's political divide.

There were fake videos of Bollywood stars endorsing the opposition, as well as those purporting to show one person casting multiple votes. Some were crude or poked fun. Others were far more sinister and sophisticated productions aimed to deliberately mislead. All were widely shared.

'Fear and animosity'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came under fire for posts making sectarian remarks with India's minority Muslim community of more than 200

million. These included numerous videos, mimicking minority campaign speeches by Modi, falsely claiming his opponents were planning to redress India's wealth in favour of Muslims.

Nark said such posts "aimed at stoking fear and animosity towards Muslims to polarise voters along religious lines".

"The ruling party's strategy of exploiting religious sentiments for electoral gain has not only undermined the integrity of the democratic process but also sowed dangerous seeds of division and hatred in society," he said.

False information was detected across the political spectrum but the leader of the opposition Congress party, Rahul Gandhi, was one of the leading targets. His statements, videos and photographs were shared on social media, but often incompletely or out of context.

One digitally altered video analysed by AFP used Gandhi's real house that the opposition alliance would triumph, but flipped it to say Modi would win a third term when the result is declared on Tuesday.

Others purported to show Gandhi falsely appealing to people to vote for Modi. Among the more aggressive

examples were those falsely linking him to India's rival neighbours, Pakistan and China.

These included a photograph that claimed Gandhi was wearing the "Chinese constitution" during an election rally. It was in fact that of India.

Other posts portrayed Gandhi, a Hindu, as being against India's majority religion, capitalising on Modi's efforts to cast himself as the country's staunchest defender of the faith.

One video of a ruined Hindu temple, a real image from Pakistan, was widely shared.—AFP



A VOLCANO spews a large plume of ash during an eruption, as seen from La Castellana town, central Philippines, on Monday.—AFP



LONDON: A visitor looks at *The Circus Performer*, a painting by the late French artist Maurice Utrillo, on display during an exhibition, *Discover Degas and Miss La, at the National Gallery*.—AFP

NEWSMAKERS



JAMES Stephen 'Jimmy' Donaldson, better known by his online alias MrBeast.—Photo courtesy BBC

MrBeast overtakes T-Series for most YouTube subscribers

Monitoring Desk

MRBEAST has overtaken T-Series as the biggest YouTube channel in a long-running battle for the most subscribers, the BBC reported on Monday.

Indian music label T-Series, which uploads trailers and music videos, held the record for the largest YouTube channel for five years, before it was toppled on Sunday.

MrBeast, real name Jimmy Donaldson, was already the individual with the largest following. But the 26-year-old has now made history on the platform with a seemingly unassailable 269 million subscribers, dethroning T-Series and putting him head and shoulders above everything else.

Across nearly 800 videos MrBeast has made a name for himself with massive stunts — including giving away private islands, being buried alive, and staging a

real-life version of the Netflix hit *Squid Game*.

In a post on X, MrBeast said he had finally "crushed" YouTube star Felix Kjellberg, known as PewDiePie, in surpassing T-Series' 268 million subscriber count.

In a follow-up post, MrBeast said his channel took the record with its largest ever daily spike in subscribers, which rose by more than 2 million on Sunday.

T-Series originally set the record in 2019 by overtaking PewDiePie — to which the Swedish YouTuber said "all it took was a massive corporate entity with every song in Bollywood" in a music video explaining his defeat.

MrBeast becoming the most subscribed-to individual and channel on YouTube means he has extended his grip, and wealth, on the platform even further. He has several other channels dedicated to his gaming, philanthropy and reactions to other content — accounting for tens of millions of subscribers each.



LIVERPOOL: The Queen Anna, a cruise ship, sails up the River Mersey before a naming ceremony in north-west England. The Cunard Luxury Cruise Line's 249th vessel weighs 113,000 tons and houses 3,000 guests.—AFP



VOYCHANSK: A drone view shows damaged property in Ukraine's Kharkiv region.—Reuters

16 killed in Israeli strike near Aleppo

BEIRUT: A war monitoring body on Monday said that 16 members from groups allied with Iran, were killed in an Israeli strike near the northern Syrian city of Aleppo. State media also reported the 'deadly Israeli attack'.

"The death toll of the Israeli strike on a factory in Hayran, in the western Aleppo province has risen to 16 pro-Iran group members, including Syrian and foreign fighters," stated the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

The Britain-based Observatory, which relies on a network of sources inside Syria, had initially reported 12 dead. It said pro-Iranian groups composed of local and foreign fighters have considerable influence in government-controlled Hayran.

Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes on its northern neighbor, since the outbreak of civil war in Syria. They have mainly targeted army positions and Iranian-backed fighters including the Hezbollah group.

A Syrian defence ministry statement read "after midnight, the Israeli enemy launched an air attack from the southeast of Aleppo, targeting some positions" near the city. It reported "martyrs" and "some material damage".

While Israel 'vaguely' comments on individual strikes in Syria, it has repeatedly said it will not allow any enemy Iran to expand its presence there.

On Wednesday, according to the Observatory, Israeli strikes in western and central Syria killed a girl and six fighters working with Hezbollah (including three Syrians).

Hezbollah (allied with Hamas) has long fought in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, in the country's civil war.

In March, the Observatory had said that Israeli air strikes near Aleppo's airport had killed 52 people. The deceased included 38 government soldiers, seven Hezbollah members and seven Syrian pro-Iran fighters.

"During last night's attack by the Zionist regime on Aleppo, Saad Aljar, one of the IRGC advisers in Syria, was martyred," Iran's Tasnim news agency stated, whilst referring to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

The conflict plaguing Syria has killed more than half a million people and displaced millions more, since it erupted in 2011 after Damascus cracked down on anti-government protests.—AFP



A BALL of fire and black smoke rises moments after an Israeli air strike targeted a residential building in the city of Durei, central Gaza Strip, on Monday.—AFP

UN experts urge all countries to recognise Palestinian statehood

Say over half of all structures in Gaza have either been destroyed or damaged

GENEVA: A group of United Nations experts called on Monday for all countries to recognise a Palestinian state to ensure peace in the Middle East.

The call came less than a week after Spain, Ireland and Norway officially recognised a Palestinian state, prompting anger from Israel, which has found itself increasingly isolated after nearly eight months of aggression in Gaza.

The experts, including the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the Palestinian territories, said recognition of a Palestinian state was an important acknowledgement of the rights of the Palestinian people and their struggle towards freedom and independence.

"This is a pre-condition for lasting peace in Palestine and the entire Middle East beginning with the immediate declaration of a ceasefire in Gaza and no further military incursions into Rafah," they said.

"A two-state solution remains the only internationally agreed path to peace and security for both Palestine and Israel and a

way out of generational cycles of violence and resentment."

Israel's Foreign Ministry did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

With their recognition of a Palestinian state, Spain, Ireland and Norway said they sought to accelerate efforts to ensure a ceasefire in Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza. The three countries say they hope their decision will spur other European Union states to follow suit. Denmark's parliament later rejected a proposal to recognise a Palestinian state.

Israel has repeatedly condemned moves to recognise a Palestinian state, saying they bolster Hamas.

Gaza structures

Some 55 per cent of all structures in the Gaza Strip have been destroyed, damaged or possibly damaged since war erupted in the Palestinian territory eight months ago, according to preliminary satellite analysis by the UN.

The analysis showed more than 137,000 buildings affected, UNOSAT, the United Nations satellite analysis agency, said on X, formerly Twitter.

The estimate is based on a satellite image taken on May 3, and compared with images taken in May a year earlier, last September, and on October 15 — just over a week after

October 7 said. The fresh satellite image was also compared to images taken during several dates in November, then again during the first months of this year, UNOSAT said.

"According to satellite imagery analysis, UNOSAT identified 36,591 destroyed structures," the agency said in a statement. In addition, it said it had seen "16,513 severely damaged structures, 42,346 moderately damaged structures, and 36,825 possibly damaged structures for a total of 137,297 structures".

"These correspond to around 55pc of the total structures in the Gaza Strip and a total of 135,142 estimated damaged housing units," it said. UNOSAT said the image comparisons showed the governorate of Deir Al-Balah, in the centre, and Gaza, in the north, had suffered the worst damage between April 1 and May 3.

Comparing satellite images on those dates indicated that an additional 2,613 structures had been damaged in Deir Al-Balah, while another 2,368 had been damaged in Gaza governorate in just over a month. Within Deir Al-Balah, the Na'aleh municipality suffered the greatest number of newly damaged structures during that period, at 1,216, UNOSAT said. The agency stressed that the findings were still part of a preliminary analysis, which had yet to be validated in the field.—Agencies

Iran's top diplomat confirms talks with US

BEIRUT: Iran's acting foreign minister Ali Bagheri said on Monday his government was engaged in negotiations with arch-enemy the United States brokered by the Gulf states of Oman.

Asked about the issue at a news conference during a visit to Beirut, Bagheri said "we have always continued our negotiations... and they have never stopped." Washington and Tehran have not had diplomatic relations since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.

The British daily Financial Times reported in March that Bagheri was involved in indirect talks with the United States in Oman — in early 2024, against the backdrop of heightened regional tensions over Gaza.

Bagheri arrived Monday in Lebanon, on his first foreign trip since assuming the interim role following the death of Hossein Amir-Alabadi in a helicopter crash last month that also killed Iran's president, Ebrahim Raisi. Bagheri said the choice of destination for his visit was "because Lebanon is the cradle of resistance" against Israel.

Bagheri, Iran's former top nuclear negotiator, said discussions with Western powers about Tehran's atomic activities were ongoing. Western governments fear Iran is seeking to develop a nuclear weapon — a claim the Islamic republic has always denied.—AFP

Palestinians seek to join genocide case

AMSTERDAM: Palestinian authorities have filed an application with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to join South Africa as a party in its Gaza genocide case against Israel, the court said on Monday.

In a statement the ICJ, also known as the World Court, said the Palestinian authority "filed... an application for permission to intervene and a declaration of intervention in the (South Africa v. Israel) case."

On May 13, the Palestinian authority officially recognised the authority of the ICJ to resolve all disputes that may arise or have already arisen under Article IX, which paved the way for them to request to join South Africa's case against Israel as a party.

If granted by the court, the request could allow the Palestinian authority to also add an ad hoc judge of their choosing to the ICJ panel which currently has 16 judges, 15 of the court's regular judges and one Israeli ad hoc judge.

South Africa and Israel have been invited to furnish written observations on the Palestinian application for permission to intervene as a party. The Palestinian authorities became a signatory to the genocide convention in 2014 — after they were granted United Nations permanent observer state status.—Reuters

2 Hezbollah fighters die in Lebanon

BEIRUT: Hezbollah said two of its fighters were killed by Israeli fire on Monday, after Lebanese official media reported fatalities in Israeli strikes on a car and a motorcycle in the country's south.

About eight months of regular cross-border clashes between the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group, a Hamas ally, and Israel have intensified in recent days.

Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) said on Monday that "an enemy drone strike targeted a motor cycle in Naqurah" — a coastal town near the Israeli border, later reporting "one person was killed and another wounded".

In another attack, "an enemy drone targeted a car" near the southern village of Zariyah, "killing one person", the NNA said, also reporting Israeli strikes in the country's west. It did not say whether the dead were civilians or fighters.

Hezbollah said two of its fighters who either hailed from or lived near the site of the strike on the car had been killed by Israeli fire, without providing further details.

The group said it launched "a squadron of explosive-laden drones" at northern Israeli army positions "in response to the assassination carried out by the Israeli enemy this afternoon in the Zarzith area". Israel has

previously targeted Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon as well as allied Palestinian and Lebanese militants in cars and on motorcycles. The latest violence came as Iran's acting foreign minister Ali Bagheri was visiting Lebanon, where he was expected to meet Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah. Bagheri was on his first foreign trip to the position since a helicopter crash last month killed Iran's top diplomat Hossein Amir-Alabadi, along with Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi and other officials.

Also on Monday, the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hammel-Rosschauer said she discussed with Lebanese Foreign Minister Abdullah Bass Habibi the "urgency for the parties to return to the cessation of hostilities".

On Sunday, Hezbollah said its fighters had bombarded two army positions in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights after deadly Israeli strikes on south Lebanon, which an official said killed two shepherds.

The violence since early October has killed at least 453 people in Lebanon, mostly fighters but including 88 civilians, according to a tally. On the Israeli side, at least 14 soldiers and 11 civilians have been killed, according to the army.—AFP

Brexit firebrand Farage shakes up election fight in Britain

LONDON: The well-known Brexit firebrand politician Nigel Farage announced on Monday that he plans to stand for the general election in the United Kingdom. The general election is scheduled to take place next month and the major U-turn threatens to split the rightwing vote and further imperil the beleaguered Conservative Party.

Farage, who is now 60-years-old, says he will run for the anti-immigration Reform UK Party, in a "unioptic" seat in the southeast of England. He announced his plans to contest the polls, less than two weeks after ruling himself out of the July 4 contest. He will also return as party leader.

The populist ex-member of the European Parliament (MEP), who has failed on several previous attempts to be elected



NIGEL Farage, a leader of the right-wing populist party Reform UK, answers journalists during a campaign meeting, on Monday.—AFP

to the UK parliament, says he changed his mind "after hearing from voters". His decision may divert key

votes away from Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's ambitious Tories in numerous seats, and could help the Labour

opposition seize power for the first time since 2010.

Farage, who is a 'longtime vocal supporter' of the former US president Donald Trump, was 'unapologetic' and insisted that his party could become the UK's foremost opposition.

"What I'm really calling for, and what I intend to lead, is a political revolt, a turning of our backs on the political status quo," he said at a press conference, in London. "I genuinely believe we can get more votes than the Conservative party," he added. Farage predicted a Labour landslide and the Tories in a distant second, which "would shift in his favour".

Farage told the 'Sunday Times' this weekend that he was eyeing a "takeover" of the Conservatives post the election.—AFP

As war again shakes Europe, leaders mark 80 years since D-Day

PARIS: In the coming week, western leaders will mark the beaches of northern France with "80 years since Allied troops surged into Nazi-occupied Europe," in the World War II D-Day landings. They are "haunted" by the war which is raging through the continent, as Ukraine battles the Russian invasion.

French President Emmanuel Macron, is due to host the President of the United States Joe Biden, King Charles III of Britain and the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, along the shores of Normandy. These leaders represent the three central countries, who were involved in the landings on the 6 of June, 1944. An (unscripted) 'syndicate act' will also see the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in attendance.

No official from Russia has been invited. Paris went back on plans to host bilateral representatives of Russia, in recognition of the Soviet Union's immense contribution in the second world war.

The guests who will receive the "highest honours" are "surviving veterans", with around 200 veterans expected to be in

attendance. This is a number which is dwindling with every passing year, with most veterans well into their late 90s and some over 100 years' old.

However, as leaders pay their respects to the veterans of World War II, the 'all-out modern war' which has raged for over two years (since the Russian invasion of Ukraine), will be 'on their minds'.

'Solidarity can resolve'

Biden, Macron and Zelenskyy are coming together at a critical juncture in the conflict. Kyiv is warning that Russia risks joining the upper hand, without a significant increase in Western support. Macron has already sought to break taboos by 'refuting' a role as sending troops to Ukraine in position which has unsettled some of their EU allies. However, there have been noticeable changes in recent weeks. The West is showing readiness to permit Kyiv to use Western weaponry to engage targets in Russia and France, as well as 'pushing' for the deployment of European military instructors in Ukraine.

Macron, who once sought to build a relationship with

President Vladimir Putin, has repeatedly warned about the existential nature of the Ukraine conflict for Europe, saying, in a speech in April that "our Europe is mortal, it can die." "Never will we forget the sacrifice of thousands of young soldiers" who crossed the Channel that day, the French president said in a statement (ahead of the ceremonies), whilst expressing the "unending gratitude" of France.

Referring to the war in Ukraine, he said the current time "is a period that challenges us to ask what price we are prepared to pay for our freedom and for defending our values."

"May the example of these heroes, whether renowned or anonymous, galvanise our resolve and our belief in a future of peace and security."

'The longest day'

The landings by the Allied forces, backed by airborne operations which parachuted troops directly onto 'occupied soil', was the biggest naval operation ever (in terms of the number of ships deployed and the troops involved). By the end of what came to be known

as "the longest day", 156,000 Allied troops (with 20,000 vehicles), landed in Nazi-occupied northern France, despite facing a hail of bullets, artillery and aircraft fire.

In an operation hidden from the Germans, the Allies landed on five beaches across the coast of Normandy: 'Omaha and Utah' for the Americans, 'Gold and Sword' for the British and 'Juno' for the British and Canadians. The landings marked the "beginning of the end" of the "Nazi occupation of Europe". Months of intense and bloody fighting did lie ahead, before they emerged victorious over the regime of Adolf Hitler.

On Wednesday, the first of three days of ceremonies will see Macron pay tribute to French victims of Nazi occupation, including 70 members of the French Resistance executed by the Germans at Caen prison in Normandy on D-Day, the Thursday, the 80th anniversary will see leaders attend national ceremonies at the heart-stoppingly vast war cemetery on the Normandy coast, with an international ceremony attended by all the main guests at Omaha.

On Friday, Biden will give a

speech at the 'Pointe du Hoc', which is a chilling promontory where German bunkers were attacked by US troops in a daring assault during the landings, to defend 'freedom and democracy'. Macron will then deliver a keynote speech in 'Bayeux', which was the first French town to be liberated.

On Saturday, Biden will continue his trip in Paris, with the first state visit of his presidency to France. This gives Biden and Macron a critical chance to push for peace in Ukraine and Gaza, in talks scheduled to take place at the 'Elysee Palace'.

In Moscow, the Kremlin

spokesman 'Dmitry Peskov' lashed away the lack of an invitation for Russia, saying the "most important for us will be the commemorations next year for the 80th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War" (using the term most widely used in Russia for World War II).—AFP



WORLD War II veterans arrive at Deauville airport, in France, from Atlanta, US, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the 1944 D-Day landings in Normandy region.—Reuters



US pushes Biden's 'old plan' despite Israeli reservations

Officials admit plan based on proposals from mediators, already agreed to by Hamas

By Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: Amid growing doubts over Tel Aviv's stance, senior Israeli and US officials admitted on Monday that the Gaza ceasefire plan put forward by US President Joe Biden last week was actually the modified version of a proposal that had already been put forward by mediators.

While the White House described the plan as originating from Israel, the Israeli official told NBC News it was an earlier plan to which Israel had made some amendments and changes.

Separately, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said the proposal was "nearly identical" to the one submitted several weeks ago by Hamas.

Hamas on Friday said it viewed Biden's outline "positively", but since then it has made no official comment.

The plan, which was endorsed by the G7 on Monday, is being pushed by the White House as something acceptable to Israel — despite presentations from Tel Aviv.

Media reports have noted that Israel had previously rejected an almost identical plan put forward by Qatar and Egypt, which Hamas had accepted on May 6. The US had supported that plan as well.

On Monday, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan insisted that Israel had shown willingness to agree to the ceasefire and prisoner release deal proposed

by President Biden.

However, Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's office quickly stressed that Israel would push on with the war sparked by the October 7 attack until all of its "goals are achieved", including the destruction of Hamas's military and governing capabilities.

Israeli media have questioned to what extent Biden's speech and some crucial details were coordinated with Netanyahu's team, including how long any truce would hold and how many captives would be freed and when.

Election pressure

There is a widespread belief that President Biden is looking to end the Gaza war before the presidential elections in November, which is why he is pushing for a revamped peace plan.

Recent opinion polls underscore the increasing domestic pressure on President Biden's political future, fueled by Israeli atrocities in Gaza. The polls show that seven in 10 Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents (73pc) have little or no confidence in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, up from 54pc in 2023.

Another poll indicates that 73pc of Arab Americans have an unfavorable view of President Biden, compared to 54pc with an unfavorable view of Donald Trump. Many of these voters reside in key states like Michigan and Wisconsin, which Mr Biden must win to secure another term.

The polls also indicate why Biden is making a conscious effort to distance himself from Netanyahu.

Some observers speculate that by framing the peace plan as an Israeli initiative, the Biden administration is attempting to rehabilitate Netanyahu's image.



VATICAN: Pope Francis meets with Interior Minister Moham Naqvi, on Monday.—AFP

S&P forecasts 450bps policy rate cut by year's end

Projects immediate decline in SBP interest rate by end of current month

By Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: With an unexpected decline in monthly inflation below 12 per cent — the lowest in about 30 months — the S&P Global projected an immediate cut in the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) policy rate by the end of the current month and a decline of cumulative 450 basis points by the end of 2024 from an existing peak of 22pc.

"The recent softening in headline inflation increases the likelihood of SBP lowering its policy rate in June 2024. Overall, S&P Global Market Intelligence projects a cumulative 450 basis point reduction in the policy rate by the end of 2024," S&P Global Market Intelligence said on Monday in a brief note.

The next monetary policy committee meeting of the central bank is due on June 10.

The S&P noted that the real-time headline Consumer Price Index

(CPI) inflation of 11.8pc for May — down from a peak of 28pc in May last year — was considerably lower than the market expectations, mainly on the back of a notable deflation in food prices, led by perishables.

"Inflation is projected to continue its declining trend in the coming months, mainly owing to favourable base effects," it said, adding that it would remain in the double-digit range, with an average monthly year-over-year inflation rate of 13.2pc for 2024.

It said the SBP had maintained its policy rate at 22pc in its April 29 meeting due to elevated inflation, heightened global financial market uncertainty, and the upcoming budget announcement in June, but the latest inflation numbers justified rate cuts from now on.

Besides the market expectations, the latest inflation number for May released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) at 11.8pc was beyond the imagination of even the government. "Inflation is anticipated to remain within the range of 11.5-14.5pc for May 2024," the Ministry of Finance had forecast last week in its monthly economic outlook.

Last week, the ministry forecast the prospects for a gradual easing

in inflation, with expectations of a decrease to 12.5-13.5pc by June 2024. Both monthly estimates were surpassed by a significant margin.

Interestingly, the Annual Plan Coordination Committee (APCC) last week set an annual CPI target of 12pc for the next fiscal year.

The finance ministry had attributed the downward inflation trajectory to a high base effect of last year and improvements in domestic supply chain of perishable items, staple food like wheat and reduction in transportation costs.

The government's commitment to curbing inflation through stringent administrative measures paints a promising picture for the inflation outlook, it claimed. A key pillar in this strategy is the bolstered availability of food items, which is crucial for taming inflationary pressures.

The government claims credit for easing inflationary pressures, saying it stabilised prices by consistently managing supply and demand. In May, petroleum product prices dropped twice, positively impacting the CPI for the month. Besides, lower fuel prices reduced transportation costs, contributing to this favourable CPI trend.

Most jurors said they were at least vaguely familiar with this case. "I live in Delaware. You can't swing a cat without hearing something," one potential juror told the judge. Two jurors expressed strong political views.

One said he had worked with

Labour poised for 'biggest majority' in 100 years

By Aika Rahman

LONDON: The UK's Labour Party appears poised for its largest parliamentary majority in a century, it emerged on Monday. According to a YouGov poll, Labour led by Keir Starmer is set to secure a 194-seat majority, marking the biggest electoral victory since 1924 when Conservative politician Stanley Baldwin first triumphed with 208 seats.

This projection, the first from YouGov since the election was called, signals a dramatic shift in the UK's political landscape.

Labour is expected to win 422 seats, a significant increase of 222 from the 2019 results. This would surpass Tony Blair's landslide in 1997 and is the highest number of seats Labour has ever won.

The poll indicates a sizeable electoral defeat for the Conservative Party, which could drop to just 140 seats, the lowest since their 131 seats in 1905.

YouGov's polling, which includes over 53,000 interviews in England and Wales and over 5,500 in Scotland, suggests Labour's vote share would be 42.9 per cent, compared to the Conservatives' 24.5 per cent.

The potential Labour landslide spells trouble for many high-profile Conservative ministers. The poll suggests that Chancellor Jeremy Hunt, Defence Secretary Grant Shapps, and Commons Leader Penny Mordaunt, among others, are at risk of losing their seats.

Interestingly, in an LSE blog from 2022, researcher and Emeritus Professor in the Department of Government at the University of Essex Paul Whiteley noted that the Conservative vote share consistently appears to be more predictable than that of Labour, suggesting that Labour support is more volatile than Conservative support.

Methane gas kills 11 inside Balochistan coal mine

Two miners shot dead in separate incident

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: At least 11 people died after inhaling methane gas inside a coal mine in the Sarhi area, some 50km from Quetta, on Monday.

The victims include nine coal miners, a coal company manager and a contractor. "The coal miners were working around 1,500 feet deep in the mine when the gas eruption started and quickly spread to the place. All the coal miners fell unconscious," Abdul Ghani Shahwani, Chief Inspector of Mines in Balochistan, told Dawn.

He said these workers along with a contractor and manager were inside the mine at around 1pm and after one and a half hours it was noted that there was no signal coming from inside the mine.

Rescue teams from the Mines Department rushed to the site. When rescuers reached inside the mine after taking safety measures and ventilating the gas nobody was found alive.

"All the nine miners and two others were found dead deep inside the mine," the official said, adding that the bodies were shifted to a nearby health facility where doctors confirmed their deaths.

The chief inspector said the mine belongs to the United Coal mining company and that all the miners who lost their lives came from Sindh. The coal mine has been sealed and an inquiry ordered into the incident.

Gunned down

Two coal miners were killed in a gun attack in Duka district on Sunday night, officials said.

Karimullah and Abdul Naveen, who belonged to the Sulaiman Khel tribe, were killed while Fazal Rahman was injured in the attack. Additional SDO Akhtar Jan Hamid said on Monday, adding that the attackers also used hand grenades.

The private security guards, who were deployed in the area, returned fire and after an exchange of fire the attackers disappeared into the nearby mountains.

Later, enraged people carrying the bodies held a protest rally and a sit-in in front of the DC office.

Man attacked over blasphemy allegation dies

By Mohammad Asghar

RAWALPINDI: A Christian man, who was badly injured in a mob attack in Sargodha after being accused of committing blasphemy, died late on Sunday night after fighting for his life at a hospital for eight days.

Nazir Masih, 70, had sustained head injuries before and other Christians were rescued by police amid violence by an enraged mob in Sargodha's Mujahid Colony, over alleged desecration of the Holy Quran on May 25.

Police claimed they rescued the man, as well as two Christian families from the enraged mob that wanted to lynch them and burn down the homes of some other members of the minority community in the area.

A senior official said the man was rescued and shifted to a hospital in Rawalpindi, where he twice underwent surgery. However, he breathed his last on late Sunday night.

His family later shifted the body to their residence in Mujahid Colony, where his funeral prayers were offered on Monday. A heavy police contingent was present during the funeral, while police were also deployed to guard his home.

One of Nazir's relatives, Ifsan, told Dawn that the funeral prayers were offered in the same street where his uncle was attacked. He said the family of the deceased was present at their home in Mujahid Colony and police had been deployed for their security.

The body was later taken to the Gilduala graveyard for burial.

DPO Asad Malik said the body was first taken to Sargodha district hospital for a post-mortem examination, after his death in Rawalpindi. He said security was provided during the funeral prayers to avert any untoward incident.

The officer disclosed that murder charges were added alongside terrorism and other offences attributed to the case, following Nazir's death.

Police had rounded up several suspects and booked hundreds after the violence, stemmed from the allegation that some locals had seen burnt pages of the Holy Quran outside Nazir Masih's home.

Imran Gulati in Lahore also contributed to this report

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SINDH GOVERNMENT AT THE FOREFRONT OF SERVING ITS PEOPLE



Information Department,
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SPORT

Vinicius named player of the season as Real sweep CL awards

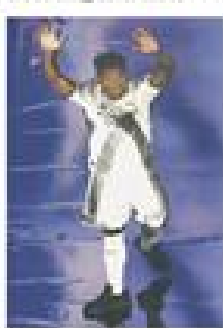
MADRID: Real Madrid forward Vinicius Junior was named the Champions League's player of the season by UEFA's technical observer panel on Monday.

Vinicius played 19 matches in the competition for champions Real, scoring six goals and assisting in five. He was on the scorers' sheet when Real beat Borussia Dortmund 3-0 in the final on Saturday, earning his second Champions League medal with the club.

The UEFA panel also named Real midfielder Jude Bellingham the best young player of the competition. The 20-year-old English international scored four goals and provided five assists in 11 appearances.

The goal of the season award also went to a Real player, with Federico Valverde's late first-time volley strike against Manchester City at home in the quarter-finals taking the honours. The goal, assisted by Vinicius, ensured a 3-3 result for the hosts, who won the tie on penalties.

The triumphant Real players hit Madrid's usual celebration hotspots on Sunday with tens of thousands of supporters escorting the team's open-top bus after they were crowned European champions for a record-extending 15th time.



REAL Madrid's Vinicius Junior waves to fans during the Champions League celebrations at Santiago Bernabéu.

—Reuters

The team's stars, led by president Florentino Pérez, made their first stop at the city's Almudena cathedral. "I don't know which team Jesus would support, but I know that... he would surely appreciate this cup," said the cathedral archbishop of Madrid, José Cobo, who was left with a replica trophy.

The team then returned to the Madrid regional government's headquarters to present another replica to president Isabel Díaz Ayuso, whom they also met after winning La Liga.

"If we are here, it's because there's good news," said Real Madrid captain Nacho. "Once again we are champions of Europe. It seems easy to say — 15 time champions... I hope it's many more times."

Nacho, along with Dani Carvajal, the retiring Toni Kroos and Luka Modric, reached a career sixth Champions League victory, equalling the all-time record set by former Real winger Pele Gento well over half a century earlier.

Pérez, thanked midfielder Kroos, who has said he will retire after Euro 2024, "for everything he has represented on and off the pitch."

"Thank you for 10 unforgettable years," the German international told ecstatic fans at the central Sol square who were chanting "Toni, stay".

A heavy police presence accompanied the bus to a packed Colón fountain, where Nacho wrapped a club scarf around the statue representing the Phrygian goddess Cybele.

The party ended at Real's Santiago Bernabéu Stadium with a light show. On a special stage set up for the occasion, midfielder Modric, 38, confirmed he would be staying at the club.

"See you next season," he told relieved fans. —Agencies

Real sign France captain Mbappe on free transfer

MADRID: France forward Kylian Mbappe has joined Real Madrid as a free agent on a five-year contract, the La Liga club said on Monday, ending a transfer saga that rumbled on for years before the European champions captured their newest "Galactico".

"Real Madrid C.F. and Kylian Mbappe have reached an agreement whereby he will be a Real Madrid player for the next five seasons," the Spanish champions said in a statement, fresh off their 15th European Cup triumph.

The 25-year-old captain of the French national team had announced he was leaving Paris St Germain in a video posted on social media platform X on May 10.

Mbappe will move to Real Madrid in July when his PSG contract expires on June 30 but the forward will be unveiled before joining up with the France squad for the European Championship in Germany.

Mbappe joins a star-studded side in Madrid with the likes of Ballon d'Or favourites Vinicius Jr, and Jude Bellingham, led by Italian Carlo Ancelotti — the most successful coach in Champions League history with five titles. Although Mbappe won several trophies at PSG, often completing domestic doubles and trebles, the Champions League has eluded him and remains the only major honour left to complete his sparkling resume. —Reuters



RUSSIA'S Daniil Medvedev in action during his French Open fourth-round match against Alex de Minaur of Australia at Roland Garros on Monday. —Reuters

Sabalenka eases through as Di Minaur stuns Medvedev

PARIS: World number two Aryna Sabalenka powered her way through the French Open quarter-finals with an exceptional performance that kept her on course for her first title in Paris.

The Belarusian 26-year-old, a semi-finalist at Roland Garros last year, never faced a break point in the 69-minute fourth-round match and finished with 36 winners and 12 unforced errors.

Sabalenka averaged a loss against Navarro earlier this year at Indian Wells and reached her ninth career Grand Slam quarter-final. The two-time Australian Open champion is attempting to become the first woman to win the season's first two majors since Serena Williams in 2015.

"It sounds crazy to me, to be honest, and I'm super happy that I was able to bring this consistency on the Grand Slams," she said. "It's motivating me a lot to keep pushing myself a bit and to see where in the limit."

Sabalenka, who has lost only 17 games through her four matches, next faces 17-year-old Russian Mura Andreova.

Andreova advanced with a 7-5, 6-2 win against Varvara Gracheva, the last remaining Frenchwoman in the field. Last season's WTA November of the Year, Andreova saved two set points in the opening set before rolling into



EMMA Navarro of the US returns a shot against Aryna Sabalenka during their French Open fourth-round match on Monday. —Reuters

her first Grand Slam quarter-final.

Sabalenka has won her first two meetings, beating Andreova in straight sets on clay in Madrid in 2023 and 2024.

Fourth seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan advanced to the quarter-finals with a 6-4, 6-3 defeat of 15th seed Elina Svitolina of Ukraine.

Rybakina converted five of seven break points and finished with more than twice as many winners as her opponent (26 to 12). She also won 12 out of 18 points at the net.

Rybakina will be playing in her WTA Tour-leading ninth quarter-final of 2024. She faces 12th-seeded Jasmine Paolini of Italy, who reached the final eight in a Grand Slam for the first time by rallying for a 4-6, 6-0, 6-1 win against Russia's 13-time Aceswoman.

Paolini won 16 of the last 19 games after falling behind 4-0 to begin the match.

On the men's side, Daniil Medvedev suffered a four-set loss to Australian's Alex de Minaur in the fourth round as his disappointing record at Roland Garros continued.

The Russian fifth seed, a former US Open champion and six-time Grand Slam finalist, started strongly but slipped to a 4-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-3 defeat.

De Minaur will face either Alexander Zverev or Holger Rune in his second Slam quarter-final and first since the 2020 US Open.

Medvedev's best performance in the French Open remains a quarter-final run in 2021, while he has also lost in the first round in five of his eight appearances.

"A lot played better," admitted Medvedev, who double-faulted on match points. "To be honest, I'm disappointed to lose, but I don't have anything to tell myself as a tough way like I was not, good attitude today or I was not fighting till the end. I did all of this. He played better."

In Sunday's late action, Jannik Sinner took time to get his engine going before motorizing into the quarter-finals.

Second seed Sinner kept his hopes of taking Novak Djokovic's top ranking alive with a battling 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 win over local favourite Casanova Moser in front of partisan fans on Court Philippe Chatrier.

Sinner next faces Bulgarian 10th seed Grigor Dimitrov, who defeated Hubert Hurkacz 7-6 (7/5), 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) to reach his first quarter-final at the French Open and complete his set of Grand Slam last eight appearances.

On a Jabour continued her quest to win an elusive maiden Grand Slam by taking out Danish player Clara Tauson 6-4, 6-4 before breaking into a song with her fans. —Agencies

Chelsea name Italian Maresca as coach

LONDON: Chelsea have appointed Enzo Maresca as their new head coach on a five-year contract, the English Premier League club said on Monday.

The Italian will leave Leicester City, where he led his promotion back to the Premier League in his first season in charge, and begin his new role on July 1. Chelsea said in a statement: "He has proven himself to be an excellent coach capable of delivering impressive results with an exciting and identifiable style," said Chelsea's sporting co-directors Lawrence Stewart and Paul Winstanley. "His ambitions and work ethic align with those of the club."

Leicester were disappointed to see Maresca leave.

"With Enzo's decision made and the board's terms for his departure met, we wish him well in his future endeavours," they said in a state-

ment. "He leaves with the appreciation of everyone at the Club for his work in helping us to achieve an immediate return to the Premier League."

The 44-year-old replaced Maurizio Pochettino, who left the club last month after one season.

Under Argentine Pochettino, the west London side put together a strong run late in the season to finish sixth and secure European football, a marked improvement on their 12th-placed finish in the 2022-23 campaign.

Maresca will be tasked with returning Chelsea to the Champions League which they won for the second time in 2021. The 44-year-old previously coached Manchester City's youth team and was the senior side's assistant coach under Pep Guardiola during their trophy-winning season.

His first managerial role came at

Italian side Parma in 2021, where he lasted 14 games, winning only four times.

Maresca was appointed Leicester manager at the start of the 2023-24 Championship season, which they began in scintillating form, reeling up an eight-point lead at the top of the second tier by the end of 2023.

Leicester struggled at times in the second half of the season and were hampered by off-field issues, but Maresca guided them back to the Premier League as they secured automatic promotion and finished top of the standings.

"To join Chelsea, one of the biggest clubs in the world, is a dream for any coach," he said. "It is why I am so excited by this opportunity. I look forward to working with a very talented group of players and staff to develop a team that continues the club's tradition of success and makes our fans proud." —Agencies

Pakistan thrash Canada to get FIH Nations Cup semis boost

GNIEZNO (Poland): Forward Bana Wabsood's superb four-goal show helped Pakistan crush Canada 8-1 in their second pool match of the in the FIH Nations Cup in Gniezno on Monday.

With this massive victory Pakistan led pool 'B' that also includes France and Malaysia and got close to qualifying for the semi-finals of the nine-nation event. Pakistan in their opening match of the event drew 4-4 against Malaysia.

Other than Wabsood's impressive show, Ghazdar Ali contributed a brace while Mohd Rahman and Harman Shahid chipped in with a goal each.

Sean Davis opened the scoring for Canada in the second minute of the match but Pakistan responded after no less than five minutes as Wabsood equalised with a brilliant strike.

Wabsood added one more in the 27th minute as Pakistan ended the second quarter with a one-goal lead.

Ghazdar scored his second goal in the third quarter as Pakistan extended their lead to 3-1.

However, Pakistan's best was yet to come as they smashed five goals in the last quarter, leaving no room for the Canadian side. All three goals were scored in the final 10 minutes.

With a healthy goal difference, Pakistan are now in a strong position in pool B, boosting their chances of advancing to the semi-finals. The team will look to maintain this momentum in their last pool stage match against France scheduled for Wednesday. —Agencies



PLAYERS of Pakistan and Canada compete during their FIH Nations Cup match. —courtesy FIH

With Owen leading the line, PFL gets govt nod

KARACHI: The man who once used to lead the line for England was, on Monday, leading talks for the launch of a franchise league in Pakistan.

Former England and Liverpool striker Michael Owen scored for the Pakistan Football League as soon as he touched down in Islamabad, helping the project get the government's nod.

The approval came when a delegation of the PFL, which has been termed "illegal and unauthorised" by the Pakistan Football Federation Normalisation Committee, met Inter-provincial Coordination Minister Raza Raza, who is also the prime minister's adviser on political and public affairs.

A statement from the Ministry of Inter-provincial Coordination termed the meeting "a significant milestone in the government's efforts to promote sports, in line with the Prime Minister's Vision".

This is the second time Owen has come to Pakistan in a bid to launch a franchise league in the country. On his last visit in 2022, he came as the brand ambassador of Global Soccer Ventures (GSV), which has now been rebranded as PFL.

The PFL plan, according to an official statement, is to construct a "state-of-the-art soccer city stadium" in Karachi. Two years ago, GSV held a "groundbreaking ceremony" at the NED University. Those plans have been revived. Alongside Owen this time were his former England and Liverpool strike partner Emile Heskey and former France fullback Pascal Cimpoeasa.

The PFL has also committed to establish academies alongside holding the franchise league.

In an event at Parliament House later on Monday, Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gillani assured his support for the PFL, which hopes to be the football counterpart of cricket's Pakistan Super League.

"Let us celebrate the spirit of football, embrace diversity, and work together to create a brighter future one where every child has the chance to chase their dreams on the football field," he added.

The PFL plans to launch its event in November this year but it faces opposition from the FIFA-appointed PFF NC. The Hassan Mahmood NC has stated it is the sole body to regulate football in the country and threatened it would open disciplinary proceedings against players and officials who decide to take part in the PFL. —Sports Reporter

Pakistan reach AVC Challenge Cup quarters

ISA TOWN (Bahrain): Continuing with their sublime form, Pakistan defeated Thailand 25-22, 25-14, 25-21 in the AVC Challenge Cup at Isa Sports City Hall on Monday to confirm their spot in the quarter-finals.

Masroor Khan was the most prominent performer for Pakistan, who clinched the Central Asian Volleyball Championship on home soil in May, as he clocked 30 points while captain Murad Khan contributed with 20 points to lead the national team to an important victory.

On Sunday, Pakistan made a solid start in the tournament when they beat Kazakhstan 25-19, 25-19, 25-21. —Agencies

Duplantis wins at Stockholm Diamond League but falls short of record

STOCKHOLM: Sweden's Armand Duplantis failed in another attempt to break his own pole vault world record but continued to impress ahead of the Paris Olympics at the Diamond League meet at Stockholm's Olympic Stadium on Sunday.

The Olympic and world champion broke his record for the eighth time with a vault of 6.24 metres in April, and after failing to victory with his first attempt at 6.00m on Sunday, he had the home crowd behind him as he attempted to go

even better. Duplantis came bitterly close, but was unable to clear 6.25m in his three attempts. Two-time world champion American Sam Kendricks was second with 5.90m.

World record holder Lasse Schulte-Lopate set the fastest time in the world this season when winning the men's 3,000 metres race in 8:01.63, ahead of fellow Ethiopian Bernard Ferede, who set a personal best of 8:05.78.

Ferede did make a winning return to action as she con-

tested her first outdoor race of the year, and the Dutch world champion had little trouble winning the women's 400m hurdles in a time of 1:23.07.

"It was really fun, Stockholm is really a wonderful place and especially if I can run during Måns Zelmerlöf's world record attempt, then the crowd is really amazing," he said. America's two-time world champion Chase Jackson won the women's shot put with her second throw of 20 metres enough to defeat Canada's

Sarah Mitton, the world indoor champion, who took second with 19.98.

Spain's Alonso de Santos cruised to victory in the men's 400m hurdles, ahead of world indoor medalist Kyron McManis.

Don Sostons, who beat Norway's Olympic and world champion Karsten Warholm in Oslo on Thursday with a world-leading 46.65, could afford to run a slower time of 47.01 as he came to the line having exploded down the back straight. British Olympic

silver medalist Laura Muir strodded to a win in the women's 1,500 metres in a time of 3:57.95. Muir made her move on the final bend and pulled away down the home straight.

Korea's Edinah Jebelok came second with a personal best of 3:58.88 ahead of Georgia Goffish, the Australian who won over 1000m in Oslo on Thursday.

World champion Yaroslava Mahuchikh won the women's high jump, clearing 2.00m at the second attempt, with the Ukrainian making her out-



SWEDEN'S Armand Duplantis competes in the men's pole vault event at the Diamond League at the Stockholm Olympic Stadium. —AFP

door season debut. Jamaica's world champion, Shericka Jackson won the women's 200m in a season's

best of 22.65, but will wait for her 21.41 from last season, the second fastest time ever. —Reuters



Nortje takes 4-7 as South Africa beat Sri Lanka

NEW YORK: South Africa's Anrich Nortje took a remarkable four wickets for just seven runs as the Proteas dismissed Sri Lanka for a record low 77 on their way to a six-wicket win in the teams' T20 World Cup opener in New York on Monday.

Sri Lanka's total was their lowest in all T20 cricket, with fast bowler Nortje's figures the best by a South African in a T20 World Cup, surpassing his own 4-50 against Bangladesh in Sydney two years ago.

"It's been a while since I've had those figures," said Nortje, the player of the match, at the presentation ceremony. "Just happy to have pulled it off for the team."

"We didn't know what to expect from the pitch, we'd heard one or two rumours about being up and down," the 30-year-old added.

Kagiso Rabada (2-21) and left-arm spinner Keshav Mahara, who took two wickets in two balls on his way to 2-22, also damaged the cause of 2014 champions Sri Lanka.

Opener Kusal Mendis (15) and veteran all-rounder Angelo Mathews (16) were the only Sri Lanka batsmen to pass 15 after their captain, Wanindu Hasaranga, seemingly misread conditions by opting to bat first upon winning the toss.

South Africa, however, also lost early wicket as their top order also struggled to time the ball as a drop-in pitch that in the corners of a Long Island grassed field specially



SOUTH AFRICA'S Anrich Nortje bowls a shot during the group D match against Sri Lanka at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium. —AFP

for the tournament.

But the big-hitting Heinrich

Klaassen struck a six and a four off successive deliveries on his way to

19 not out as South Africa finished on 80-4 with 26 balls to spare.

The difficulty both sides had in

scoring runs raised fears the above-

prize match between arch-rivals India and Pakistan — due to be played at the ground on June 9 — could become a lottery.

South Africa captain Aiden Markram, whose side have two more games at the ground, said: "Credit for what we did in the field but the batting was a bit up and down."

"It was quite a tough battle... We're fortunate that we have our next two here and have a decent idea of how it's going to play but it's important to assess as you move around and come up with plans."

Legspinner Hasaranga took 2-22 but in truth he had too few runs to play with following a Sri Lanka innings where he was one of four ducks.

"We were hoping for 160-170 but now we know it was more of a 120-130 wicket, especially with our bowlers," said Hasaranga. "We wanted to perform a bit better."

South Africa fast bowler Dinesh Kumar, making his World Cup debut, sparked Sri Lanka's collapse when, with his first ball, he had Pathum Nissanka caught in the deep before Nortje dismissed Kagiso Rabada in similar fashion.

Mahara then struck twice in the ninth over as both Hasaranga, stamped by De Kock and Mathews Samarawickrama, chain batted for a quicker delivery, fell for tonight to leave Sri Lanka 32-4 before Charith Anuranga survived the hat-trick. —AFP

England kick off campaign against Scotland

BRIDGE TOWN: Depressed of ideal preparation by rain, defending champions England will hope to get their act right straight away when they face Scotland in their T20 World Cup opener Bridgetown, Barbados on Tuesday.

Phil Salt will look to continue his red-hot form of the Indian Premier League in the T20 shortcrisps, even as pace Jofa Archer's return adds firepower to the English bowling attack.

Rain played spoilsport in the preceding four-match T20 series at home against Pakistan, but England will enter the tournament as one of the strong contenders to lift the title for an unprecedented third time.

In what will be their first ever meeting against the Scots in the shortest format, the Jos Butterfield England will be the over-weathering favourites to emerge winners at the Kensington Oval, which offered a two-paced wicket for the game between Namibia and Oman on

Sunday evening. Placed in Group 'B', England have traditional rivals Australia, Namibia and Oman for company besides Scotland.

To reach the Super Eight stage, teams will have to finish in the top two of a group.

In white-ball cricket, it hasn't been smooth sailing for England since their five-wicket victory over Pakistan in the final of the last T20 World Cup in Melbourne in 2012.

A year after their success in Australia, Butler's men endured a disastrous campaign in the ODI World Cup in India, finishing seventh after winning three and losing six of their nine matches including a painful defeat to Afghanistan.

Their poor run in the white-ball game continued with a series of defeats to West Indies in both the 50-over and 20-over format.

In the rain-marred rubber against Pakistan recently, England regained some of their lost ground with a 2-0 series win.

Now focused on their opener against Scotland, England have fond memories of playing at the Kensington Oval as it is at this very venue the team won its first-ever T20 World Cup title back in 2010 under Paul Collingwood's captaincy, beating Australia by seven wickets in the nearest showdown.

In the last 14 years since that triumph, England have become a dominant force in limited overs cricket, winning the 2019 ODI World Cup before their glory Down Under two years ago.

Playing in their third consecutive T20 World Cup, Scotland are no match to their fancied opponents on paper but they will nonetheless look to make an impression after having been through the European qualifiers.

Scotland won all six of their matches in the qualifiers to finish top of the standings, which guaranteed them a ticket to the West Indies and the USA for the marquee tournament. —Agencies



SINCE 1953 WE ARE TRUSTED NOT TO COMPROMISE



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KARACHI

Sunset 07:19 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 05:41 am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 28°C
Maximum 33°C
Outlook Partly Cloudy

METRO South



Sabalenka eases through as Di Minaur stuns Medvedev

Pg.17 SPORT

Anti-polio campaign begins in 16 Sindh districts

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A seven-day special campaign to administer polio drops to immunise over four million children, under the age of five, across the province commenced on Monday.

An official said the campaign is in line with the national polio eradication programme to be run from June 3 to June 9 in 16 districts of Sindh. During this special campaign, he said, a total of 4,757,301 children will receive polio drops through 40,000 police workers and security personnel.

"The training of the campaign staff is already done and considering the hot weather, arrangements have been made for ORS, clean drinking water, and caps for the police workers," he added.

"A meeting chaired last week by Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Faisal Pechayee emphasised that children arriving from other provinces and particularly Afghanistan should be given polio drops at all railway stations and bus stops, with assistance from law enforcement agencies," he added.

He also referred to the meeting discussion which decided that students from medical and public health institutions will also be included in the campaign.

These students, he said, would persuade reluctant parents to have their children vaccinated against polio virus.

"All deputy commissioners are supervising the campaign and reviewing its progress in evening meetings for each union council," he added.



A HEALTH worker administers polio drops to a child in a katchi abadi in North Nazimabad Town, on Monday. — Fahim Siddiqi / White Star

Sindh has spent less than half of its climate allocations of 16 budgets

• Research finds Rs48.8bn allocated for climate-related depts in 16 years, but overall expenditure was just Rs20.2bn • Rs40m earmarked for climate change directorate but nothing was spent

By Shazia Hassan

KARACHI: Despite being battered by heatwaves, heavy rains and unprecedented floods, the province of Sindh has spent less than half of its total 'climate budget' in the last 16 years that saw a consistent rise of the Pakistan Peoples Party, it emerged on Monday.

The Climate Action Centre (CAC) in collaboration with The Citizens' Organisation on Monday an interesting and well-timed discussion — 'Big Claims, Small Expenditures' — on Sindh's climate budget.

Researchers from The Citizens' looked at budget allocations and expenditures for and of the province's climate-related depart-

ments — Environment, Climate Change, Coastal Department, Directorate of Climate Change, Forest and Wildlife, Alternative Energy, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and Rehabilitation Department — in the last 16 years to find that less than half of what was allocated was spent on development, etc.

The total allocation of Sindh's climate budget during this time was Rs48.8 billion and the total expenditure was Rs20.2bn, bringing their performance status to 41 per cent.

Looking at Sindh Environment sub-department performance status, against the total Rs1.419bn allocations in 16 years, the department's expenditure was a mere Rs336.56 million. That is less than 10pc.

Looking at Sindh Climate Change sub-department Directorate of Climate Change (DoCC) performance status, it has been allocated Rs40m and there has been zero expenditure so far. It was just created and that's it. It did nothing.

Sindh Coastal Development sub-department performance status had sporadic allocation, as well as expenditure. In the past 16 years, the Sindh government allocated a total of Rs10.669bn for its coastal development, with an expenditure of Rs4.821bn and a performance of 45.19pc.

Sindh Forest sub-department performance status showed a total of Rs9.894bn (77pc) was spent on forest from 2008 to 2022-23 against a

Continued on Page 14

Another cop shot dead as criminals attack police post off M9 motorway

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A policeman was shot dead and another wounded in an armed attack on a police check post off M-9 motorway on Monday.

SSP-East Dr Farukh Raza said that the police had recently set up 29 pickets to provide security to the buyers and traders at the sacrificial animal market on Northern Bypass.

Officials said that armed assailants opened fire at the policeman deployed at the check post near the Jamali bridge and in an exchange of gunfire Constable Mohammed Yaseen was killed while Constable Salman Abbas suffered bullet wounds.

The SSP said that both the policemen were performing their duty at the check post near Ganna Mandi within the remit of the Shorab Goth police station when the assailants attacked them.

The body of the slain cop was shifted to the Abbasi Shahzad Hospital while the wounded policeman was taken to the Aga Khan University Hospital for treatment.

When asked as to whether it was an act of terrorism or targeted killing, the SSP said that the armed attack appeared to be in "retaliation" by the criminals as the check posts were creating "hindrances" in their criminal activities.

"We are working on it and ground intelligence is also being collected to bring the culprits to justice," the SSP said.

The police said that the martyred constable originally hailed from district Khairpur.

Only on Saturday, a policeman was gunned down and three others were hurt in a targeted attack at an eatery in Patel Para.

3.2 magnitude earthquake jolts parts of Karachi

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A 3.2 magnitude earthquake was felt in several parts of the city on Monday evening.

The tremors struck at a depth of 22 kilometres, with its epicentre located 15 kilometres northeast of Karachi, said the National Seismic Monitoring Centre of the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) that holds the responsibility for seismic monitoring and tsunami and their early warning in the country.

The earthquake was mainly felt in district South, where frightened residents of Defence, Clifton, Li Chundrigar Road and Saddar were seen rushing outdoors while praying.

"It was a low-magnitude earthquake and it did not cause any damage to property or human life," said an official of the PMD.

It is the third earthquake felt in the metropolis over the last few weeks.

On May 2, a 2.3 magnitude earthquake jolted parts of the metropolis, including Gadsby Town, Kalohr and areas of Malir district with its epicentre being 38 kilometres from the northeast of Malir at a depth of 84km.

On April 24, a low-magnitude earthquake had jolted Karachi's Malir district and the seismic monitoring centre said its magnitude was 3.2 on the Richter scale.

Consumer court slaps Pakistan Post with Rs1.3m fine for failing to deliver document to Lincoln's Inn

By Sumair Abdullah

KARACHI: A consumer court has imposed a fine of over Rs1.3 million on the Pakistan Post as compensation for failing to deliver a document to Lincoln's Inn in the United Kingdom.

Plaintiff Akbar Jawad, a lawyer, had filed a lawsuit under the relevant sections of the Sindh Consumer Protection Act 2014, before Judicial Magistrate of Consumer Protection Court (JCM) Fahimuddin Balochani against the Pakistan Post, International Mail Office, and Pakistan Head Post Office in Clifton, seeking compensation for their alleged negligence, faulty services, physical inconvenience, mental agony and financial losses to him.

After hearing and recording the evidence submitted by the respondents and the plaintiff, the court ordered the Pakistan Post to pay Rs246,909 for the

loss of air tickets, Rs1 million as damages and Rs60,000 as the cost of suit to the plaintiff, as compensation.

The court also mentioned that if the respondents failed to comply with the order, they (relevant officials) shall be jointly and severally punished with imprisonment for one month and to pay an additional fine of Rs50,000 under the provincial consumer protection law.

The applicant pleaded before the court that last year in February, he had booked a letter engagement containing his 'Call Declaration', a document, meant to be delivered to the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, and its registrar, treasury office in London, UK.

He submitted that he was a student member of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn and passed his Bar Training Course in England and the Wales in 2022.

He stated that he was about to qualify as a Barrister of England and the Wales

and, for that matter, he had to visit London to attend his Call of the Bar Ceremony — a graduation event — held in March 2023, for that matter he had purchased air tickets.

He explained that due to the negligence and faulty services of Pakistan Post, the plaintiff missed the event as he did not obtain a UK visa because the document was not delivered to the specified location. It was mandatory for him (plaintiff) to deliver the handwritten document in physical form to Lincoln's Inn.

During the proceedings, the respondents' counsel objected that the plaintiff did not adopt proper procedure and filed the complaint after 45 days.

However, the court mentioned that during cross-examination, the respondents admitted that the "time of enquiry is six months from the date of booking". They (respondents) also accepted that the complaint was filed at Pakistan

Post, International Mail Office, had "failed to redress the grievance" of the plaintiff.

Regarding the maintainability of the complaint, the court noted that the respondents had admitted their guilt while offering a compensation amount of Rs11,000 to the plaintiff which was refused by him, adding that the respondents did not object to the jurisdiction of the court.

"The entire evidence of respondents is crystal clear that the letter engagement... Call Declaration has never been reached at the point of destination... and respondents have failed to fulfil their responsibility and failed to dispatch the letter engagement at its destination and failed to redress the grievance of the complainant who has shown his trust in Pakistan Post/respondents and looked his crucial Call Declaration through them despite several other options," the court noted.

Another attempt to unearth the 'real' Manto

Two of the great writer's plays are being enacted at Napa until Saturday

By Peerzada Salman

KARACHI: Saadat Hasan Manto is one of those rare Urdu writers who attract the attention of the younger generation working in creative fields. While the senior lot of readers and writers mostly remembers him for his unvarnished partition tales, those who are trying to interpret his work in the 21st century seem to be more interested in his dealing with the dynamics of the man-woman relationship.

One can also see an effort in trying to unearth the 'real' Manto. Indian filmmaker Nandita Das and Pakistani director Samad Khosro have tried that in the last decade but seemed to be more intrigued by the man himself than ideas that he investigated through his tales.

Produced by Surya Productions, a double bill of dramas titled Manto that premiered at

the National Academy of Performing Arts (Napa) over the weekend and will run until June 8 is another such attempt. Instead of going for the writer's more celebrated short stories, director Rao Jamal Singh Rajput has opted to enact two of his plays — *Alif* and *Sassi*. The plays have a prominent choreographic element directed by Wahab Shah and Waqar Samra.

Alif has the central character of Sushila (Hiba Ali Khan) who in the opening scene is sitting in the waiting area of a railway station. A man Kishore (Usman Javed) comes in to ask her who she's waiting for. When she says she's alone (*ahli*), he replies she isn't. The crux of the tale is in this exchange — Sushila's loneliness. She is a dancer who performs in front of crowds but essentially she's leading an unloved, any levelless, life. Even when she does seem to find it in the form of another man, she's left in the lurch.

In *Sassi*, another young girl, Manchi (played by Reham Rafeq) is experiencing a financially challenged situation. She stitches and sews clothes for others but herself desires a pricey sari. The man who is into her, Kavi (Wahab Shah) is a poet, but is finding it hard to get some money for his latest ghazals. On the

other hand, an unctuous rich man, Seth Sahib, can help her do that.

Both *Alif* and *Sassi* pivot around women. One of whom is in search of intangible happiness and the other is looking for material satisfaction. It's a nice contextual contrast.

The good thing about the two pieces is the impressive performances from the female leads. Hiba Khan is superb concurring in her role. The most appreciable aspect of her performance is the way she articulates each word. The clarity of sound and the richness of expression of the artist are gratifying. Only if she can stop inadvertently looking at the audience, she'll be doubly delightful.

Reham Rafeq, too, underplays her character. She plays the part of Manchi with a delicate blend of vulnerability and assuredness.

It's the male actors that leave much to be desired, especially the two leads that overstretch themselves and come across as individuals who've got jobs that are above their pay grade. For example, an Urdu poet is exposed to pronounce words such as *ghin* (before) with care and not utter it *hah*.

The dance quotient could have been reduced as well. After all, these stories are dialogue driven and brimming with emotion.

A SCENE from the play *Alif*. — Fahim Siddiqi / White Star

Cylinder blast tragedy exposes lack of capacity at LUH burns ward

By Mohammad Hussain Khan

HYDERABAD: The Parelal cylinder blast and fire incident that claimed lives of many people, most of them children, lays bare weaknesses and ineptness of Liaquat University Hospital's burns ward yet again. The death toll in the May 30 tragedy rose to 14 on Monday while many more of the no fewer than 45 injured are still fighting for life.

LUH burns ward is catering to the health-care needs of patients from Hyderabad alone, but other adjoining districts of lower Sindh. It looks as if the ward itself is fighting for its survival.

Even after completion of the ground-plus-three-storey building's construction, it is devoid of important component — an intensive care unit (ICU) exclusively for burns patients. Other equally important components are non-existent though they may have been reflected on papers like project cost-2 (PC-2) of the unit, whose work was initiated when the burns unit was headed by Dr S.M. Tahir, who retired from LUH back in 2018.

The unit has been working under an ad hoc arrangement for as long as one could remember. Around two decades back, it used to work in a building that was declared 'dangerous' to live in. Then the unit was shifted to a two-storey building comprising old pri-

vate wards. "When we were shifted to the private wards buildings, I had objected that what kind of treatment the hospital management expects in this environment for burn victims," said Dr Tahir, who remained associated with the burns unit from 2000 to 2018.

Essential component still missing

"A state-of-art autonomous burns unit was my dream. I remember having included basic necessities and components in papers for the burns unit but when it was nearing completion, I retired. Today, burns ward still remains an incomplete set-up with no ICU and related facilities. Still victims are referred to Karachi that we used to do two decades back," he said.

The May 30 tragedy again exposed vulnerability for burn victims if they end up in LUH's burns ward. Almost same old ad hoc mechanism reigns supreme in the burns ward where staff was drawn from other units and disciplines. Since ICU remains non-existent, some serious patients had to be kept in medicine and paediatrics ICU, raising possibilities of infection for other patients of the ICU.

When an LUH paramedic staffer, Ravi Tarelli, went through a similar tragedy as he lost seven of his family members in a fire in his house, he had to face same kind of issue. He took them to Karachi's civil hospital as LUH doctors advised their shifting.

"Adult patients with above Elze burn wound struggle for survival if their face, chest and neck have wounds and survival of children with 10pc wounds is undermined," said a burns ward doctor. The LUH doctor said that over 10 patients had to be shifted to Karachi's hospitals because there was no ICU or high dependency unit (HDU) in practical terms.

Twenty-three patients were admitted in the HDU/ICU of Civil Hospital Karachi on May 30. Six were admitted to Patel Hospital as well. Only 10 stable patients could be accommodated in LUH burns ward while two patients in paediatrics ICU and one was admitted in the medicine ICU.

Cost of facilities

Record shows that the three-storey burns ward has 64 beds inclusive of 16-bed ICU provision built at a cost of Rs67.94m. With the inclusion of Rs67.94m cost of machinery, the total cost stood at Rs144.82m. Otherwise a dedicated burns ward, half of the provision was handed over to dental ward around 2022 by then medical superintendent and director administration.

"A disaster component is not available. ICU is non-existent but want of machinery and trained human staff. How are we going to handle patients save technicians and trained staff. There is a speciality a normal paramedic

can't handle. Department of plastic surgery is also shifted to our building. These departments were shifted to burns ward even when the building was incomplete," confided a doctor. When human resources remain unavailable, the ICU is not going to run," he said.

According to Dr Tahir, he had proposed that the burns ward should be autonomous so that it should not have to rely on others for staff, doctors and other necessities relating to ward. "I always objected to LUH administration that whenever we train staff they are shifted to elsewhere, leaving us to start from scratch," he remarked. He said that he had proposed a separate laboratory so that patients should not have to be shifted to other areas for pathological investigations, adding he had proposed separate department of physiotherapy, nutritionist, anaesthetist, etc but today these facilities are not available there.

Accommodating other sections

In new building — located outside LUH's premises opposite outpatient department (OPD), thirty burn victims could be admitted on ground floor. The first floor space was available for four dental patients from dental department and remaining space was given to plastic surgery operating theatre. The second floor has space for seven people

burn 10 female burn patients. Another 10 each of male and female plastic surgery could be kept there. Eight beds are meant for "Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery" including four of oral cavity cancer patients on the third floor thus spanning space for this otherwise fully fledged burns ward.

There was a plan to shift ENT ward from LUH as well. Accommodated Oral Reconstructive Surgery and Maxillofacial surgery was set here. "Before we are as unit shifted to this building, maxillofacial colleagues shifted themselves," said a burns ward source. "Burn patients are prone to infection and they need extraordinary environment in ICU which our burns ward can't offer simply thus victims' families run from pillar to post to shift patients to Karachi," said a doctor.

No tendering process

According to LUH's Medical Superintendent Dr Aijaz Akbar, ICU of burns ward was part of 'tender' and it was an old scheme. "We have checked papers but we don't find ICU's component in tender papers of this ward. Secondly, dental ward was shifted on verbal orders of then director administration Sartar Javed to burns ward," Akbar told Dawn. He said neither equipment of ICU nor trained staff was available in ward.

Two killed, three injured in clash over land

By Our Correspondent

NAWABSHAH: A man and a woman were killed and three women were injured in a clash between Kolhro and Chando tribes over a land dispute in riverine area near Tharshah in Nausahro Feroze district on Monday.

Ms Parveen Khatoon and Mumtaz Kolhro died on the spot. Ms Mukhlisan, Ms Bushra and an unidentified woman suffered wounds in the clash.

Police sources said that the clash was an offshoot of a dispute over a piece of land between the rival groups. The bodies and the wounded were shifted to nearby hospital, said police.

No arrests were made till filing of this report.

Rivals kill man, hurt relative over old dispute

By Our Correspondent

NAWABSHAH: A man was killed and his relative was injured when their rivals attacked them with firearms in Hasan Panhwar village near Bhita Road town on Sunday.

Jalid Panhwar died on the spot whereas Sarfaraz Panhwar was seriously injured. They were shifted to the town's hospital by police from where the body was handed over to relatives after autopsy, said police.

Amwar Panhwar, a relative of the deceased, told reporters that they had an old dispute with the rival group. The victims were targeted when they had gone to the nearby village where their rivals lived to meet relatives, he said.

They alleged that Bhita Road police were not taking any action against the culprits, while police said that they were investigating the incident.

Man kills wife, alleged lover for 'honour'

By Our Correspondent

NAWABSHAH: A man axed his wife and her alleged lover to death in the name of honour in Ramzan Malah village near Kandaro in Nausahro Feroze district on Monday.

Kandaro SHO Abdul Latif Thakam informed reporters that Shah Nawaz Malah killed his wife Ms Hakeem Malah and the alleged lover Subhan Malah and escaped.

Police shifted the dead bodies to Kandaro taluka hospital. However, police had not lodged any FIR on the double murder.

IGP reviews proposed police reforms

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Inspector General of Sindh Police Ghulam Nabi Memon on Monday said that "competent and course qualified officers" would be deputed at police stations to bring a 'positive change' in the policing and promotion of people-friendly atmosphere there.

He said this while chairing a meeting to review proposed reforms to be introduced at the level of police stations.

Under the proposed reforms, staff police officers would be posted for longer tenure' at police stations.

The meeting was informed that CCTV cameras would be installed inside and outside the police stations.



HYDERABAD: Women carry fodder for cattle near Tandjoam road on Monday. — Umar Ali

Exams 'sabotaged' by agitating teachers, employees at Khairpur university

Only physics students took paper in front of main gate after all others forced out of campus

By Our Correspondent

SUKKUR: The Shah Abdul Latif University (Sals), Khairpur, witnessed complete chaos on Monday as students of most departments turned up to take their semester exams but were turned away and those of the physics department had to take their paper in front of the closed gate of the varsity amid a controversy involving status of its vice chancellor.

A conglomerate of teachers' and employees' associations calling itself the 'Joint Association Committee' apparently closed the main gate after turning away all the students saying that no

exams were going to be held today (Monday). While students of other departments left, those of physics department stayed on and Chairman of their department Farman Ali Mangi along with some teachers, conducted the exam. The students, were however, had to sit on ground under open sky in front of the varsity's main gate amid extremely hot weather conditions and without any essential facility.

Leaders of the agitating committee said Dawn that there was no notification about restoration of the vice chancellor issued by the varsity administration and, therefore, they did not allow the semester paper to be conducted. The committee has been running a campaign for the removal of the VC for some time and the matter was pending adjudication in the Sindh High Court. The Sals administration had issued a notification for the holding of the exams for today after the SMC, Sukkur bench, reportedly issued an order for the restoration

of the VC. The committee insists that a formal notification of VC's restoration must have been issued first.

A complete chaos was witnessed when groups of teachers and varsity employees started forcing students out of the university premises as soon as they started arriving. They managed to push all the students out of the main gate and lock it from inside. The action was executed by the chief security officer with the help of subordinate security staff.

A video of physics students taking their paper under scorching heat went viral on the social media and drew a sharp reaction from netizens, who lashed out at the Sals administration and provincial authorities for the situation.

Ishrat Mirani, a teacher of the international relations department and a member of the university's syndicate, was seen in the video condemning the agitating associations and their committee for disturbing academic atmosphere on the campus, attempting to devastate

students' carrier and committing contempt of court, "which has ordered restoration of the VC". He was heard demanding a ban on all associations, at least for six months, to facilitate smooth holding of the semester examinations and provide relief to students.

Mr Mirani held the chief security officer, president of the employees' association and Sals registrar for the chaos, lapses and troubles at the university today. The committee and its supporters kept guarding the main gate to prevent students from reentering the campus after being forced out, he deplored.

He also claimed that the registrar, without VC's permission, issued a notification for summer vacations from today (June 3) although the vacations were scheduled to begin on June 8. He pointed out that the ongoing semester was not completed yet.

Mr Mirani said that students were also being harassed to force them to vacate their hostel rooms.

Influential landlords sow paddy despite ban in Mirpurkhas division

By Our Correspondent

MIRPURKHAS: Despite government's ban on cultivation of paddy in Mirpurkhas division influential landlords and political figures have cultivated the rice on their big farmlands without any fear of law as they knew nobody could dare arrest their crop, according to. Tail-end Abadgare Association Nara Canal Circle president Mohammad

Yousaf Raza and general secretary Asad Shah.

They told this correspondent on Monday at a protest camp outside local press club that due to acute shortage of water in the tail-end areas of Nara Canal command the government had banned cultivation of paddy as it required more water than other crops but influential and political figures of the area cared less of the ban and cultivated the paddy on their lands.

They urged authorities concerned to take notice of the violation of the ban and order paddy crop sown over thousands of acres removed without delay.

The irrigation officers were selling their share of water to these influential persons enabling them to grow paddy while their area were facing shortage of even drinking water and populations in tail-end areas in Mirpurkhas, Mirwah, Gorchani, Digri, Joshaly, Nasook, Kot

Ghulam Muhammad, Sindhri, Kauri subdivision etc. were compelled to buy drinking water.

The cultivated crops of cotton, chili, onion, sugar cane and vegetables in these areas were drying up causing huge damage to growers, they said.

They said that they had been staging protest since for the past 15 days but no officer of the departments concerned had sincerely assured them of supply of water and warned they would

continue the protest campaign till supply of water to their areas without any delay.

They urged Chief Justice of Pakistan and other authorities to save their cultivated crops from getting destroyed by taking drastic measures and responding corrupt irrigation officers involved in selling water.

High profile inquiries be launched against them and they be awarded exemplary punishment, they said.

Flood-hit families block road in Digri

By Our Correspondent

MIRPURKHAS: Scores of flood-hit people, including women blocked Mirwah Gorchani-Digri Road in Digri town on Monday in protest against officials of an NGO and Sindh Bank, accusing them of demanding bribe to speed up the process of rebuilding the flood-damaged houses.

The protesters led by Gul Hassan Leghari, Ghulam Nabi Leghari and Dilip Kumar complained to media persons that NRSP in collaboration with Sindh government had planned to rebuild houses of flood victims but the process had been deliberately made slow by officials at Sindh Bank's Digri branch and the NRSP.

The corrupt officials were not cooperating with flood-affected people, they were demanding bribe for issuing tokens and releasing their money to start the house rebuilding process, they said.

BEFORE: MRS. RAUHABA RAZI (IN-CHARGE JUDGE IN THE BANKING COURT NO. IV AT KARACHI

Bank-404 Pakistan Secretariat, Sindh, Karachi

SUIT NO. 22 OF 2024

Bank Alfalah Limited Karachi. PLAINTIFF

VERSUS

1. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 1) 2. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 2) 3. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 3) 4. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 4) 5. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 5) 6. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 6) 7. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 7) 8. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 8) 9. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 9) 10. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 10) 11. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 11) 12. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 12) 13. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 13) 14. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 14) 15. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 15) 16. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 16) 17. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 17) 18. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 18) 19. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 19) 20. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 20) 21. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 21) 22. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 22) 23. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 23) 24. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 24) 25. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 25) 26. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 26) 27. Mr. S.K. Ali (Respondent No. 27) 28. Mr. S.K. 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SUDOKU ALPHA

QUICK

A4722

TRICKY

B4722

	1		3	4				8
6								
		4	2		9			6
8					5			
	4			7				
	2	5		1		6		
9					8		6	4
			5				9	7
1	7	2	9	6				

1					5			
	8	2			9			
	4		8				6	
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	7	3		1			9	8
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4					8	6		

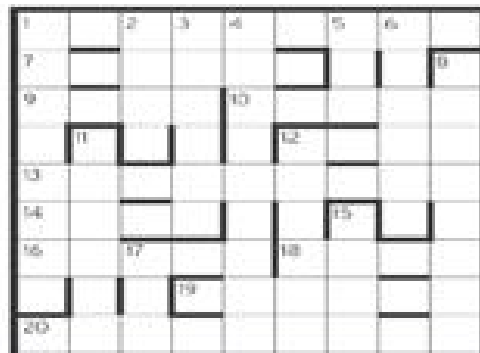
To solve this puzzle each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9. While the rules may be simple, there are numerous strategies to help you solve sudoku. For hints and information visit www.sudoku.org.uk.

Created by Peter Rimmer (C) PZL.com

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

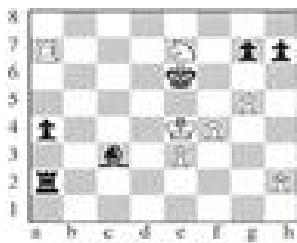
1. Imitates (8)
7. Jockeys (8)
9. Kilt (4)
10. Freight (5)
12. Ripped (4)
13. Bearing a design (9)
14. Not false (4)
16. Minimum (5)
18. Cog (4)
19. Royal son (8)
20. Dream to (9)



DOWN

1. Quickly or punctually (8)
2. Notion (4)
3. Government assembly (6)
4. Group of musicians (9)
5. Hearing organ (3)
6. Rue (8)
8. Dried nerd (anag.) (8)
11. Raise children (8)
12. Very sad (5)
15. Crooked (4)
17. Proper (3)

CHESS



WHITE TO PLAY
HINT: FORCE CHECKMATE.

1. N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6, N7, N8, N9, N10, N11, N12, N13, N14, N15, N16, N17, N18, N19, N20, N21, N22, N23, N24, N25, N26, N27, N28, N29, N30, N31, N32, N33, N34, N35, N36, N37, N38, N39, N40, N41, N42, N43, N44, N45, N46, N47, N48, N49, N50, N51, N52, N53, N54, N55, N56, N57, N58, N59, N60, N61, N62, N63, N64, N65, N66, N67, N68, N69, N70, N71, N72, N73, N74, N75, N76, N77, N78, N79, N80, N81, N82, N83, N84, N85, N86, N87, N88, N89, N90, N91, N92, N93, N94, N95, N96, N97, N98, N99, N100, N101, N102, N103, N104, N105, N106, N107, N108, N109, N110, N111, N112, N113, N114, N115, N116, N117, N118, N119, N120, N121, N122, N123, N124, N125, N126, N127, N128, N129, N130, N131, N132, N133, N134, N135, N136, N137, N138, N139, N140, N141, N142, N143, N144, N145, N146, N147, N148, N149, N150, N151, N152, N153, N154, N155, N156, N157, N158, N159, N160, N161, N162, N163, N164, N165, N166, N167, N168, N169, N170, N171, N172, N173, N174, N175, N176, N177, N178, N179, N180, N181, N182, N183, N184, 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ISLAMABAD

Sunset 07:15pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 04:54am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 28°C
Maximum 42°C
Outlook Sunny

METRO North



Sabalenka eases through as Di Minaur stuns Medvedev

Pg.17 SPORT



VISITORS enjoy their leisure time along Upper Kachura Lake in Gilgit-Baltistan's Skardu district. — AFP

10 electric buses arrive in Islamabad today, 20 expected tomorrow

Buses to run on two new routes from G-11 Nust station to Pims and from Pims to Quaid-i-Azam University, says official

By Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Finally, the electric buses are set to hit Islamabad's roads as 10 buses will be arriving in the city on Tuesday (today) followed by 20 more in the next 24 hours.

"A fleet of 30 buses will reach Islamabad in two days: on Tuesday and Wednesday," said an officer of the CDA. He said these 30 buses will be operated from Convention Centre on two routes. The first route will be from G-11 Nust station to Pims covering G-10, G-9 and G-8 and the second from Pims, G-7, G-6, G-5,

National Library, Bari Imam and Quaid-i-Azam University.

The service to be started in a few days will be available from 6am to 10pm daily. Besides, 70 more buses will reach Karachi in a couple of days which after customs clearance will be transported to Islamabad. The last fleet of 60 buses will reach Islamabad later.

"Electric buses will reach in Islamabad from Tuesday. This was informed in a meeting chaired by CDA, Chairman Muhammad Ali Raza Khan at CDA headquarters," said a press release issued on Monday.

The CDA chairman said a strategy would be devised to give subsidy to deserving segments of society, including persons with disabilities and students.

The CDA has set up a temporary depot with six electric chargers at the Convention Centre to operate the 30 buses. However, the civic agency will face a crisis-like situation when it will receive more buses as there are no depots and chargers for them. The CDA has

been in the tendering process for the establishment of two depots since December 2023; however, the contract is yet to be awarded.

Source said that in February technical bids were opened followed by opening of financial bids and National Logistic Cell turned out to be the lowest bidder. However, its bid was too higher than the estimated costs; therefore, the civic agency is yet to award the contract. There is also a likelihood that the civic agency may go for a fresh tendering.

It had last year planned three sites for construction of the depots - Zero Point, I-9 and Transir. However, work is yet to be started on any one of them. "The delay in establishing the depots warrants proper inquiry," said an official.

The CDA has acquired 160 buses by a contractor, National Radio and Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC), which will operate the buses. The CDA will pay it Rs306 to Rs331 per kilometre.

Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif, dur-

ing his previous tenure, had directed the CDA to launch new bus services on 13 routes. He had consistently pushed the CDA to start the service and as a result the civic agency engaged the NRTC to procure the buses from an international firm that manufactures buses in China.

He had also inaugurated three metro bus services: Orange Line, Green Line and Blue Line. The buses plying on the three routes belong to the CDA and they are providing great relief to thousands of passengers daily.

After the closure of the Government Transport Service (GTS), no effort was made to launch any bus service in Islamabad. However, during the previous term of the PM, N government (2013-18), the Rawalpindi-Islamabad metro service was started followed by Orange, Green and Blue Lines.

Officials said when the new buses will start operation on the 13 new routes, rural and urban areas and almost all sectors of Islamabad will be connected with each other.

Seven-day anti-polio campaign starts

RAWALPINDI: A seven-day anti-polio campaign started in the gemstone city with a target to vaccinate more than 900,000 children in the district.

Punjab Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC) has warned of polio virus resurgence as the province enters polio high transmission season in June.

The warning was issued on the occasion of a special polio eradication campaign that started on Monday in six districts of Punjab.

The districts include Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad, Okara and Mianwali. The PEOC stated that with the onset of June, "we are entering into high polio transmission season which means that chances of children being affected by the virus are very high".

It stated that this was the season when temperatures will soar above the normal threshold - ideal for polio virus transmission. Also, Punjab is anticipating mass movement in the next three months due to school holidays and Eidul Azha, thereby increasing chances of polio virus reintroduction in Punjab.

In Rawalpindi, the inauguration function was held at the Commissioner's Office where children were brought to get vaccinated.

Commissioner Asim Khattak and Deputy Commissioner Dr Hassan Waqar Cheema inaugurated the anti-polio campaign by giving protective drops to children. A large number of young children and parents were also present there, along with Health Officer Dr Ijaz, coordinator of World Health Organisation and other relevant officers.

The senior officials directed that efforts should be made to cover the refusal and non-attended cases on the same day. They said the dream of polio-free Pakistan was about to be realised, but in this regard, every citizen had to fulfil his social responsibility along with government departments.

The commissioner said the circulation of polio virus was continuing and the virus had been found in the environmental samples of Punjab, which was protected only by the polio vaccine. Multiple doses are the only way to prevent polio.

He said polio workers would go from house to house in hot weather so treat them kindly and cooperate with them fully, adding that summer season was very favourable for polio virus due to vacations.

Giving a briefing on this occasion, it was informed that this seven-day campaign is being organised throughout the district.

The anti-polio campaign will continue till June 6 in the drive, as many as 192 medical officers of union councils and 677 area in-charges have been appointed in Rawalpindi district and 2,834 mobile teams had been formed. As many as 269 fixed points and 125 transit points have also been set up.

On the first day of the polio campaign, the target of administering drops to 160,000 children in Rawalpindi district will be achieved. — Staff Reporter



CATTLE owners bring a bull down from a truck at Bhatta Chowk in Rawalpindi on Monday. — Photo by Muhammad Asim

Heatwave likely to subside this week

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: Gusty winds and drizzle in the twin cities turned the weather pleasant on Monday evening as the Met Office has predicted that the heatwave was likely to subside during the week.

It also forecast dust-thunderstorms and rain in the upper parts of the country from June 4 to 7th.

The residents of Rawalpindi and Islamabad endured stifling heat for over a week, with temperatures rising to 43 degree Celsius.

However, the Met Office said a shallow westerly wave was likely to enter upper and central parts of the country on Tuesday (evening/night) and was likely to persist during the next three days.

Under the influence of this weather system, rain-wind/thunderstorms is expected in Gilgit-Baltistan (Diamir, Astore, Gilgit, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghazne, Shigar),

Kashmir (Neelum valley, Muzaffargarh, Rawalakot, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Mirpur, Mirpur) from June 5 (evening/night) to June 8 with occasional gaps.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, dust-storm/thunderstorm with rain is expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Kohistan, Shangha, Buner, Malakand, Kohat, Bajanor, Mohmand, Khyber, Peshawar, Mardan and Kurram from June 4 (evening/night) to June 8 with occasional gaps. Similarly, in Punjab and Islamabad, dust-storm/thunderstorm with rain has been predicted in the twin cities, Multan, Gellyat, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mandi Bahaudin, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Sahiwal, Narowal, Lahore, Kasur, Okara, Sheikhupura, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang, Khushk, Nargodha and Mianwali from June 4 to June 6 with occasional gaps.

Dust-storm/thunderstorm with isolated rain has also been forecast in Balochistan, Baluchistan, D.G. Khan, Sukkur, Multan and Layyah from June 5 (evening/night) to June 7.

A similar weather pattern will affect Quetta, Zhob, Turbat, Sherard, Kohlu, Muzakhar, Thera Bagli and Barkhan in Balochistan from June 5 (evening/night) to June 7 while in Sindh, dust-storm/gusty winds with isolated rain-thunderstorms are expected in Sukkur, Jacobabad, Kachhore and Larkana from June 6 to 7.

The Met Office stated that dust-storm/windstorm and lightning might affect daily routines, standing crops, loose structures like electric poles, vehicles and solar panels during this period.

It said heatwave conditions were likely to subside in the country during the forecast period, warning all government departments to remain alert and take necessary measures to avoid any untoward situation.

Islamabad, AJK, GB residents deprived of free healthcare

Health card service suspended after centre fails to clear dues

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: After the federal government failed to pay for the health card service, the residents of Islamabad, Azad Jammu Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan have been deprived of the healthcare facility as opposed to Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa residents.

Raja Zafar Bhutti, 41, is a heart patient based in Islamabad. He recently visited Pims for medical treatment but the hospital refused

him treatment free of cost, saying he would have to pay for tests and other medical facilities. The hospital management told him that the permanent address on his ID card was Islamabad and the federal government had not paid its dues to State Life, resulting in the suspension of the service for the residents of Islamabad.

"I was shocked — in 2022 I had an angioplasty at Pims, and did not pay a single rupee," he said, adding that it was unfortunate that the residents of the federal capital could not get free treatment unlike those based in KP and Punjab.

Since the start of the health care service in 2015, the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan has been dealing with it and in

2023 it won the contract again for the next three years (2022 to 2025).

When this correspondent contacted the health card helpline, a representative confirmed that the free treatment for residents of Islamabad, AJK, and GB had been halted because of the lack of funds. "However residents of KP and Punjab are getting the facility as their government have paid the amount," he said.

Sehat Sahulat Programme Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Arshad said that the modified PC-I authorisation was under process at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives which would likely be resolved in a week or so. Karol Hospital head Khawaja Waheed

Khawaja termed the development unfortunate. He complained that private hospitals were also suspended but only the KP government was allowing its residents to get treatment from private hospitals, as the service in Punjab was restricted to state-owned hospitals.

"The service should be restored instantly as we have been getting hundreds of patients who are going back empty-handed due to the suspension of the facility. It shows that a large number of people have been deprived of free medical treatment," said Mr Khawaja, who also heads the Pakistan Awami Quwat party.

Sehat Sahulat Programme CEO Arshad Khan informed Dawn that the programme's extension was

approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) till June 30, 2024, for the high-poverty population. "The modified PC-I authorisation is under process as of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and likely to receive in a week or so, for [the] inception of service and funds allocation for clearance of State Life approved pending liabilities accordingly," he said in a written reply.

It is worth mentioning that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif launched the health card programme on December 31, 2015, for Islamabad's residents as the "first step towards making Pakistan a welfare state".

He had announced that the card

would be expanded to all parts of Punjab, Balochistan, AJK, Gilgit-Baltistan and the former Fata region. The people of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) had not benefited from the project at the time because their governments had declined to become part of the federal government's programme to which they also had to contribute. Later, KP launched its health card namely Sehat Insaf Card.

During the PTI government, the programme was expanded across the country, apart from most districts of Sindh. In April 2022, some hospitals suspended the service as they feared that PML-N might discontinue the programme as the PTI promoted the programme as its initiative. However, the PML-N reinstituted the programme.

1994-1995



RAQPIKERS search for reusable items from the waste dumped at a landfill site in I-11 sector. — White Star

Winners of NA seats from Islamabad want cases transferred to another tribunal

Since Islamabad has lone tribunal, cases cannot be shifted out of capital

By Hishar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: In what marks the beginning of a legal squall, all the three declared winners of National Assembly seats from Islamabad have sought the transfer of election petitions, pending adjudication, before the only poll tribunal for the federal capital to some other tribunal.

In a surprising, controversial move, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), itself a party to the election petitions, has fixed the identical petitions apparently drafted by the same lawyer but filed through different counsel for hearing today (Tuesday).

The development comes days after a controversial ordinance was promulgated to amend Elections

Act to empower the ECP to appoint retired judges as election tribunals. Anjum Asad Khan, Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary and Raja Khuram Shahzad— declared winners from NA-46, NA-47 and NA-48 respectively—in their petitions, copies of which are available with Dawn, have not only sought transfer of election petitions against them to some other tribunal, but have also prayed to stay proceedings before the election tribunal till the final disposal of these applications.

The legal predicament is that there is a single election tribunal in Islamabad and the ECP under the law cannot transfer the cases to a tribunal out of Islamabad and the Ordinance empowering it to appoint retired judges as election tribunals has been challenged before the Lahore High Court.

The applicants have expressed apprehensions that they will not get justice from the tribunal where their cases were pending. “...The right of individuals to be dealt with in accordance with law is a universal code of justice,” one of the appli-

cations reads and refers to Article 4 of the Constitution which guarantees it.

It also says that the right to fair trial was the center stone of justice and refers to Article 59-A of the Constitution. It says there were some legal flaws and defects in the election petition, which were substantial and material in nature and warranted dismissal of election petition.

One of the six cases, three were registered at the Karachi Company police station, two at the Secretariat police station and one at the Industrial Area police station. Except for one robbery case in which US citizens were robbed, all FIRs were registered against the PTI leaders. The foreigners were robbed in Islamabad on May 25.

It, however, says the tribunal not only called upon all the respondents of election petition but also examined the entire record of election from the authorities concerned the very first date of hearing. It says the petitioner of the election petition intends to deprive the applicant from his lawful right with mala fide intentions.

The ECP’s case list has been shared with the media some two weeks after a new audit found that the declared winners on all three National Assembly constituencies from the federal capital had actually secured less votes compared to the ‘runners-up’.

Diplomat’s car hits, injures constable

ISLAMABAD: A police constable sustained injuries after being hit by a speeding car driven by a British diplomat on Monday.

Police officers told Dawn that after the incident the police impounded the official car owned by the UK High Commission driven by the country’s third secretary.

The incident took place at Radio Pakistan Chowk on Constitution Avenue where traffic was being manually managed due to power outages at the time.

A police constable attached with the Security Division was moving towards Radio Pakistan Chowk on a motorcycle from Lyftham Road when his side was open to traffic.

The diplomat was moving in her official Honda car on Constitution Avenue from D-Chowk when the traffic

from her side was stopped manually by an ITF official.

However, the diplomat jumped the close signal and hit the constable. As a result, he sustained injuries and fell on the road. ITF and area police officers impounded the car and shifted the injured to hospital. The constable was identified as Amir Shah.

A police spokesman confirmed that the driver was a third secretary at the British High Commission. He said the police impounded the official car for legal action.

The car driver was allowed to go after she introduced herself as a diplomat, the spokesman said. The constable was shifted to Polyclinic and later taken to Feroz for medical tests. His condition seemed to be stable, he added. — Staff Reporter

Police ‘seal’ six FIRs with no regard for court order

Five out of six cases pertain to PTI leaders; spokesperson admits no legal cover for this practice

By Munawar Azam

ISLAMABAD: In a stark violation of a lower court order, the Islamabad police sealed six FIRs in May 2024 even though there is not a single law to empower the police to indulge in this practice.

Officials told Dawn that the police cannot legally seal an FIR but they resort to this practice on the “verbal orders” of senior officers in a “deliberate attempt” to keep the contents of the case secret from those implicated. These FIRs can be used at a later stage against the suspects depending on circumstances, they claimed.

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Relations (ISPR). On May 11, two cases were registered at the Secretariat police station, the officers said, adding that one of the FIRs at the Secretariat police station was registered under sections 504-a, 143, 147, 188, 341, 188, and 353 and the Amplifier Act.

This case also implicated the leadership of the Jamiat-ul-Islami besides the PTI, and the FIR said that those nominated in the FIR had resisted the police and violated Section 144.

On May 22, two cases were registered at the Karachi Company police station, the officers said, adding that one of the cases was registered under sections 290, 141, 188, and 160 of the Pakistan Penal Code and the other was registered under Section 324. However, both FIRs were sealed on the order of the City Zone SP, the officers said.

They claimed that the FIRs were registered after a batched raid by the police at the PTI Secretariat to arrest absconding PTI leader Hammad Azhar who had surfaced in Islamabad. The raid was conducted after the police received information about Mr Azhar’s presence in the secretariat. He, however, evaded the police.

Court order

The practice of sealing FIR, though in vogue, brings it in stark contrast to an order of the judicial magistrate, Rana Majahid Rahim, in June 2019 when he directed the capital police not to seal any FIR as it was against the fundamental rights of the suspects as well as the complainants.

The court also ruled that withholding the copy of an FIR was against the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

The order was issued in response to a plea by then-PTP Senator Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar who approached the court seeking direction to the police to provide him with a copy of the FIR registered against him at the Margalla police station.

“...it would be in fitness of things to remind the SHO concerned, and higher officers that the police have no authority to seal an FIR,” the court said, adding, “Sealing of an FIR was always disavowed just to secure the arrest of the accused persons at will without providing them an opportunity to exercise their rights under Section 498.”

Section 498 of the Criminal Procedure Code pertains to the “power to direct admission to bail or reduction of bail.”

Speaking about the sealed FIRs, the police spokesperson said there was no law in this regard but justified that the reports were kept under wraps on the order of senior officers. “Only those FIRs are sealed which may cause a law and order situation,” he added.

When asked about the court order that had barred this practice, he said he would ask the high-ups and revert with a response. However, the spokesperson failed to share a response till this report went to press. This correspondent also approached Inspector General of Police Syed Ali Naair Rizvi for his comments via WhatsApp almost a week ago, but he did not respond either.

GILGIT BALTISTAN DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Notice Inviting Tender

Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA) under GLOP-II Project invites sealed tenders/bids from all interested contractors/firms to participate in execution of works in Hunza District/Shigar Valley of Gilgit Baltistan for the year 2024.

S. #	Name of Work	Approved Cost in Million	2% Earnest Money in Million
District Hunza			
1.	Construction of Flood Protective Works Shigar-Hunza	Rs. 37.305	Rs. 1.119

- Mandatory Requirements for Eligibility for Issuance of Tender Form.**
 - Valid PEC Registration Certificate for current financial year with relevant category and above, and codes of specialization i.e. CE04 (Flood Control System) and CE11 (General Engineering Works).
 - Attested latest profile of the contractor.
 - CNIC of the prospective bidders.
 - Affidavit of no litigation and no blacklisting.
 - Required Bid Security (CDB) from scheduled bank of Pakistan.
- The Location & Deadlines are as under:**
 - Location:** Office of the AD, GBDMA, DC Office Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan.
 - Issuance:** Documents will be issued from **06-06-2024 to 28-06-2024** upto **11:30 AM**
 - Submission Deadline:** Due date is **28-06-2024 till 12:00 noon**
 - Tender Opening:** Tenders will be opened on **28-06-2024 at 12:30 PM**
 - Tender Opening Location:** GBPWD Rest House, Zero Point, Karimabad
- Method of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelopes (SSTE). (PEC Harmonized with GB PPPA Rules).
- Terms and Conditions:**
 - Under the following conditions the bid will be rejected:
 - Conditional and telegraphic bids/tenders.
 - Bids received after specified date and time.
 - Bids of blacklisted firms.
 - Unsealed bids or wrongly marked bids (Technical and Financial).
 - The Tender Documents/RFP containing detailed terms and conditions, method of constructing/supply procedure for submission of bids, bid security, bid validity, opening of bid, evaluation criteria, clarification / rejection of bids, performance guarantee etc. can be obtained from the **Office of the Assistant Director, Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority, DC Office Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan**.
 - Have experience in execution of at least 2x similar Projects.
 - Competitive responsive lowest bid winner must have provide Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) renewal **2024/2025**.
 - If any member of the Procurement Committee remains out of District Headquarters on the date of opening of tenders, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time as mentioned above.
 - Firm must have bank balance of at least 30% of the value of the Project or have bank credit line of at least 50% of the project cost.
 - In case of any conflict, GB PPPA Rules 2022 shall be major rule having effect on all rules.
 - Rates quoted **05% and below** of the technical sanction (TS) shall be considered as unworkable and shall be rejected.
 - In case of JV agreement, proper format duly signed by all partners of JV clearly mentioning share of each partner lead and associate partner duly attested by Magistrate 1st Class shall be mandatory.
 - Bid security as specified in shape of **CDB/TDR** from any scheduled Bank of Pakistan is must. Bid security of insurance companies will not be accepted.
 - Procurement/supply/construction shall be carried out in accordance with the policy and guidelines issued from time to time by the GBDMA.
 - The prospective eligible bidders may obtain bidding documents after payment of price of bidding documents and by submitting a **written application personally** or through an authorized representative with **duly attested copy of power of attorney**. Power of attorney for bidding should be in **Rs. 100/- stamp paper in original** mentioning the project name with employer stamp.
 - In case of firm, list of partners/partnership deed, giving full particulars of Director/Proprietor or other connected information along with power of attorney or being sole proprietor such undertaking on stamp paper is to be furnished.
 - The proposals along with bid security and other mandatory relevant documents must reach, in sealed envelopes, by hand at Office of the AD, GBDMA, DC Office Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan before closing date or on closing date and time at GB PWD Rest House, Zero Point, Karimabad as above and be clearly marked “**BIDDING APPLICATION**” for “**Construction of Flood Protective Works Shigar-Hunza**”.

The Procuring Agency reserves the right to reject any or all bids subject to relevant provisions of PPPA Rules, 2004/GB PPPA Rules 2022. The Procuring Agency may reject all bids or proposals of any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal under Rule-33 of said Rules.

This advertisement is also available on www.pppa.org.pk

(ASSISTANT DIRECTOR)
Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority
Hunza / Nagar
Ph: 08613-930124

0208-37434

0208-112

KP-HMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROJECT (KP-HCIP) ESSE DEPTT
GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
THROUGH EXECUTIVE ENGINEER C&W DIVISION UPPER DIR

REQUEST FOR BIDS

Civil Works (ONE-ENVELOPE BIDDING PROCESS)

Country: Pakistan
Name of Project: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project
Loan No./Credit No./Grant No.: IDA-68601DA-67140

- The Human Capital Investment Project, Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir has received financing from the World Bank under the contract for civil works: **PACKAGE-01 TO PACKAGE-08**.
- The Human Capital Investment Project, Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Govt of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for multiple Bids for the work “**Reconstruction of Flood Affected Schools District Upper Dir**” The time duration of each contract is 06 months.
- Bidding will be conducted through national competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank’s “**Procurement Regulations for IFB Borrowers**” March 2018 (Procurement Regulations) and is open to all Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Office of the Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir and inspect the bidding document during office hours (9:00AM to 5:00 PM) Monday to Friday at the address given below.
- The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PKR 15,000/- for each package. The method of payment will be cash payment. The document can be obtained from the office of the Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below as per the schedule mentioned in the table below. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below as per the schedule mentioned in the table below.

S.No	Description	Bid Security (PKR)	Tender Processing Fee	Bid Submission Date & Time
1	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD AFFECTED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPPER DIR..... Package-1 (BID Ref: a SOURCE-00001-000-000) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	Bid submission date & time: 28 June 2024 at 12:00 PM Bid Opening: 28 June 2024 at 12:30 PM
2	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD AFFECTED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPPER DIR..... Package-2 (BID Ref: a SOURCE-00001-000-000) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
3	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD AFFECTED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPPER DIR..... Package-3 (BID Ref: a SOURCE-00001-000-000) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
4	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD AFFECTED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPPER DIR..... Package-4 (BID Ref: a SOURCE-00001-000-000) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
5	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD AFFECTED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPPER DIR..... Package-5 (BID Ref: a SOURCE-00001-000-000) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
6	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD AFFECTED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPPER DIR..... Package-6 (BID Ref: a SOURCE-00001-000-000) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
7	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD AFFECTED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPPER DIR..... Package-7 (BID Ref: a SOURCE-00001-000-000) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
8	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD AFFECTED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPPER DIR..... Package-8 (BID Ref: a SOURCE-00001-000-000) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-

- The Bid Security of any Bidder found to be providing false documentation can be forfeited.
- A Pre-Bid meeting will be held on 13 June 2024 at 11:00 AM in the office of Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir.
- Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful Bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.
- The bidder will provide Bid Security in shape of CDB in the name of Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir.
- The successful bidder will provide 10% performance guarantee on the bid value.
- Venue of the Bid opening is Office of the Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
C&W DIVISION DIR UPPER

Sunset 07:04 pm
 Sunrise (Tomorrow) 04:56 am
NEXT 24 HRS
 Minimum 30.0°C
 Maximum 43.0°C
 Outlook Mostly Sunny
AQI
 Maximum (Yesterday) 209



Sabalenka eases through as Di Minaur stuns Medvedev

Pg.17 SPORT



QANQA Ram Hospital OPD deserted due to a strike by young doctors. — White Star

Govt's reply sought to Imran's plea against fresh May 9 cases

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday issued notices to the Punjab government and other respondents on a petition of PTI former chairman Imran Khan against a decision of the provincial cabinet to prosecute him and other leaders of his party on charges of involvement in the May 9 riots.

A two-judge bench, comprising Justice Feroz Haider and Justice Shakil Ahmad, directed a law officer to submit replies on behalf of the respondents by June 10.

Earlier, Advocate Sardar Latif Khan Khosa argued on behalf of the petitioner that the Punjab Cabinet on May 24 had approved the nomination of PTI leaders in additional cases of May 9 protests. He

said the decision was made in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of the petitioner's arch-rival Nawaz Sharif.

He said the federal and Punjab governments were scared of Imran Khan, fearing his release from the false cases. He alleged that both governments wanted to implicate Imran in false cases. He asked the court to set aside the impugned decision by the Punjab cabinet for being illegal, without jurisdiction, mala fide and of no legal consequence.

The Punjab Cabinet had approved fresh legal action against the former prime minister and other PTI leaders for "building a hate narrative against state institutions".

According to Punjab Information Minister Anna Bokhari, Mr Khan had consistently been building a narrative

against state institutions that's why the provincial cabinet had decided to take action.

PAYOFF: A special court on Monday allowed former chief minister Parwez Elahi a one-time exemption from personal appearance on the medical grounds in the case of illegal appointments in the Punjab Assembly.

Mr Elahi, who has been released on bail, did not appear before the court and medical reports furnished by his counsel said the doctors had recommended a complete bed rest for him.

The lawyer said the doctors also advised Mr Elahi to have some critical medical tests done, which were yet to be conducted. He asked the court to allow the former chief minister a one-time exemption from personal appearance.

The court allowed the request and

delayed the indictment of Mr Elahi and other suspects in the case till June 14.

Previously, the court kept delaying the indictment in the case for months due to non-production of Mr Elahi by the prosecution, citing medical reasons.

However, the PTI leader also skipped two hearings after his release on bail.

The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) had registered the FIR, alleging that illegal appointments of 898-17 posts were made in the assembly when Mr Elahi was the CM and co-suspect Muhammad Khan Bhatti was his principal secretary in 2021.

The prosecution said the favourite candidates were appointed to the posts despite being declared failed in the written examination. The appointed candidates had also been nominated as suspects in the case.

Police claim 50pc drop in violent crimes

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The provincial capital has witnessed a significant decrease of over 50 per cent in heinous and violent crimes due to multiple strategies the police have adopted, bringing a major relief to the public.

In a press conference at Qila-e-Gujjar Singh Police Lines on Monday, Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Bilal Siddique Kamran said the elimination of several organised crime networks, the arrest of hardened criminals, improved chaffing rates, and effective operational strategy had contributed significantly to reducing street crime in Lahore, a city that had been reporting a constant crime surge for many years.

He claimed the provincial capital had marked a nearly 50pc decrease in property crimes. He said the data was prepared based on the number of calls to the police helpline 15 that citizens made to report heinous and other crimes, including robbery, dacoity, vehicle snatching, and theft.

The CCPO said crime calls related to burglary had reduced by 64pc, and calls related to dacoity had reduced by 56pc. Similarly, he said the provincial capital had witnessed a significant decrease in

vehicle theft by 51pc and vehicle snatching by 57pc.

The crime related to vehicle theft and snatching had posed a potential challenge for the police, he said, adding the CIA, the anti-vehicle lifting squad, and other formations of the Lahore police had played a key role in rounding up and eliminating several major networks in this respect.

"The Lahore police made frequent raids on the dens of criminals to weaken their organised networks and arrested many of them," he said.

The police arrested 2,580 proclaimed offenders of category "A", 18,264 of category "B", 16,678 court absconders, and 3,679 target offenders, he said.

About the investigation wing, which played a decisive role in bringing crime down, the Lahore police chief said the police had completed the investigations of a total of 474,000 cases that were lying pending since 2018.

"It was an extensive, exhausting, and challenging job to complete the investigations of a huge number of pending cases," he said.

This exercise helped a lot in initiating court proceedings against repeat

Continued on Page 14

Civilians trial will defame army: Alvi

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Former President Dr Arif Alvi says the army trial of civilians will eventually defame the army at home and abroad. "It is high time to heal the nation and distance itself from spreading 'hate-speech'," he suggested.

Speaking to media persons after a visit to the Punjab Assembly and meeting with PTI-backed MFAs on Monday, Dr Alvi said the PTI had three demands - supremacy of law, release of PTI members from custody, and return of mandate, who genuinely won general elections.

He said it had become inevitable to create peace in the wake of constantly heating up political temperature and added that the mandate of real winners of general elections

should be returned - for a better economic future.

He said the resolution of political conflicts would help create employment opportunities for millions of unemployed youth. He lamented that the health and education facilities were depleting and poverty increasing.

Dr Alvi said he had met party workers, who had grumbled in jail for eight months, despite the fact that there was no evidence of their involvement in any violent activity. In one case, he said, a party worker's two brothers were also arrested.

The former president headed the judiciary for standing tall for the law and justice. He also commented that the Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report was a report of Pakistan and judiciary. He stressed that

the army, politicians and the civilians should learn from the commission report and stop tagging people as traitors.

He said it was PTI's right to distrust those judges who were showing prejudice against the PTI leaders and those should distance themselves from benches hearing PTI leaders cases.

Dr Alvi also expressed solidarity with the Palestinians and thanked Norway, Spain and Ireland for recognising Palestine. He also acknowledged the South African government for taking Palestine's case to the International Court of Justice.

He said the Pakistan government was responsible to ensure security for the workers from China and stressed that the CPEC project should be completed in all respects.

Gymkhana land lease issue echoes in PA again

Club pays Rs260m electricity bill per annum; house told

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The issue of lease of 150 acres of land to Gymkhana Club in the provincial capital again echoed in the Punjab Assembly on Monday as Finance Minister Muztaba Shuja told the house that the facility that was leased out for just Rs5,000 per year, pays Rs260 million electricity bill per annum.

The minister told the house that the club had been given lease of land up to 2050 against a 1996.

He said earlier the house amount was just Rs15 per acre.

He said that the club was also paying Rs260 million per annum as power bill.

He added that liquor was also being illegally sold at the facility.

Speaker Malik Mohammad Ahmed Khan registered that poor peasants had been given land in Chudhri desert at a rate of Rs25,000 per acre, while the elite class grabbed hundreds of acres of land in the urban centre against the payment of a pittance amount.

Treasury MPA Samiullah Khan suggested that a day should be fixed for general discussion on the Gymkhana Club.

Meanwhile, opposition leader in the Punjab Assembly, Malik Ahmed Khan Bhachar, demanded setting up of a judicial commission to investigate the events of May 9, 2023.

Taking part in the general discussion on law and order during the assembly session requisitioned by the opposition, he said that any investigation conducted without a judicial commission into the May 9 incidents would remain controver-

sial and unsatisfactory.

He asked how many PTI activists had been challenged in May 9 cases, adding that six cases had been registered against him, though not a single case under Section 144 was made against him before May 9.

He said the law and order situation could be fixed according to the government, but it was not so for the PTI, alleging that Punjab police inspector general had been given the target of torturing every PTI worker making a public move.

Earlier, finance and parliamentary affairs minister Muztaba Shuja claimed that the law and order situation had improved as compared with the previous year's.

Opening general discussion on law and order, he highlighted the police role against terrorism, drug mafia, electricity theft, kite flying and in providing security to Chinese citizens in the province.

He said the police had also conducted

a successful operation against dacoits of Katcha (riverine) area, car and motorcycle theft, as well as inter-provincial smuggling.

He said that modern facilities were being provided to the police on the direction of the chief minister, while the network of the Punjab Safe Cities Authority cameras was being expanded to other towns of the province.

Opposition member Sheikh Ishtiaq and treasury's Samiullah Khan exchanged hot words as the opposition resorted to shouting slogans and thumping of desks.

The speaker warned both sides against resorting to cross talk and using non-parliamentary language. "Make arguments in favour of your leadership, but avoid cross talk or violating the sanctity of the house by using abusive words."

Later, the chair prorogued the house for an indefinite time on completion of its agenda.

YDA's strike paralyses hospitals

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: A partial strike by Young Doctors Association (YDA) activists at government teaching hospitals in Lahore left patients stranded and healthcare services crippled on Monday.

The strike demands provision of security for doctors during duties.

Lahore General Hospital and Sir Ganga Ram Hospital were completely shut down, while Mayo Services, Punjab Institute of Cardiology, and Jinnah Hospital Lahore saw a thin presence of doctors.

Reports said that young medics were divided over the strike call, leading to chaos at hospitals. Outpatient departments were locked, and patients were forced to leave without treatment. In some cases, patients were made to wait in the scorching heat before being turned away. Administration officials tried to keep OPDs running by deploying neutral doctors, but YDA members forced them to leave. Witnesses reported that YDA members even thrashed attendants and relatives of patients who insisted on treatment.

The strike has disproportionately affected poor, elderly, and women patients, many of whom were brought in on wheelchairs or stretchers.

The association's office bearers said that the strike call was given for the provision of security to the young doctors as the incidents of violence were surfacing every other day at the state-run hospitals.

Light rain brings relief but heatwave to return today

LAHORE: The residents of Lahore experienced a brief respite from the scorching heat on Monday evening when strong winds, gusting over 100 kilometers per hour, swept through the city, followed by a light shower - with traces recorded in some areas and up to 1 millimeter in others.

However, meteorological officials tempered hopes of a long-term reprieve from the heat, predicting that the winds and rain would clear within the next two hours and the mercury would drop slightly before rising again by morning, with the heatwave expected to return.

"The partly cloudy conditions will clear in the next one to two hours," said an official from the Meteorological Department. While a week-long advisory offers some hope, predicting dusty winds in upper and central Punjab between June 4 and June 8, it also warns of a "flash drought" - a condition that occurs when low rainfall is accompanied by consistently high temperatures over a short period.

According to the Met office advisory, flash droughts develop and intensify rapidly, often within weeks or even days, leading to quick increases in evapotranspiration rates and depletion of available water in the top layer of soil. Although the country received slightly above-normal rainfall from January to May 29, 2024, the below-normal rainfall and soaring temperatures in May, particularly in southern Pakistan, may lead to flash drought conditions, the Met office warned farmers. — Staff Reporter

IUB pays half-month salary to staff

By Our Correspondent

BAHAWALPUR: Teachers of the Islamia University Bahawalpur (IUB) staged a demonstration in front of the VC secretariat on Monday to protest release of just half-month salary to them for May and the suspension of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) grant to the IUB.

The protesting teachers said their financial issues would worsen since the Eidul Azha fell in the current month.

They also regretted that the promise made by IUB chancellor/governor in December 2024 to release the HEC grant for the IUB had not been honoured.

Meanwhile, IUB Media Director Dr Shahzad Khalid in a press release claimed that the administration had to curtail expenses because of financial crisis, resulting in payment of half month's salary to its employees.

He said under the VC's instructions, a bank loan was being arranged for the payment of remaining salary to the teachers before Eid.

Patient refused operation for not paying extra fees

By Tariq Saeed Birmiani

DERA GHAZI KHAN: Allegations of collusion among doctors and staff at the Sardar Fatah Muhammad Khan Boudar Institute of Cardiology have surfaced as patients are being charged exorbitant additional fees for operations at the government hospital.

In response to a written complaint from patient Shahid Bilal Khan Ghori, Commissioner Dr Nasir Mahmood Rashid has ordered Medical Superintendent Dr Ahsan Rahman Khan Chaudhary to submit a report within seven days regarding the allegations.

Mr Ghori reported his complaint to the commissioner that he was admitted to the cardiology institute on May 31 for a scheduled bypass operation on June 1 due to a heart problem. Upon admission,

Mr Ghori underwent 25 to 30 tests, costing him over Rs65,000.

Additionally, he arranged blood donors as instructed by the doctors. However, on the day of the operation, he was asked to pay an additional Rs250,000 despite having already paid Rs405,000, for which he only received a receipt of Rs95,000.

The operation was cancelled due to his inability to pay.

The surgeon in charge initially agreed to proceed with the operation but later cancelled it, citing Ghori's unfitness for anaesthesia, despite prior tests indicating otherwise.

Mr Ghori alleges that the operation was cancelled due to his inability to pay the extra amount, causing him significant mental distress.

Mr Ghori reported his complaint to the commissioner that he was admitted to the cardiology institute on May 31 for a scheduled bypass operation on June 1 due to a heart problem. Upon admission,

Mr Ghori underwent 25 to 30 tests, costing him over Rs65,000.

Suspect involved in attack on inspector killed in 'shoot-out'

By Our Correspondent

SARGODHA: The suspect involved in the attack on a police inspector was killed in an alleged police encounter near village Dhiran Malakwal on Monday.

The deceased was identified as Zaigham Abbas Gondal was in the police custody in a robbery case.

The police gave a tentative story of the encounter, saying that Zaigham was being taken to Mithal by Mian Police Sub-Inspector Muhammad Sattar for recovery of arms when four of his accomplices ambushed the police party and freed him from custody.

On the information, the police of different police stations chased the suspects and an encounter took place near the Dhiran Malakwal. As a result of the firing of his own accomplices in the encounter, Zaigham was killed while his companions managed to escape.

The police alleged that Zaigham was involved in murder and robbery incidents. He was also involved in an attack on Inspector Maher Shabbir Haral. The police shifted the

body of the victim to hospital for a post-mortem and registered a case against the deceased and his accomplices, including Babar and Faizal.

SHOT DEAD: Armed men killed their opponent while he was asleep at his home at Chak 54-NB Ransohab.

The victim was identified as Khizar Hayat Baloch. It is suspected that he was killed over an old enmity.

In another incident, an unidentified attacker shot a 60-year-old motorcyclist dead at Kot Momin.

According to sources, Ghulam Haider (60) of Mohalla Sahib Din was travelling on a motorcycle when an armed man shot him dead. Kot Momin police shifted his body to the hospital and registered a case.

FINDS: The district administration fined several eateries for selling rotis at higher rates.

Deputy Commissioner retired Capt Asrarullah Haider Khan, Assistant Commissioner Amira Khatoon Tarar raided the hotels and eateries in Targhah Colony, Factory Area Chak and other areas and imposed heavy fines on the hotel owners for overcharging on rotis instead of selling it at Rs14.

DG Khan measles situation reviewed

By Our Correspondent

DERA GHAZI KHAN: Commissioner Nasir Mahmood Rashid on Monday directed vaccination teams to achieve their respective measles vaccination targets in the field given the outbreak of the disease in the division.

Providing over a meeting to review the measles outbreak and other issues in the division, he directed the health department officials to ensure provision of measles vaccine and availability of essential medicines.

From January 1, 2024 to May 31, some 1,093 suspected measles cases were reported in DG Khan division.

Among these, 163 cases were confirmed, 783 tested negative, and 173 cases are under investigation.

As many as 31 measles patients were admitted to different hospitals in the division at present.

The commissioner warned the officials of strict action over any misrepresentation of numbers of measles cases. If symptoms of measles appear in a child, he/she should be referred to the nearest hospital, he said, adding that there is no need to be panicked, but precautionary measures should be taken to prevent the spread of measles.

The commissioner directed all health centres in the division to ensure provision of measles vaccine and availability of essential medicines.

From January 1, 2024 to May 31, some 1,093 suspected measles cases were reported in DG Khan division.

Among these, 163 cases were confirmed, 783 tested negative, and 173 cases are under investigation.

As many as 31 measles patients were admitted to different hospitals in the division at present.



LAHORE: Parts of the city received light rain on Monday night. — White Star / M. Asif

Khanewal doctors on strike against minister's rude conduct

By Our Correspondent

TORA TEK SINGH: On the call of the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), outpatient departments of all government and private hospitals remained closed on Monday in Khanewal district.

Dr Muhammad Zahid, Khanewal district PMA president, said the strike was in response to the provincial minister's insulting behaviour and the transfer of doctors without allegations or inquiry.

He said that on June 1, provincial minister for primary and secondary health care Khwaja Imran Nazir had visited Kabiirwala THQ hospital after the death of five children due to measles. Six have been discharged, and the others are stable.

FIRE: Garments and cloth worth millions of rupees were reduced to ashes,

and machinery was also burnt after a fire broke out at AQ Garments factory on Jhang Road near the airport in Faisalabad on Monday.

Rescue 1122 claimed that the fire was controlled by 12 fire tenders and was caused by an electric short circuit.

Also, in a separate incident, three labourers were burnt alive, and a cattle shed was gutted after a fire broke out on Monday in a cattle farm in Chutiana area Chak 101-GB.

Farmer Muhammad Jamil said an employee had set fire to the roof's wooden branches to fill coals in a barga, but the fire spread, reducing the shed and its contents to ashes.

MURDER: Two motorcyclists gunned down Malik Imran Aftab in the district courts complex near the CPO office at Faisalabad on Monday.

A court staff qasid and a passerby were also injured and shifted to Allied hospital.

The police said the deceased, a resident of Thikriwala, had come to see his under arrest murder case accused brother Malik Adnan. Later police followed the attackers: Shahbaz and Aftab.

PTI CASES: Faisalabad Anti-Terrorism Court judge Raja Shahid Zamroz adjourned the hearing of cases against Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub on Monday until June 24.

Mr Ayub is accused in four FIRs registered on May 9, 2023, regarding his involvement in riots after Imran Khan's arrest.

He appeared before the court and was also accompanied by Senator Shibli Faraz and lawyer Babar Arwan.

'Robber' killed, two others injured in encounters with police

By Our Correspondent

KASUR: A suspected robber was gunned down, while two others sustained injuries after an encounter with local police in two separate incidents on Monday.

In the first incident, police claimed that four unidentified armed robbers intercepted a motorcyclist near Kacha Pakka village, in the limits of Khushian police station and took away his bike and cash.

Following an emergency call by the victim on police helpline 15, a police team started chasing the suspects.

Police say that near Pind Kalam village, the robbers took positions in the fields and opened indiscriminate fire on the police party that was retreating.

Similarly, in Sarai Maghal area

on Monday, the police claimed to have arrested three robbers, one of them in injured condition.

According to the police, the arrested suspects are members of a gang. They were identified as Danish of Sheery Aul (who was injured), Ibrahim and Manir of Pataki, after an "encounter" on Bahadri Road.

The police say they chased the suspects when they were fleeing after snatching a bike and valuables from a man near Bahadri.

Police claim that the gang was wanted in over 30 cases of robbery, house dacoity and bike snatching in Pheednagar, Sarai Maghal and Lahore. Police also claimed to have recovered the snatched bike and valuables from the suspects.

In both encounters, no police man was injured.

LLF announces winners of folklore writing prize

Dawn Report

LAHORE: The Lahore Literary Festival (LLF) has announced the winners of the LLF Folklore Writing Prize 2024.

According to the results announced on Monday, Kheer Raja won the first prize, Malak Shahzad second and Meera Amber Raheem got the third prize. The first, second and third position holders would receive the cash prize of Rs70,000, Rs50,000 and Rs30,000, respectively.

The jury for the second edition of the prize included renowned novelist Osama Siddique, Anna R. Ali, Jamal Hussain, Arooba Hussain and Nadhra Shahid.

Speaking about the prize, LLF founder and CEO Razi Ahmed said that school and college students from across Lahore entered the writing prize, indicating a keen interest among young writers for creative writing. In addition, he announced that the

entries from last year and this year would be published in an anthology in that more people might benefit from reading these rich creative writing pieces.

The writing contest was held in collaboration with the British Council and it was announced at the 12th edition of the LLF at Alhamra in February. The young writers were asked to submit an original creative writing piece in English with a word limit of 1,500 in response to

the frescos in the rooftop room at the Naumihal Singh Harwal near the Bhatti Gate.

The young writers were asked to look deeply into the frescos and create imaginative stories about the current times and the past centuries, taking hints from the artworks on the wall.

They were asked to explore how these stories echoed and transmuted across cultures and identities especially in relation to Abdur Rahman Chughtai's works.

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YDA diagnoses ills facing SZMCH

RAHIM YAR KHAN:

Handfuls of patients faced difficulties when Young Doctors Association's local chapter closed the Outpatient Department (OPD) of Sheikh Zayed Medical College Hospital (SZMCH) on Monday.

YDA activists gathered outside the OPD under the leadership of Dr Shabbir Warraich and chanted slogans against the SZMCH administration and the Punjab government for not paying heed to their demands.

Dr Warraich told this correspondent that there were no basic facilities including MRI, CT Scan and some other pathology and radiological diagnostic tests necessary for patients at the hospital which resulted in quarrels between doctors and patient attendants.

He said many doctors had been beaten due to these reasons but, to appease the patients,

health authorities were transferring doctors but not equipping the health facility with basic equipment.

He said the administration was maintaining the institute's security through private security guards but not paying them their salaries. In such a situation they would be least concerned about hospital security.

Dr Warraich said doctors were being threatened even due to unavailability of beds, ventilators, medicines and free clinical tests.

He said the revamping of old building of the SZMCH was in progress with millions of rupees but the Punjab government and the administration were not serious about the completion of the Sheikh Zayed Medical College Hospital (SZMCH) Surgical Tower Project work on which was stopped two years ago.

He said surgical procedures had been beaten due to these reasons but, to appease the patients,

Car dealer gunned down by robbers

SAHIWAL:

Car dealer Muhammad Rameez was shot dead by three gunmen at his showroom in neighbourhood Sufiabad, Pakpattan, on Monday.

According to reports, the gunmen looted cash and snatched Rameez's mobile phone. When Rameez resisted, they opened fire and injured

him. He succumbed to his injuries on way to hospital.

The incident occurred merely 100 yards away from the police station. The city police registered a murder case against the unidentified gunmen.

The deceased was also the president of the Mochipara traders' body. — Correspondent

Two 'dacoits' killed, cop injured in encounter

By Our Correspondent

RAIRAWALPUR: Two unidentified suspected dacoits were killed and a constable was injured in a police "encounter" at 79/WR village in the limits of Thikri police station, Vehari district, on Sunday night.

According to a spokesperson, a police party signalled a car to stop for checking at a picket on Sunday night, but the driver sped away.

He said as the police chased the suspicious car, the suspects occupying it opened fire on the policemen at 79/WR village. The police party retaliated with the fire.

The police impounded

the car used by the suspects, claiming recovery of weapons, snatched motorcycles and stolen goods.

BOY KILLS: A minor boy died, while three other children and a woman suffered serious injuries when the boundary wall of a house collapsed on them at Labana Church on Sunday night.

According to Rescue 1122 officials, the children were playing, while the woman was sitting near the dilapidated wall, when it collapsed.

As a result, Mahsoor

Bibi (8) Ramzan (10), Rabia Bibi (3), Maqsooda Bibi (18) and Abdul Jabbar (5), were seriously injured. They were shifted to the Bahawal Victoria Hospital (BVH), where Ramzan succumbed to his injuries.

ARRESTED: The South Main police in Multan claimed to have arrested a woman who allegedly kidnapped a two and a half months old child, recovering the infant from Kot Radha Kishan.

According to the police, the suspect, Nabila, kid-

napped the infant, Haris, from Samsajab locality.

The child's father, Sufi, told the police that his son was with his grandmother when Nabila kidnapped him and took him to Kot Radha Kishan.

The police, with the help of geo-fencing and other modern technologies, located the accused and after raiding her house arrested her.

PLASTIC BAGS BANNED: The Vehari district administration has banned use of plastic bags from June 5 in its jurisdiction.

This was announced by Deputy Commissioner Syed Asif Hussain Shah while chairing a meeting on Monday.

According to a handbook, the DC imposed a ban on all plastic bags and pamphlets and ordered use of cloth in making of these items.

He warned of strict action in case of any violation. The DC also ordered the private transport owners to reduce the fares by three percent, otherwise action will be taken against the violators.

PESHAWAR

Sunset 07:23pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 05:05am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 27°C
Maximum 42°C
Outlook Sunny

METRO
North

Sabalenka eases through as Di Minaur stuns Medvedev

Pg.17 SPORT



A MASON repairs Bab-ul-Khyber in Jarnud as part of a beautification plan. A gateway of historic Khyber Pass, it was built in 1904 by the then military ruler, Gen Ayub Khan. — Photo by Ibrahim Shihwarri

Govt to provide free solar system to poor households

CM renews call for withdrawal of cases against Imran

By Umer Farooq

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Monday announced the provision of free solar systems to families living below the poverty line in the province.

He also said his government would offer subsidised solar systems to lower-middle class families, with half of the costs to be shared by both.

"Unlike the federal government that doesn't care about the poor, we have planned a landmark initiative of providing such families with solar systems free of charge," Mr Gandapur told the provincial assembly during a session chaired by Speaker Bahar Saleem Swati here.

The chief minister said as part of its solarisation plans, the government would install solar systems in its offices, buildings, and educational institutions, as well as in water and sanitation service companies.

He rejected the opposition's criticism of the announcement of the province's budget ahead of the federal one, saying there were no issues with doing so.

Mr Gandapur said the province's projected budgetary allocations for the fiscal year 2024-25 won't see any reduction and instead would go up after the federal government announced its budget.

He said the economic growth rate was 6.2 per cent during the last two years of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government in the centre but it plunged to just one per cent.

The chief minister raised questions about the federal government's spending amid high inflation.

"We [the KP government] aren't receiving funds despite the federal government's commitments. We have reservations about it and will highlight it," he said.

Mr Gandapur also called for a debate on the Rs200 billion in annual payments to independent power producers, insisting many IPPs didn't even produce electricity. He said the centre had promised massive development funds to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's merged tribal districts after their merger with the province, but a meagre amount was given away for the purpose.

"Out of the promised Rs500 billion, our tribal districts have got just Rs100 billion. People question where the rest of the money has gone," he said.

The chief minister warned that if the centre didn't provide Rs200 billion to tribal districts, it should prepare for a "strong reaction."

He wondered how it was possible to maintain law and order without funds.

Mr Gandapur claimed that the province didn't even get a single penny from the funds for the fight against terrorism.

He said that the provincial government provided Rs7 billion to strengthen the police, considering the improvement of law and order the biggest challenge.

The chief minister warned that he and his party's lawmakers wouldn't relax if the centre denied the province its rights.

"If the federal government cuts higher education funding, the act will be tantamount to laying land mines for itself," he said.

Mr Gandapur said his party PPT's leader and former prime minister, Imran Khan, was jailed just because he spoke for the people.

He wondered who would be held responsible for the prolonged detention of Mr Imran after his acquittal in the cipher case.

The chief minister said unfortunately, the people who urged authorities to make the Hamoodur Rahman Commission report on the fall of Osama public were

being called traitors.

"We have run out of patience," he said, complaining about the imprisonment of the PTT leader and the denial of the election symbol 'bat' to the party.

Mr Gandapur renewed the demand for immediate withdrawal of all cases against Mr Imran for his release. He said instead of admitting past mistakes and learning from them, authorities were committing more.

The chief minister wondered how many people would be silenced for defiance.

Earlier, lawmakers "condemned" the death of Musa Khan, a student of the University of Malakand, in a road accident after the administration reportedly asked him to leave the premises at night for "playing rabab" in his hostel room.

They demanded the suspension of the university's vice-chancellor and provost, as well as the doctor of the Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar, who refused a bed to the student when he was taken there with serious injuries.

Higher education minister Meena Khan Afridi informed the house that he was dissatisfied with the probe report on the matter and formed another inquiry committee to come up with its findings.

He said the VC and provost could be suspended by the university's syndicate only. The speaker asked him to call a meeting of the university's syndicate for the suspension of the VC and provost over the student's death.

The house also unanimously passed a resolution demanding regularisation of women teachers of the Elementary and Secondary Education Foundation.

In the resolution, MPA Iqbalullah complained that each of the women teachers of the foundation got Rs21,000 every month but had to pay rent and transport charges from that meagre amount.

Meanwhile, finance minister Afrab Alam Afridi presented a report on the biannual monitoring of the implementation of the National Finance Commission Award (July-Dec 2023) in the house.

Two Swabi boys drown in Indus River

By Our Correspondent

SWABI: Two teenage boys drowned in the River Indus here on Monday, Rescue 1122 and police officials said.

They quoted eyewitnesses as saying that Zameer Ahmad, 17, and Mohammad Tayyab, 16, were bathing in the River Indus in Garmsara area to beat the heat along with their friends when they drowned.

The locals informed Rescue 1122 whose teams reached the spot and started search for the boys.

The deceased hailed from Gar village.

Also in the day, a man died by suicide in Bedono area of Topi city on Monday, rescue officials said.

They said a team shifted the man to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, whose doctors pronounced him dead.

SHO Topi city police station Haroon Khan told Dawn that the man ended his life over a family dispute.

The deceased was identified as Sharif Khan, 50.

MAN KILLED: A man identified as Abid Khan was killed allegedly by his first wife, police said quoting the second wife of the deceased.

Lubna Abid, widow of Abid, told police that locals informed her that someone killed her husband and that his body was lying in a nearby area. She said when she reached there, she found him dead.

Tordher police registered an FIR against the deceased's first wife, Hamida, on the complaint of Lubna, and started investigation.

Militant killed, cop hurt as attack on polio team foiled in Lakki

By Our Correspondent

LAKKI MAHWAT: A militant was killed and a policeman injured when cops escorting a polio team in Belarai subdivision of Lakki Mahwat came across a group of miscreants, triggering a gun battle here on Monday.

A five-day anti-polio drive began armed fight security in the district with over 1,800 personnel deployed to guard polio workers.

An official said that the policemen came face to face with militants in Wargarey area of the tribal subdivision.

He said that the exchange of fire continued for some time as the assailants used automatic weapons, injuring a cop, identified as Baster Ali.

"The law enforcers returned the attack and neutralised a militant," the official claimed, adding that the cops seized an AK-47 assault rifle, bullets and hand grenades from the killed militant, and shifted his body to the District Headquarters Hospital, Tazawal.

He said that after the attack, a heavy police contingent reached the site and launched a search for the remaining assailants in the area.

Later, district police officer Tameer Khan visited the hospital and enquired after the wounded constable.

Meanwhile, in Bannu, over 2,400 policemen have been deployed across the district to provide foolproof security to polio workers.

DPO Zauddin Ahmed is monitoring the security arrangements for the ongoing polio eradication campaign.

He paid visits to the centres established at hospitals, and checked the presence of policemen escorting the mobile teams.

Mr Zia asked the subordinate police officers to sensitise policemen to the security standard operating procedures and ensure they wore helmets and bulletproof jackets during duty hours.

Separately, the police arrested a proclaimed offender in injured condition in Wanda Baloch area of Garhi Gambila on Monday.

The police had received information about the presence of an outlaw, Shafullah, at his hideout in the rural locality, an official said, adding a police party was dispatched to the area to arrest him. He said the outlaw opened fire when he noticed police around his hideout.

In the retaliatory firing by the police, the outlaw was injured and later arrested with an assault rifle, ammunition, over two kilograms hashish and 480 gram ice drug.

The official said that the arrested suspect was a contract killer and was wanted by the police in murder and narcotics selling cases.

The police shifted the injured to the DHQ Hospital, and registered a case against him under relevant sections of law.

Policeman shot dead in North Waziristan

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: A policeman was killed in a targeted attack in Shiyah taluk of North Waziristan district here on Monday.

The incident occurred in Almara village when unknown motorcycleists opened fire on Abdul Rahim outside his house. As a result, the policeman died instantly. The attackers managed to escape.

The police launched an investigation into the incident.

On May 26, two people were killed in a targeted attack by unknown persons in Mirsh. — Correspondent

Protesters want Malakand varsity top officials sacked over student's death

The student was expelled from hostel 'for playing rabab'

Dawn Report

PESHAWAR/LOWER DIR: Artists and youth staged a musical protest against the death of a student of University of Malakand, who had died in a road accident after being allegedly expelled from the hostel over playing rabab on the campus.

The protest was arranged by Hunani Tolana, Malakand, Pakistan Development Foundation and Forum for Inquiry, Knowledge and Review.

A statement issued here said that a large number of youth artists gathered outside Peshawar Press Club and artists played their rababs to protest the death of Mohammad

Musa Khan, a sixth semester student of University of Malakand.

Protesters were holding placards in favour of Musa Khan, Hayat Roshani, Mohammad Bilal Sethi, Younas Anwar, Prof Gulzar Jalal, Karim Fortuna Sethi, Advocate Haider Jan, Sahran Daman, Farooq Khan, Haris Kamal, Advocate Arbab Ibrahim and Shahary Chaghar masti took part in the protest.

They said that all people responsible for death of Musa Khan should be brought to justice. They also demanded of the government to terminate from service the provost of Malakand University, hostel warden and chief provost. They must be barred from holding any government job in future, they added.

The protesters demanded that dynamic leaders should be appointed as vice-chancellors of universities who had a genuine love for literature and arts. They said that students should be allowed to organise cultural events.



MUSK enthusiasts play rabab during a protest outside Peshawar Press Club on Monday to express solidarity with a student of the University of Malakand who died in an accident after being expelled from the hostel. — White Star

They sought a transparent and impartial investigation into the circumstances leading to expulsion of

Musa Khan from hostel and his subsequent death.

Meanwhile, despite closure of

University of Malakand (UoM), hundreds of its students on Monday took to streets and held a rally against the death of Musa Khan.

Carrying placards inscribed with slogans of 'stand for justice and stand for Musa', protesters blocked Chakdara-Shamsara road to traffic, and chanted slogans against the university administration. The local administration diverted traffic to Swat GT road.

Protesters demanded immediate suspension of UoM Vice-chancellor Prof Rashid Ahmad, provost Dr Jamun Khan, chief provost Dr Aziz Khan and hostel warden Balah Khan for their alleged misbehaviour and mentally torturing the student.

They said that Musa Khan and his friends were served show-cause notices for keeping rabab that caused severe depression to him and he died in a road accident. Scores of protesting students were also carrying rabab on the occasion.

Besides student leaders, the rally was also addressed by ANP provin-

cial president Miss Hishar Hussain, MPA Humayun Khan, ANP provincial general secretary Hussain Shah Younsaf, provincial president of Mardoon Kisan Party Fiaz Ali, JI youth wing district president Atiqur Rehman, PFP district information secretary Advocate Alamzeb, students' jugachief Musa Khan, PFP Adani leader Naeemullah and others.

They alleged that Musa Khan, a student of journalism and mass communication department, was killed in a road accident because he was expelled from the hostel along with other friends in the night. They rejected the notification to resolve the issue amicably.

Taking notice of the issue, the UoM has convened a meeting today (Tuesday) of all deans, heads of departments and coordinators of women sub-campus in Bakhela.

A notification issued by the university registrar said that the agenda of the meeting would be shared on the table.

Bannu tribesmen block road against ex-nazim's murder

By Our Correspondent

LAKKI MARWAT: The murder of a former nazim and his companion sparked a protest in Bannu as tribesmen blocked the Miramshah Road on Monday.

Unknown armed men had killed a former nazim, Malik Ishaq and his companion, Naqir in Dheri Mamsudkhel area on Sunday.

Ishaq was affiliated with police-eradication initiative, and at the time of occurrence he was returning home on a motorcycle after attending a training session of police observers.

The double murder was widely condemned by local elders and tribesmen.

The protesters took the bodies to Dossark point and staged a sit-in on the Bannu-Miramshah Road.

The protesters kept the busy road closed for several hours, roadblocking transporters and commuters in standing heat.

They condemned the murders and said the government had failed to provide the citizens with security of life and property.

They asked the government to tell them who would rear the children of the deceased.

They expressed concern over lawlessness in the district and said that killings had become a routine.

A speaker said that innocent citizens were being killed every other

day but the law enforcement agencies were unable to trace the perpetrators.

"If the tribesmen take up arms for their own protection then what is the need for police and other law enforcement agencies tasked with protecting citizens' lives and properties," he deplored.

Provincial minister for public health Erg Malik Pakhtoonyar Khan, former minister Malik Shah Mohammad Khan, Syed Nasser Ali Shah, brother of MNA Mustafa Nasser Ali Shah, and Miryan (health council) chairman Pir Kamal Shah also turned up and expressed solidarity with the relatives of the deceased.

They declared that peace was inevitable for development, and stressed the need for concerted efforts to promote peace and harmony in the region.

Mr Pakhtoonyar said that to maintain peace was the topmost priority of the provincial government.

He asked the people to put aside their political differences and forge unity in their ranks to defeat the elements responsible for disturbing peace.

Later, the protesters ended their agitation and dispersed when a government team headed by district police officer Ziauddin Ahmed held successful negotiations with their representatives in the presence of the provincial minister and other elders.

Health dept's affairs being streamlined: minister

Says centre for brain tumour treatment on cards

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa health minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah on Monday said the provincial government had earmarked Rs232 billion in the next budget for 89 ongoing and 32 new health projects to improve patient care in the province.

He told a news conference here that efforts were afoot to streamline the affairs of the health department and ensure that people get quality services in public sector hospitals.

"We have decided to launch an air ambulance service to help the critically-ill and injured people in the remote areas of the province and save their lives by ensuring their shifting to hospitals for medical assistance. The service will be available to the people in the next few months," he said.

Accompanied by health secretary Mahmood Aslam Waris and director-general (health services) Dr Mohammad Saleem Khan, the minister said a Gamma Knife centre for the treatment of brain tumour was being established in the province amid a high incidence of the growth of abnormal cells in the brain.

"We need a dedicated and specialised centre to provide quick relief to the patients of brain tumours," he said.

The minister regretted the death of Malakand University student Mena Khan in a road accident and announced that the number of intensive care unit beds at the medical teaching institutions would be increased to ensure critical patients get admission and care on time.

He said the relevant staff members of the Mian Rashid Hussain Shabood Memorial Hospital, Pabli had been stan-

ded over negligence regarding the treatment of patients, while a proper probe was under way to fix responsibility.

"We won't spare hospital employees mistreating patients," he said.

The minister also said the department had planned robotic surgeries in hospitals to save both time and resources.

He added that in order to handle health emergencies in rural areas, the Motorbike Response Unit was being established, while the plans to declare Hayatabad Township a health city were being finalised.

Mr Shah announced the start of the "executive health check-ups for the dignified free treatment of senior citizens in all hospitals and said the facility could be formally inaugurated by Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur soon.

He emphasised the allocation of a "reserve fund" in the budget to ensure that patient care isn't halted.

"We are forming a pool of doc-

tors and nurses on a contractual basis to address staff shortages in hospitals," he said.

The minister said that the health department was setting up trauma centers in all regions to ensure stabilisation of patients before their referral to the city's hospitals.

He said that Peshawar's hospitals had over 60 per cent of the province's patient load, so merely increasing ICU beds won't suffice to address the issue.

"We have decided to strengthen secondary care hospitals so that patients are treated there and only complicated cases are sent to Peshawar for tertiary care services," he said.

Mr Shah said the Sehat Card Plus was a flagship healthcare programme of his government under which people received free services regardless of their financial status.

He said the health insurance programme was being streamlined to ensure that the money allocated for it was spent on better patient care.

Power cuts cause water shortage in Mansehra

By Our Correspondent

MANSEHRA: Prolonged power outages and low voltage have caused shortage of water in Mansehra district.

"If the current spate of power outages continues unabated we will come onto the roads," Mohammad Bashir, a resident of the city area, threatened.

Residents of Mansehra town and its suburbs, Shinkleri, Khaki and other parts of the district have been facing water shortage because of prolonged loadshedding and low voltage.

Mr Bashir said the federal government had announced to cut the outage time, but to no avail.

"Water supply system in the city and suburbs has been lying dormant due to excessive outages and fluctuation in voltage," he said.

Abdul Wahed, another resident, said commercial and domestic electricity consumers had been paying bills regularly but even then the Peshawar Electric Supply Company subjected them to prolonged loadshedding.

The people of Shinkleri and its suburbs also complained of water scarcity, saying they couldn't operate water pumps due to frequent power outages and low voltage.

Govt urged to fund Hindko Academy

PESHAWAR: Gandhara Hindko Board, a literary and cultural organisation, has urged the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to provide funds to Gandhara Hindko Academy and set up a Saradki Academy as well in the province to promote Saradki language and culture.

Mohammad Ziauddin, general secretary of the board, made the appeal after a meeting of the board members, said a press release.

Mr Ziauddin, himself a research scholar and author of several books, said as per official statistics, Hindko was the second main language of KP and the sixth widely spoken regional language of the country.

"This language remained deprived of official patronage for a long time subsequent to independence. After 68 years of wait, the KP government set up Gandhara Hindko Academy in 2015 under the public-private partnership," he said pointing out that the step was taken when Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was in power in KP.

Mr Ziauddin said Hindko Academy in the last nine

years had worked not only to promote Hindko but also other languages spoken in KP and other parts of the country.

"The Hindko Academy has published books in Pothohi, Saraiki, Khowar, Kohistani, Gogri, Brahui and Pothohi," said the researcher who is a member of the committee that runs the academy in partnership with the KP government.

He said that Hindko Academy and the board had published over 500 books so far while as many as 18 journals in various provincial languages were being brought out. — Bureau Report

Bajaur residents demand reduction in transport fares

By Our Correspondent

BAJAUR: The residents have demanded of the Bajaur district administration to revise the public transport fares on both intra and inter-district routes after the significant decrease in the prices of petroleum products.

Talking to Dawn, people from different walks of life, including traders, political and social activists and government employees, said prices of diesel and petrol had witnessed a reasonable decrease since the formation of the PMU-N-led government at the centre in March this year.

However, they claimed that the people of Bajaur couldn't see any relief from the cut in the prices of petroleum products as the local authorities failed to revise the fares.

Zahoor Khan, a trader of Badkhalab Bazaar, told Dawn that despite reduction in oil prices, public transport fares remained unchanged in Bajaur.

Usman Khan, a social activist, asked the authorities to revise the fares of public transport after the prices of

petroleum products witnessed continued decline during the last three months.

Shahid Khan, another social activist, said public transport fares were unchanged despite the fact that prices of petroleum products had witnessed up to Rs40 per litre cut since March.

The residents asked the district administration to revise downward the fares to provide the people with some relief amid rising inflation.

Meanwhile, an official of the district administration said a meeting of the representatives of the transporters would be called on Wednesday to revise the transport fares.

ROAD REPAIR: Rehabilitation work on a two-and-a-half-kilometre stretch of road between a bus terminal and Khar Bazar has been launched, according to a statement issued here the other day.

The statement said deputy commissioner Mohammad Anwarul Haq directed the officials of the relevant department to execute the scheme at the earliest.

It said the road had been in poor condition since 2007. The statement said that rehabilitation work on the road would be completed in the shortest possible time.



KP-HMAN CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROJECT (KP-HCIP) ESSE DEPTT
GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
THROUGH EXECUTIVE ENGINEER C&W DIVISION UPPER DIR

REQUEST FOR BIDS

Civil Works (ONE-ENVELOPE BIDDING PROCESS)

Country: Pakistan
Name of Project: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project
Loan No./Credit No./Grant No.: IDA-68601DA-67140

1. The Human Capital Investment Project, Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Human Capital Investment Project and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for civil works: **PACKAGE-01 TO PACKAGE-08.**

2. The Human Capital Investment Project, Elementary & Secondary Education Department, Govt. of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the work "Reconstruction of Flood Affected Schools District Upper Dir." The time duration of each contract is 02 months.

3. Bidding will be conducted through national competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IFB Borrowers" March 2018 (Procurement Regulations) and is open to all Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

4. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Office of the Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir and inspect one bidding document during office hours (9:00AM to 5:00 PM) Monday to Friday at the address given below.

5. The bidding document in English may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PKR 15,000/- for each package. The method of payment will be cash payment. The document can be obtained from the office of the Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below as per the schedule mentioned in the table below. Electronic Bidding will not be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below as per the schedule mentioned in the table below.

S.No	Description	Bid Security (PKR)	Seal/Stamp Processing Fee	Bid Submission Date & Time
1	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD-AFFECTED SCHOOL, DISTRICT UPPER DIR, Package-01 (BID No. a SOURCE-KHWA-01-01) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	Bid Submission Date & Time: 24 June 2024 at 12:00 PM Bid Opening: 26 June 2024 at 12:00 PM
2	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD-AFFECTED SCHOOL, DISTRICT UPPER DIR, Package-02 (BID No. a SOURCE-KHWA-02-01) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
3	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD-AFFECTED SCHOOL, DISTRICT UPPER DIR, Package-03 (BID No. a SOURCE-KHWA-03-01) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
4	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD-AFFECTED SCHOOL, DISTRICT UPPER DIR, Package-04 (BID No. a SOURCE-KHWA-04-01) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
5	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD-AFFECTED SCHOOL, DISTRICT UPPER DIR, Package-05 (BID No. a SOURCE-KHWA-05-01) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
6	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD-AFFECTED SCHOOL, DISTRICT UPPER DIR, Package-06 (BID No. a SOURCE-KHWA-06-01) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
7	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD-AFFECTED SCHOOL, DISTRICT UPPER DIR, Package-07 (BID No. a SOURCE-KHWA-07-01) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-
8	RECONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD-AFFECTED SCHOOL, DISTRICT UPPER DIR, Package-08 (BID No. a SOURCE-KHWA-08-01) Sub Head: - 02% District - 02% District	1,000,000/-	20,000/-	-

7. The Bid Security of any Bidder found to be providing false documentation can be forfeited.

8. A Pre-Bid meeting will be held on 13 June 2024 at 11:00 AM in the office of Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir.

9. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful Bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the Bidding document.

10. The Bidder will provide Bid Security in shape of CDR/OTR from any scheduled Bank of Pakistan in must. Bid security of insurance companies will not be accepted.

11. The successful bidder will provide 10% performance guarantee to the bid value.

12. Venue of the Bid opening is Office of the Executive Engineer C&W Division Upper Dir.

**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
C&W DIVISION DIR UPPER**



GILGIT BALTISTAN DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

Notice Inviting Tender

Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA) under GLOF-3 Project invites sealed tenders/bids from all interested contractors/firms to participate in execution of works in Hunza District/Shisgar Valley of Gilgit Baltistan for the year 2024.

S. #	Name of Work	Approved Cost in Million	2% Earnest Money in Million
District Hunza			
1.	Construction of Flood Protective Works Shisgar-Hunza	Rs. 37,305	Rs. 1,119

1. **Mandatory Requirements for Eligibility for Issuance of Tender Form:**

- a) Valid PEC Registration Certificate for current financial year with relevant category and above, and codes of specialization i.e. CE04 (Flood Control System) and CE11 (General Engineering Works).
- b) Attested latest profile of the contractor.
- c) CNIC of the prospective bidders.
- d) Affidavit of no litigation and no blacklisting.
- e) Required Bid Security (CDR) from scheduled bank of Pakistan.

2. **The Location & Deadlines are as under:**

- i. **Location:** Office of the AD, GBDMA, DC Office Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan.
- ii. **Issuance:** Documents will be issued from **06-06-2024 to 28-06-2024** upto **11:30 AM**.
- iii. **Submission Deadline:** Due date is **28-06-2024 till 12:00 noon**.
- iv. **Tender Opening:** Tenders will be opened on **28-06-2024 at 12:30 PM**.
- v. **Tender Opening Location:** GBPWD Rest House, Zero Point, Karimabad.

3. **Method of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelopes (SSTE). (PEC Harmonized with GB PPPA Rules).

4. **Terms and Conditions:**

- a. Under the following conditions the bid will be rejected:-
 - i. Conditional and telegraphic bids/tenders.
 - ii. Bids received after specified date and time.
 - iii. Bids of blacklisted firms.
 - iv. Unsealed bids or wrongly marked bids (Technical and Financial).
- b. The Tender Documents/RFP containing detailed terms and conditions, method of constructing/supply procedure for submission of bids, bid security, bid validity, opening of bid, evaluation criteria, clarification / rejection of bids, performance guarantee etc. can be obtained from the **Office of the Assistant Director, Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority, DC Office Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan**.
- c. Have experience in execution of at least 2x similar Projects.
- d. **Competitive responsive lowest bid winner must have provide Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) renewal 2024/2025.**
- e. If any member of the Procurement Committee remains out of District Headquarters on the date of opening of tenders, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time as mentioned above.
- f. Firm must have bank balance of at least 30% of the value of the Project or have bank credit line of at least 50% of the project cost.
- g. In case of any conflict, GB PPPA Rules 2022 shall be major rule having effect on all rules.
- h. Rates quoted **05% and below** of the technical sanction (TS) shall be considered as unworkable and shall be rejected.
- i. In case of JV agreement, proper format duly signed by all partners of JV clearly mentioning share of each partner lead and associate partner duly attested by Magistrate 1st Class shall be mandatory.
- j. Bid security as specified in shape of **CDR/OTR** from any scheduled Bank of Pakistan is must. Bid security of insurance companies will not be accepted.
- k. Procurement/supply/construction shall be carried out in accordance with the policy and guidelines issued from time to time by the GBDMA.
- l. The prospective eligible bidders may obtain bidding documents after payment of price of bidding documents and by submitting a **written application personally** or through an authorized representative with **duly attested copy of power of attorney**. Power of attorney for bidding should be in **Rs. 100/- stamp paper in original** mentioning the project name with employer stamp.
- m. In case of firm, list of partners/partnership deed, giving full particulars of Director/Proprietor or other connected information along with power of attorney or being sole proprietor such undertaking on stamp paper is to be furnished.
- n. The proposals along with bid security and other mandatory relevant documents must reach, in sealed envelopes, by hand at Office of the AD, GBDMA, DC Office Hunza, Gilgit Baltistan before closing date or on closing date and time at GB PWD Rest House, Zero Point, Karimabad as above and be clearly marked "BIDDING APPLICATION" for "Construction of Flood Protective Works Shisgar-Hunza".

The Procuring Agency reserves the right to reject any or all bids subject to relevant provisions of PPPA Rules, 2004/GB PPPA Rules 2022. The Procuring Agency may reject all bids or proposals of any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal under Rule-33 of said Rules.

This advertisement is also available on www.pppa.org.pk

(ASSISTANT DIRECTOR)
Gilgit Baltistan Disaster Management Authority
Hunza / Nagar
Ph: 08613-930124

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