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Inflation drops to lowest in nearly a decade

- Consumer Price Index eases 0.8pc month-on-month; falls to 1.5pc year-on-year
- Falling food prices contribute to slowdown; decline exceeds even ministry's expectations
- PM credits economic team, says macroeconomic gains reaching people

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: Annual inflation continued its downward trend, falling to a nearly decade-low of 1.5 per cent year-on-year in February, primarily driven by a decline in perishable food prices, especially wheat flour.

The decline even exceeded the Ministry of Finance's expectations, which had projected inflation to remain between 2pc and 3pc. In its February report, the ministry also predicted that the figure would rise to between 3pc and 4pc by March.

The slowdown in inflation is primarily driven by lower prices of wheat and its by-products, perishable items like onions, cotton pulses, and a slight reduction in electricity charges. These products hold significant weight in inflation calculations, making even minor price changes impactful in reducing the overall inflation rate.

In contrast, sugar and edible oil prices are rising in the domestic market despite their declining rates globally. The government has permitted sugar exports, particularly to Afghanistan, citing surplus stock as the reason.

The headline inflation, measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI), eased by 0.8pc in February on a month-on-month basis, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics on Monday.

The inflation rate in February 2025 was the lowest since November 2015, mainly due to the high base effect from the previous year (February 2024 — 23.1pc). The CPI inflation dropped to 9.6pc in August 2024, marking the first single-digit figure in over three years, and the downward trend continued in the following months.

The CPI inflation surged above 10pc in November 2021 and remained in double digits for 33 consecutive months until July 2024. In between, it peaked at 38pc in May 2023, driven by unprecedented food and energy prices.

Shehbaz to review govt's one-year performance today: Page 3

Pakistan is currently experiencing disinflation, indicating a slowdown in inflation. In contrast, deflation refers to a decline in overall price levels.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), average cumulative inflation over the past 49 months increased by 83pc, impacting the retail prices of all consumer items. This decline in inflation does not indicate a reduction in the cost of living.

'Economic team's efforts'

In a statement, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed satisfaction over the continuous decline in the CPI inflation. "This is very good news on this occasion as the current government completes its first year," the premier remarked.

He attributed the decline to his economic team's efforts, saying that economic indicators are improving with each passing day. He claimed that the benefits of macroeconomic improvement have started reaching

Continued on Page 5

MULTAN: Rescuers pull out a worker from the rubble after the roof of a thread factory collapsed, on Monday. Five workers were injured in the incident. According to Rescue 1122, the injured were transferred to Nishtar Hospital after being provided first aid.—PPI / Text by Imran Gabol

Torkham tensions mount as forces trade fire

- Six security men, two civilians injured; man dies of cardiac arrest as locals forced to flee hail of bullets. • Taliban fighter reportedly killed, two wounded in exchange of fire

By Ibrahim Shinwari

KHYBER: At least eight people, including six troops, sustained minor injuries on Sunday night after Pakistan and Afghan Taliban forces traded fire at the Torkham border, forcing civilians to flee for their lives besides causing one death due to "cardiac arrest".

Sources said the firing started around midnight, with both sides initially using light weapons and later resorting to heavy weaponry, which damaged several buildings in the area.

A number of official and private buildings were hit by bullets and mortar shells overnight. While the guns fell silent around 11am, the situation remained tense on the border and troops on both sides remained entrenched.

Four security men martyred in North Waziristan attack: Page 3

Reuters quoted the Afghan interior ministry as saying that one Taliban fighter had been killed and two injured in the firing.

Panic in area

The intense firing coupled with artillery fire caused panic among residents in the Bacha Maina residential compound (a community of about 100 houses) who had to flee their homes in the middle of the night.

Sabir Khan, a resident, told *Dawn* that they had to take shelter in the Britishera railway tunnels to escape the bullets and rain. They moved to safer localities in Landi Kotal early in the morning. He said that most of the fleeing residents could not even take their Sehri due to the chaos.

Khyati Shah, another resident, said that several vehicles collided with each other as residents were in a hurry to leave the locality amid intense gunfire.

He claimed a number of houses were also hit by

Continued on Page 5

FC soldier martyred in Kalat suicide bombing

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: A Frontier Corps man was martyred and four others were injured in a suicide attack carried out by a woman on a convoy near Kalat on Monday, officials said.

The attack came a day after Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti expressed alarm over the security situation prevailing in the province.

Officials said the suicide blast took place when the FC convoy was passing through the Mughalni area.

Attack by militants on Punjab border areas foiled: Page 2

"An FC soldier was martyred and four others were wounded in the attack carried out by a female suicide bomber," Kalat Deputy Commissioner Bilal Shabbir confirmed, adding that soon after the attack security forces and police cordoned off the area and shifted the body and the injured to hospital.

The banned Baloch Liberation Army (BLA-Azad) claimed responsibility for the assault.

Reports said the targeted FC vehicle was badly damaged in the attack, but other vehicles in the convoy remained safe.

"An FC commandant travelling in the convoy also escaped unhurt in the suicide attack," a senior security official said.

Sources said the FC convoy was on its way to a

Continued on Page 11

Pims doctors examine Imran in jail

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: A team from the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) visited the Adiala Jail on Monday to conduct a medical checkup of former prime minister Imran Khan.

The four-member team was headed by Dr Altaf Hussain, an ENT specialist.

56 PTI workers get bail as arrest warrants out for Omar Ayub, others: Page 3

Other members of the team included Dr Umar Farooq from the hospital's Dental Department, Dr Muhammad Ali Arif from General Medicine and Dr Tashfeen Imtiaz from General Surgery.

The checkup lasted 30 minutes.

The examination follows a spate of allegations recently levelled by the PTI, most notably its information secretary Sheikh Waqqas Akram, claiming that the government had placed Imran Khan in solitary confinement.

Another PTI leader had claimed that Mr Khan was not even being allowed to meet his sisters or other

Continued on Page 5

ON OTHER PAGES

Govt offers arbitration, audit for IPPs

Pakistan has assured major international lenders, including the IMF, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank, that independent power producers unwilling to renegotiate contracts can opt for a forensic audit or international arbitration, following recent protests over 'forced contract revisions'. The power minister also informed the lenders during a meeting that the government would soon 'rationalise' solar net metering. **Page 9**

CB urged to send civilians' cases to ATCs

Faisal Siddiqi says power of officers to transfer custody of accused to army shouldn't be unlimited

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court, hearing petitions against the military trial of civilians, has been urged to transfer the cases of civilians to the Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs).

Faisal Siddiqi, who was representing civil society, proposed that the transfer of cases would be a "via media" — the middle way.

He added that if the trials conducted by military courts were invalidated, the cases of civilians handed maximum sentences by military courts should be sent to the ATCs, while the cases where convicts have completed their punishments should be considered "past and closed transactions".

"If the court accepts my arguments, the trial of civilians by military courts should be declared null and void," Mr Siddiqi argued.

Headed by Justice Aminuddin Khan, the seven-judge CB resumed the hearing on a set of intra-court appeals filed against the court's Oct 2023 order of nullifying the military trial of civilians involved in the May 9 violence.

The core issue in this case was the appropriate forum to try civilians, the lawyer argued, adding that civilians should be tried in civilian courts to ensure adherence to fundamental rights.

On Mr Siddiqi's suggestion, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked if he was seeking fresh trials of those already convicted for their involvement in the May 9 violence.

JCP forms body to thrash out criteria for CB appointments: Page 12

"If these cases are transferred from military to civilian courts, then from where would the trials should commence?" asked the judge.

He also questioned whether ATCs should treat evidence recorded during military trials as admissible.

The counsel contended that he was asking for a limited fresh trial by ATC of those who were awarded maximum punishments like six to ten years imprisonment.

Justice Khan, who was heading the bench, asked the counsel that if the concept of past and closed transactions was accepted, would it not mean endorsing military trials of civilians?

Unlimited authority

The court also questioned how it was decided which case would be prosecuted by military courts.

The question is not how 105 accused were selected for military trial, the counsel said, adding the question was whether the law allowed it or not.

Justice Khan then asked Mr Siddiqi

Continued on Page 5

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Attack by militants on Punjab border areas foiled

By Tariq Saeed Bimani

DERA GHAZI KHAN: Punjab police, along with the Counter-Terrorism Department and Rangers, thwarted two attacks by militants in the border areas of Dera Ghazi Khan on Monday.

Militants were forced to retreat and flee into the mountains after intense exchange of fire with law enforcement agencies.

The operation was launched after intelligence reports about the presence of militants in the border area of Mutha.

The police said the militants, armed with heavy weapons, attacked police teams but were met with a strong and timely response.

In a separate incident, another militant group launched a surprise attack on the Lakhani border check post in the vicinity of Wahowa police station.

Approximately 15 to 20 militants attacked the checkpoint from all sides, using rocket launchers, hand grenades and other heavy weapons. However, the police, equipped with thermal imaging cameras, identified the attackers and responded with machine guns and mortar fire.

The attackers were forced to retreat, and reports suggest they suffered heavy casualties.

Inspector General of Police Dr Usman Anwar said this was the 18th attack by militants that the Punjab police had foiled.

Earlier this year, on Jan 31, a similar attack on the Jhangi police check post in the vicinity of Wahowa police station was also thwarted.

29 booked for killing six; one of accomplices found shot dead

GUJRAT: Police claimed on Monday that an accomplice of the assailants who had gunned down at least six people in an ambush near Dinga, was also found shot dead in firing by his own accomplices.

The case of murdering the six individuals has also been lodged against at least 29 people, including 21 nominated and seven unidentified suspects.

Kharian circle DSP Shahid Mehmood Gujjar said Zahoor alias Joori of Randheer village who had been wanted to police in a number of murder and other cases, was found shot dead from the area by the alleged firing of his own accomplices who managed to flee the scene soon after killing the six people in Mirsa Chak Bhargran of Dinga police precincts.

Meanwhile, the bodies of victims of the firing by rival Akhtar group were handed over to the heirs after autopsy at Kharian Tehsil Headquarter hospital and they were laid to rest after offering funeral prayers in Dinga Khurd village on Monday.

Dinga police registered the case against Ghaudhry Akhtar, Usman, Zohaib, Zahoor alias Joori, 13 nominated and 7/8 unidentified suspects under sections 302, 440, 404, 148, 149 and 109 of Pakistan Penal Code on the report of Muhammad Rasib, the brother of deceased Rukhsaar, and started investigation. — Correspondent

City administration launches crackdown to check overcharging

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The city district administration on Monday launched a crackdown on shopkeepers involved in overcharging and fleecing customers and those hoarding and causing price hike in the provincial metropolis.

After being reprimanded by the city district administration, dozens of price control magistrates started inspecting the city's model bazaars, open markets and departmental stores in a bid to ensure sale of standard essential items and take action against those involved in overcharging. The magistrates conducted extensive inspections throughout the city on Monday, imposing substantial fines and getting cases registered against those found violating price control regulations.

The district administration's crackdown resulted in detecting 27 violations at various locations across the city. Officials got registered four cases against arrested vendors, issued 21 warnings and imposed fines exceeding Rs100,000 on shopkeepers and vendors involved in charging inflated prices for essential commodities during the holy month.

"We will take shopkeepers to task for creating artificial inflation in Ramazan," warned Lahore DC Syed Musa Raza while paying surprise visits to various spots. He said the administrative officers must remain vigilant in the field throughout Ramazan by continuously monitoring prices of essential items in Ramazan Bazaars and open markets to ensure affordable access for all citizens.

The DC also conducted a detailed inspection of various locations in Nishtar town following recent rainfall, to review progress of the ongoing 'Clean Mission' initiative.

The DC, accompanied by Chief Officer of Metropolitan Corporation Shahid Abbas Kathia, Assistant Commissioner of Nishtar Town Muhammad Saleem Asri and other officials, visited Ferozepur Road Gajumata, Kahna Kachha Road, and areas surrounding Sui Gas Society to assess the drainage situation.

During the inspection, DC Raza received a briefing from Wasa officials regarding developmental work on sewerage lines.

The Wasa DMD informed the DC that work on sewerage lines cleaning was progressing swiftly. The DC on the occasion instructed officials to tour all low-lying areas across the city and ensure proper drainage to prevent standing water. "Improve the sewerage system so that citizens aren't facing difficulties during the rainy season," directed the DC, emphasizing that any complaints of water accumulation should be addressed immediately. He instructed LWMC officials to identify garbage accumulation points and ensure regular checking of empty plots. He ordered Nishtar AC to focus on cleanliness systems and maintain vigilance. He sought operations to remove encroachments and relocate cattle without interruption, stressing that LWMC, Wasa and the district administration must work together as a team to perform their duties efficiently.

Lahore – a metropolitan without footpaths

The city's infrastructure planning is heavily car-centric, with almost no consideration for pedestrians

By Imran Gabol

White Star

LAHORE: The bustling streets of Lahore, known for their vibrant culture and historical charm, have become a nightmare for pedestrians as the city grapples with a lack of footpaths and rampant encroachments.

The district administration had developed model roads, including Main Boulevard, Gulberg, M.M. Alam Road, Noor Jehan Road, Kasuri Road, LOS to Samanabad Road, Mall Road (from PMG Chowk to Mian Mir Bridge), Jail Road (from Qartaba Chowk to Siddique Trade Centre), Maulana Shaukat Ali Road and Peco Road, Allah Ho Chowk to Shaukat Khanum Chowk, Canal Road (from Thokar Niaz Beg to Shahkam Chowk), Multan Road (from Chauburji Chowk to Thokar Niaz Beg), Ferozepur Road (up to Chungi Amar Sidhu) and Allama Iqbal Road. But most of these model roads don't have footpaths.

The town planners have designed the footpaths on the Canal Road on the banks of the canal and also installed billboards on it. The pedestrians have to first cross the road, which is next to impossible, to reach the footpath to walk on it. The story of Mall Road is no different as it has footpaths that mostly remain obstructed due to security barriers and parking of motorcycles on it. Other major roads across the city either lack pedestrian pathways or they are obstructed by illegal parking, advertisement billboards and utility installations, leaving walkers vulnerable to accidents and injuries.

Despite being one of the largest and most populous cities of the country, Lahore's infrastructure continues to neglect the needs of pedestrians. The residents have reported that walking on busy roads has become a perilous task, with no dedicated space for foot traffic. The absence of footpaths forces pedestrians to share roads with fast-moving vehicles, leading to frequent accidents and near-misses. They say that the footpaths are often unusable due to encroachments even on roads where footpaths exist. Traders routinely occupy these spaces for parking vehicles, setting up stalls or displaying advertisement billboards. Additionally, utility installations such as electric poles, PTCL wire boxes, and other infrastructure further restrict pedestrian movement. These obstacles force people to walk on the roads, increasing their exposure to traffic hazards. "I risk my life every day just walking to work," says Ahmed Ali, a resident of Gulberg.

"The footpaths, wherever they exist, are either blocked by parked cars or cluttered with billboards and utility boxes. It's like the city has forgotten that people walk too," he laments at the situation.

Despite the growing public outcry, no concrete measures have been taken by relevant authorities, including the Lahore Development Authority (LDA), district administration, metropolitan corporation and local government.

Residents accuse these departments of negligence and a lack of coordination in addressing the issue. Urban planning experts argue that the problem is a result of poor governance and a lack of enforcement.

"Lahore's infrastructure planning is heavily car-centric, with little to no consideration for pedestrians," says Dr Hina Shaukh, an urban development specialist.

"The encroachments are a symptom of weak enforcement of laws and a lack of accountability. Public departments need to prioritise pedestrian safety and reclaim these spaces for the people," she suggests.

Speaking to *Dawn*, Lahore Conservation Society member Dr Ajaz Anwar says the world always promote that people should walk or ride bicycles to do their routine work and develop infrastructure for them; however, the governments in Pakistan are involved in removing footpaths in the name of development. He says the Mall Road is also facing the same fate as one cannot walk on it from the Canal Road to Governor House and both sides have public houses, which have encroached upon footpaths by erecting security barriers. While pointing out another hurdle, he says, zebra crossings have been completely erased from most of the roads and no one can cross the road without putting their life at risk.

Dr Anwar says the shortage of public transport has forced the people to have their own vehicles to commute in the city.

The citizens and activists demand immediate action to address the issue and urge the government to conduct a city-wide survey to identify roads without footpaths, remove encroachments, and ensure that utility installations do not obstruct pedestrian pathways. Moreover, they call for stricter enforcement of laws to prevent traders and businesses from misusing public spaces.

"This is not just an inconvenience, it's a matter of public safety," says Ayesha Malik, a member of a local advocacy group. "Every day, people are injured or killed on the road because they have no safe space to walk. The government must act now before more lives are lost," she suggests.

Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza says as Lahore continued to grow, there was a need for developing pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. He confirmed that due to increasing population, the footpaths were removed by the previous administrations to give way to the increasing vehicular traffic in the city. He says with the population of the city, commercial and construction activities have immensely increased during the last two decades and there should be a stop to it.

Giving an example of London, Mr Raza says construction and commercial activities should be completely banned in Lahore and its mode should be turned towards conservation. He says the departments concerned are continuously asked to stop giving permission for industrial and construction activities in the city. "It's on the government radar to develop footpaths on each new road of the city and the LDA would not allow roads without footpaths."

PUNJAB TEMPORARY POSITIONS ON CONTRACT FOR LAND REVENUE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (LRMIS) PROJECT BOARD OF REVENUE

Applications are invited from the suitable candidates possessing local/domicile of Balochistan purely on contract basis for the period of One year (male and female) for filling up the following posts, subject to the respective qualifications, domicile and age limit.

A. Vacant Positions of Markaz-E-Sahooliyat

S. No.	Name of Post	No. of Posts	Age Limit	Qualification & Experience	Place of Posting
1.	Executive Officer Markaz-E-Sahooliyat (PPS-7)	01	18-28	MBA/MCS/BS (CS/IT/CE/EE). Certification and Experience will be preferred	Quetta (1)
2.	System Manager (PPS-6)	03	18-28	BS (CS/IT/CE/EE), MCS	• Turbat (01) • Hub (01) • Khanozai (01)
3.	GIS Operator Markaz-E-Sahooliyat (PPS-6)	07	18-28	BS (CS/IT/CE/EE), MCS, MSc/BS Geography with experience in GIS	• Quetta (01) • Hub (01) • Khanozai (01) • Panjgur (01) • Gwadar (01) • Jaffarabad (01) • Turbat (01)
4.	I.T Technician (PPS-5)	02	18-28	BS (CS/IT/CE/EE), MCS	• Jaffarabad (01) • Quetta (01)
5.	Asst. Computer Operator Markaz-E-Sahooliyat (PPS-5)	10	18-28	Graduate with proficiency in MS office and typing skills with a speed of 40 (WPM)	• Hub (02) • Turbat (02) • Khanozai (02) • Panjgur (01) • Gwadar (01) • Jaffarabad (01) • Quetta (01)
6.	Naib Qasid (PPS-2)	06	18-28	Literate	• Hub (02) • Turbat (01) • Khanozai (01) • Quetta (01)
7.	Security Guard (PPS-2)	07	18-28	Literate	• Hub (02) • Turbat (03) • Khanozai (02) • Gwadar (01)
8.	Janitorial Staff (PPS-1)	04	18-28	Literate	• Hub (01) • Turbat (01) • Khanozai (01) • Quetta (01)

B. Vacant Positions of Project Management Unit (LRMIS) at Quetta

S. No.	Name of Post	No. of Post	Age	Qualification & Experience	Place of Posting
1.	Revenue Expert (PPS-7)	02	-	Graduation 10 years or above experience in Managing Land Revenue Records	Project Management Unit LRMIS Quetta
2.	Database Admin (PPS-7)	01	18-28	BS (CS/IT/CE/SE/MCS) Certification and Experience in DBMS with high proficiency in SQL querying will be preferred	
3.	Webmaster (PPS-7)	01	18-28	BS (CS/IT/CE/SE/MCS) Certification and Experience in the Full-stack web/ Appl/ Mobile App Development will be preferred.	
4.	GIS Technicians (PPS-6)	01	18-28	BS (CS/IT/CE/SE/MCS, MSc/BS Geography with experience in GIS will be preferred	
5.	Junior Clerk (PPS-5)	02	18-28	Intermediate with typing skills of 25 WPM in Urdu and English.	
6.	Driver (PPS-3)	03	18-28	Literate with Valid Driving Licence from Government of Balochistan	
7.	Naib Qasid (PPS-2)	02	18-28	Literate	

Terms & Conditions: - • The positions will be initially for a period of one year purely on Contract basis with a fixed salary as per the PPS pay package by the Finance Division Govt. of Pakistan, extendable subject to satisfactory performance. • Local/ Domicile holders from all over Balochistan are eligible. • The Candidates from respective Districts for the vacant positions of Markaz-E-Sahooliat will be preferred. • The Candidate applying for a specific district will be posted in the same district and non-transferable to other districts during the contract period. • Only shortlisted candidates will be called for the test/interview. • Recruitment Quota set by Government of Balochistan for females, disabled and minorities shall be observed. • Candidates are required to provide a valid Mobile Number while submitting their applications. • **Age Relaxation shall be given to the candidates as per the prevailing Government of Balochistan age relaxation policy i.e. 43 Years Age.** • No TA/DA will be admissible. • Candidates already in government service must apply through proper channel and are required to attach a No Objection Certificate (NOC) with Application. **Test & Interview:** - •Candidates applying for various positions will undergo a Computer Based Test (CBT). The test will be conducted in Quetta. •The CBT test will be conducted on computer, featuring multiple-choice questions (MCQs), and the results will be announced promptly. The top four shortlisted candidates for each post will then be invited for an interview, which will be conducted by committee. • Test and Interview date/venue will be advertised on Newspaper.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS BY THE CANDIDATES

• The Candidates may either submit their application through URL https://www.hrdbrms.com OR with **written application along with hard copies of complete bio-data, attested photocopies of CNIC & Degrees/ Experience Certificates with two passport size fresh photographs in below mentioned address.** • Applications received through courier/mail shall not be accepted. • The Pre-Recruitment Section of PMU (IR Department shall receive all the applications submitted by hand or online. • A [illegible] applications must reach the concerned office on or before the closing date. • An application received after the closing date shall stand automatically rejected. •The last date for submission of application is **25th March, 2025**

PRO No.3480/03.03.2025

Balochistan Land Revenue Management Information System (BOR) Block No-14, Room No-112, Civil Secretariat Balochistan, Quetta. Office Tel 081-9204871

إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون

Shahtaj Faruqui

It is with immense sadness that we announce the passing away of our beloved Shahtaj Faruqui on the 1st of Ramadan.

She is the wife of Salman Faruqui, the former secretary general and federal ombudsman and the granddaughter of Nawab Badruddin Haider of Bengal.

A devoted wife, loving mother, and a cherished grandmother, she filled our lives with warmth, kindness and unconditional love. Her strength, wisdom, and her generous and gentle spirit will forever remain in our hearts. She was a respected professor of political science and international relations, and the founding head of the Helen Keller Model Special Education Centre in Islamabad. Shahtaj Faruqui will always be missed.

Her family and friends may wish to bid farewell at her residence **D-207/1 Block 5, Clifton Karachi**, (near Aunty Park opposite Moin Akhtar Park) on **Tuesday, 4 March at 11.30 A.M.**

The *namaz-e-janaza* will take place today at **Sultan Masjid, DHA Karachi** - Tuesday, March 4- following *Zuhr prayers*. She will be laid to rest thereafter at the PECHS Graveyard, Karachi.

The *Soyem* will be held on at her residence on Wednesday March 5th **between *Asr* and *Maghreb* prayers**. The *Dua* will be recited before *Maghreb*, followed by the *Iftar* by the traditional *Iftar*.

Salman Faruqui
Farhan Faruqui & Dr Shahneela Faruqui
Shamaila Khan & Ashar Khan

And her beloved grandchildren & great grandchildren
Shamira Amin & Raza Amin
Sarah Faruqui, Aadir Khan,
Samara Faruqui & Fareel Khan
Sofia Amin & Zain Amin

Woman held for 'killing' second wife of husband

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Police arrested a woman on Monday for allegedly killing her husband's second wife and dumping the body in a quarter adjacent to her house in Liaquatabad area of the city.

According to a police official, some locals witnessed a woman dumping a sack in a quarter adjacent to her house. Finding the woman's activity suspicious, they reported the matter to the police, he said.

A police team arriving at the scene, recovered the sack, finding the body of a woman packed in it.

He said the murdered woman, identified as Tayyaba, turned out to be the second wife of a local resident, Imran.

He said when the police interrogated Imran's first wife Sadia, she confessed to have killed Tayyaba for contracting marriage with Imran.

In her confessional statement, Tayyaba said she first hit Sadia's head with a heavy object, leaving her unconscious and then slit her wrists with a knife. Sadia died of excessive bleeding, she added.

The police later lodged a murder case against the suspect and shifted the body to the city morgue for autopsy.

To a question, the police official said they were also questioning Imran to determine his role in the murder of Sadia.

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DAWN

Shehbaz to review govt's one-year performance today

• PM content with team's performance, steep decline in inflation; UK diplomat calls on premier • Tarar says govt didn't just stabilise economy, but charted path to growth

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD: The federal government will hold a special gathering at the Jinnah Convention Centre today, where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to review the performance of his cabinet members upon completing one year in power.

The Shehbaz administration took office after the Feb 8 polls, following a power-sharing agreement between the PML-N and the PPP.

"On the completion of one year of the government, the prime minister along with his cabinet members will present one-year performance of different ministries and divisions in a special moot today to review the performance account of the government during the last year," said a press release issued by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Monday.

The moot will be attended by businessmen, media persons, and high-achieving youth. A source close to the premier told Dawn that during the briefing, the PM could randomly ask a minister to present the performance of their ministry.

In an earlier statement, the premier expressed satisfaction with the government's one-year performance.

The PM said due to the government's efforts, the economic indicators were improving with every passing day. The continuous improvement in the economy was the result of diligent teamwork, he added. The prime minister said all the institutions were working together for the betterment of the economy and for promoting business and investment.

UK envoy

Later, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom Jane Marriott called on PM Shehbaz. The prime minister conveyed his greetings to His Majesty King Charles III and wished him a quick recovery to full health. He also reiterated the invitation to his majesty for undertaking a visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

While discussing the global situation, the prime minister emphasised the need for collective efforts to build lasting peace in Gaza and Ukraine. The high commissioner said the UK was committed to strengthening its ties with Pakistan and to continuing to partner in the country's national progress and development.

'Art of governance'

Separately, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said PM Shehbaz had steered the country out of economic crises, restored Pakistan's reputation at the international level, and brought prosperity and development to the country within one year of his government.

In a press conference, Mr Tarar said on the completion of one year in power, PM Shehbaz would take a cabinet review and share with the public the overall performance of every ministry. Journalists will be invited to share the facts and figures in this regard, he added.

"What seemed an insurmountable challenge just twelve months ago has yielded a remarkable turnaround. We have not simply stabilised the economy but also charted the path of growth," he claimed.

While pointing out the speculations made about the economy and future of the country one year ago, he called out the PTI "which yearned for economic instability and bankruptcy of the country and even wrote a letter to the IMF to disrupt its bailout programme".

On the other hand, the PML-N had taken tough decisions and sacrificed its politics over national interest. "PM Shehbaz Sharif is a reformist leader who knows the art of governance. It is no less than a miracle that the inflation has come down to 1.5 per cent, which last year was recorded at 23.1 per cent," he added.

The national economy showed positive indicators, he said, while noting the current account surplus and substantial increase in the exports.

The minister also criticised the PTI for engaging in "politics of chaos and anarchy".

"There is a feelgood factor of Pakistan within the country and abroad," he said while criticising the PTI regime which failed to provide the masses proper infrastructure, health and education systems, and other facilities.

QUETTA: A motorcyclist wades through the rainwater accumulated on a road due to the poor sewerage system, a day after showers in several parts of Balochistan, on Monday.—PPI

Four security men martyred in North Waziristan attack

Coordinated attacks on six checkpoints countered; 13 terrorists killed, sources say

By Fazeer Gul

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: Four security personnel were martyred in clashes with terrorists in Miramshah, North Waziristan, sources told *Dawn* on Monday.

At least 13 terrorists, who attacked multiple security checkposts, were also killed during the midnight clashes.

According to the sources, six security checkposts of Spalga, Gosh, Tappi, Barwana, Pipana Lower and Pipana Top were simultaneously attacked by terrorists, armed with light and heavy weapons, on Sunday night. The attack was effectively countered by soldiers deployed at the checkposts, the sources said.

Security forces managed to kill 13 terrorists while several others were reportedly injured, the sources said, adding that the remaining terrorists managed to flee under the cover of darkness with the bodies of their fellows.

However, during the exchange of fire, four security personnel embraced martyrdom, while 13 sustained injuries.

The martyred and injured security personnel were shifted to Miramshah headquarters hospital, while the ones critically wounded were referred to the Combined Military Hospital in Bannu.

Meanwhile, additional troops arrived in the area and started a search operation to trace the terrorists, the sources said.

The military's media wing, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), has not released any statement on the attack till the filing of this report.

Security personnel have repeatedly been attacked by terrorists in North Waziristan, which borders Afghanistan, over the past few months.

Only last week, two soldiers were martyred when a suicide bomber rammed an explosive-laden car into their convoy in the Eidak area.

At least 10 people, including two civilians, were injured in the attack, which destroyed the vehicle completely.

Earlier on Feb 24, four security personnel were martyred in an attack on a checkpost in Spinwam tehsil of North Waziristan.

The early morning attack was retaliated by security forces, leading to a heavy exchange of fire.

Security officials have also claimed foreign interference in these attacks.

Last month, ISPR said that an Afghan national who was involved in terrorism inside Pakistan was killed during an operation in North Waziristan. Security forces have intensified operations against terrorists in the district.

On Feb 28, ISPR said six terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based operation in the Ghulam Khan Kalay area.

During the counter-terrorism operations in February, 156 terrorists were killed and 66 were arrested, the highest since the December 2023 figure of 139.

Most of these arrests, 50, were made from the unstable Tirah region, while 16 from Punjab.

56 PTI workers get bail as arrest warrants out for Omar Ayub, others

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: While an anti-terrorism court approved the post-arrest bail applications of 56 PTI workers in cases related to the Nov 26 protest at D-Chowk, on Monday, a court of judicial magistrate issued arrest warrants for PTI leaders Omar Ayub and others in a separate case.

ATC Judge Abdul Hanat Muhammad Zulqarnain granted the bail after hearing arguments from both sides.

The cases against the PTI activists had been registered at Tarnol and Kohsar police stations.

Arrest warrants issued

A court of judicial magistrate issued arrest warrants for PTI leaders Omar Ayub, Aamir Dogar, and Aamir Mughal over their continuous non-appearance in a case related to the violation of Section 144.

During the hearing, the court accepted the applications for exemption from personal appearance submitted by PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Shoaib Shaheen.

Barrister Gohar had formally filed a request for exemption, which the court approved.

However, arguments on the acquittal applications of the accused could not be presented, leading the court to adjourn the proceedings until April 21. The case pertains to two FIRs registered against Barrister Gohar and others at the I-9 police station.

In a related development, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered the removal of the name of Umar Sultan, the former official in charge of security of ex-premier Imran Khan, from the Passport Control List, declaring his inclusion in the travel ban list as "unjustified and illegal".

Justice Mohammad Asif issued a written order approving Mr Sultan's petition, stating that there was no record showing his name was placed on the list with the federal government's approval.

The court observed the inclusion of his name in the PCL violated his fundamental constitutional rights.

According to a report by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Umar Sultan's name was active in both the PCL and the Exit Control List. According to the directorate general of immigration and passports, it was based on a recommendation from the Additional Inspector General due to multiple FIRs against him. His name was officially added to the travel ban list on August 24, 2023.

However, the court noted that the ATC had already granted Mr Sultan bail on April 18, 2024. Based on these findings, the IHC ruled that his inclusion in the travel ban list was illegal and ordered the authorities to immediately remove his name.

Existing railway pension policy unsustainable, Senate body told

Committee seeks report on budget utilisation, progress on railway projects

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: The existing Pakistan Railways pension policy, which was formulated a decade back, is financially unsustainable, the Senate Standing Committee on Railways was informed on Monday.

During the review of budgetary allocations by the parliamentary committee, the Inspector General of Railway Police proposed the introduction of a contributory pension system to alleviate financial pressure on the government.

The committee expressed concern over contractual recruitments, emphasising the need for transparency and merit-based appointments.

When a senator highlighted the importance of converting contractual positions to regular employment, the railway secretary informed the parliamentary committee that the department had 58,000 positions against the required workforce of 95,000.

The committee sought explanations regarding incomplete railway projects and questioned the repeated revision of PC-I for ML-1, which resulted in a significant cost escalation.

Concerns were also raised over non-utilisation of funds, particularly in the Thar coal project.

The railway secretary assured the senators that all ongoing projects would be completed by the end of fiscal year 2024-25.

The committee directed the ministry to provide a comprehensive report on budget utilisation and the progress of railway projects in the next meeting.

Chairman of the Senate standing committee Jam Saifullah Khan sought a detailed report on the recent transfers within Pakistan Railways in the next meeting.

The committee reaffirmed its commitment to addressing key issues in Pakistan Railways and directed the ministry to submit detailed reports to the committee on regularisation of contractual employees, adoption of a sustainable pension policy, timely recruitment of railway police personnel, enhanced security measures at railway stations and critical infrastructure, and efficient utilisation of budgetary allocations.

The committee recommended examining international recruitment model for railways police to develop a more viable system for railway employees and law enforcement personnel.

Senator Shahadat Awan reiterated the urgent need for additional railway police personnel, highlighting a shortage of 3,000 staff members and inadequate security equipment.

The committee directed the secretary that the recruitment of railway police personnel be completed before Eid, with another 1,000 posts to be advertised before the end of the financial year.

Moreover, it was emphasised that all railway bridges and tracks be placed under strict security surveillance.

The committee stressed the necessity of modern security gadgets, including scanners, walkthrough gates, metal detectors, and explosive detectors, to enhance public safety.

The Senate committee asked the ministry to prioritise the installation of such equipment at the top 20 railway stations across Pakistan.

Innovation being encouraged to ensure food security: secretary

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Food Security has decided to shift the focus of its projects under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) to information technology and technological innovation.

Secretary Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry informed the Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research on Monday that the ministry was helping farmers using tube-wells to switch to solar energy.

But he admitted that progress had not been up to the mark and the execution of projects was quite slow.

"Despite these challenges, the ministry remains committed to achieving its targets by June," he said.

Ajmal Chaudhry briefed the committee about the PSDP for 2024-25, stating that the ministry had 26 projects on its hands, 11 of which were related to the Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (Parc).

An amount of Rs0.9 billion has been allocated for these projects, while the total project cost is estimated at Rs203bn.

The ministry reported that a model farm had been developed in Pind Dadan Khan and there were plans to establish a seed hatchery to ramp up seed production.

Discussing the budgetary proposals for 2025-26, officials stated that the projects aimed to increase productivity and attract investment from the private sector in agriculture.

Senator Syed Mansoor Ahsan, the parliamentary committee's chairman, warned of the emerging threat from climate change particularly its impact on food security, regretting that the government had paid no heed to the private sector's concerns in this regard.

Senator Ahsan wondered why neighbouring countries were ahead of Pakistan in agricultural productivity. He said there was an urgent need to improve seed quality to ensure self-sufficiency in food production.

When the senator raised private sector's concerns over the establishment of a new authority for the fruit and vegetable industry, the ministry officials replied that the proposed authority would promote the use of digital technology to boost productivity in the agriculture sector.—Amin Ahmed

Free solar panel scheme formally launched in Punjab

Over 94,000 solar panel systems to be installed in the first phase, CM Maryam told

By Zulqarnain Tahir

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday formally launched the free solar panel scheme for those consuming up to 200 units per month by conducting a digital balloting.

The Punjab chief minister directed the relevant authorities to complete the solar panel installation process as soon as possible. "We want to provide maximum relief to the people from expensive electricity and there should be no delay in this regard. The free solar panel scheme should be completed at the earliest," she said.

PUNJAB CM Maryam Nawaz is briefed on the balloting for free solar panels, on Monday.—Screengrab

On this occasion, the chief minister was informed that after physical verification, the installation of solar systems would start across the province by the end of March. The first phase of the free solar panel scheme installation would be completed by the end of July.

CM Maryam was briefed that 94,483 solar panel systems would be installed in the first phase under the 'CM Punjab Free Solar Panel Scheme'.

"Solar systems will be installed free of charge for consumers consuming up to 200 units per month in the province. Some 861,000 consumers have applied for obtaining free solar panel scheme.

"The entire process of the free solar panel scheme will be completed through end-to-end digitisation. Some 471,82 systems of 0.55 kW and 47,301 systems of 1.1 kW will be installed under the scheme. Consumers consuming 100 units per month and up to 200 units per month will be given free solar systems.

"Verification will be done using the reference number and CNIC number listed on the consumer's monthly bill. A helpline has also been set up to assist and facilitate the consumers who receive free solar panels," the chief minister was informed.

The chief minister was also told that the provision of solar panels and inverters would be linked to the computerised national identity card of consumers to ensure transparent distribution. "Installing 100,000 solar systems in Punjab will reduce carbon emissions by 57,000 tonnes. The free solar panel scheme will also reduce the burden of subsidy on the federal government," she said.

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EFU LIFE

EFU LIFE ASSURANCE LTD

NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the **33rd** Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of EFU Life Assurance Ltd. will be held at **ISE Auditorium, ISE Towers, 55-B, Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, Islamabad on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.** as well as through online video conferencing to transact the following business:

A. ORDINARY BUSINESS

1. receive, consider and approve the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2024 together with the Chairman's review, Directors' and Auditors' reports thereon.
2. consider and if thought fit to approve the payment of Final Cash Dividend at the rate of Rs. 10.50 per share i.e. 105% as recommended by the Board of Directors and also approve the Interim cash dividend of Rs. 4.50 per share i.e. 45% already paid to shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2024.
3. appoint Auditors of the Company for a term ending at the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting and fix their remuneration. The Audit Committee and the Board of Directors have recommended the name of KPMG Taseer Hadi & Co., Chartered Accountants, for re-appointment as auditors till the next Annual General Meeting.
4. transact any other matter with the permission of the chair.

By Order of the Board
Hasan Jiveni
Company Secretary

Karachi:
February 25, 2025

NOTES:

1. PARTICIPATION IN AGM THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEANS

In light of the clarification issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan vide Circular No.4 of 2021 for ensuring participation of member in general meeting through electronic means as a regular feature, the Company has also provided the facility for attending the meeting via a video-link to its shareholders. The members are encouraged to participate in the meeting online by following the below guidelines.

The shareholders are requested to please provide below information to our Company Secretary at e-mail address: **hasanjiveni@efulife.com**, at least 24 hours before the time of AGM i.e. latest by 10:00 a.m. on March 24, 2025.

Folio/CDC Account No.	Name	CNIC No.	Cell No.	Email Address

Upon receipt of the above information from shareholders, the Company will send login details to their email address, which will enable them to join the said AGM through video conference on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

2. A member entitled to attend and vote at the General Meeting is entitled to appoint another member as a proxy to attend and vote in respect of his/her behalf. Form of proxy must be deposited at the Company's Registered Office not later than 48 hours before the time appointed for the meeting.
3. Guidelines for attending the meeting and appointing proxy by the CDC Account holders are being sent to all the members.
4. The Share Transfer Books of the Company will be closed from March 19, 2025 to March 25, 2025 (both days inclusive). Transfers received in order by our Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400 before the close of business on March 18, 2025 will be considered in time to attend and vote at the meeting and for the entitlement of Dividend.
5. Members are requested to notify/submit the following, in case of book entry securities in CDC to respective CDC participants and in case of physical shares, to the Company's Share Registrar, if not earlier provided/notified:
   a. Change in their addresses;
   b. Valid and legible photocopies of Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) for Individuals and National Tax Number (NTN) both for individual & corporate entities.

6. ELECTRONIC DIVIDEND MANDATE

Under the Section 242 of Companies Act, 2017 it is mandatory for all listed Company to pay cash dividend to its shareholders through electronic mode directly in to the bank account designated by the entitled shareholders.

In order to receive dividend directly into their bank account, shareholders are requested (if not already provided) to fill in Bank Mandate Form for Electronic Credit of Cash Dividend available in the Annual Report and also on the Company's website and send it duly signed along with a copy of CNIC to the Share Registrar of the Company, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S, Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400, in case of physical shares.

In case of shares held in CDC then electronic dividend mandate form must be directly submitted to shareholder's brokers/ participant/ investor Account Services as the case may be.

In case of non-receipt of information, the Company will be constrained to withhold payment of dividend to shareholders.

7. SUBMISSION OF VALID CNIC (MANDATORY)

As per SECP directives the dividend warrants of the shareholders whose valid CNICs, are not available with the Share Registrar could be withheld. All shareholders having physical shareholding are therefore advised to submit a photocopy of their valid CNICs immediately, if already not provided, to the Company's Share Registrar at the following address, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400 without any further delay.

8. ZAKAT DECLARATION (CZ-50)

Zakat will be deducted from the dividends at source under the Zakat and Usher Laws and will be deposited within the prescribed period with the relevant authority. In case you want to claim exemption, please submit your Zakat declarations under Zakat and Usher Ordinance, 1980 and Rule-4 of Zakat (Deduction & Refund) Rules, 1981 CZ-50 Form with our Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400 or in case of book entry securities in CDC to respective CDC participants. The shareholders while sending the Zakat Declarations must quote company name and their respective CDS A/C No. or Folio No.

9. DEDUCTION OF WITHHOLDING TAX ON THE AMOUNT OF DIVIDEND

Pursuant to SECP directives vide Circular No.19/2014 dated October 24, 2014, SECP has directed all companies to inform shareholders about changes made in the section 150 of the Income Tax Ordinance, we hereby advise shareholders as under:

i. The Government of Pakistan through Finance Act, 2019 has made certain amendments in Section 150 of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001 whereby different rates are prescribed for deduction of withholding tax on the amount of dividend paid by the companies. These tax rates are as under:
   a. for filers of income tax returns: 15%
   b. for non-filers of income tax returns: 30%

   To enable the Company to make tax deduction on the amount of cash dividend @15% instead of 30%, all the shareholders whose names are not entered into the Active Taxpayers List (ATL) provided on the website of FBR, despite the fact that they are filers, are advised to make sure that their names are entered into ATL before the date for payment of the cash dividend otherwise tax on their cash dividend will be deducted @ 30% instead of @ 15%.

ii. In the case of shares registered in the name of two or more shareholders, each joint holder is to be treated individually as either a filer or non-filer and tax be deducted by the Company on the basis of shareholding of each joint-holder as may be notified to the Company in writing. The joint-holders are, therefore, requested to submit their shareholdings otherwise each joint-holder shall be presumed to have an equal number of shares.

iii. For any query/problem/information, the investors may contact the Company and/or the Share Registrar at the following phone numbers & email address. The contact number of Company Secretary is (021) 111-338-111 (Ext: 5580) & email: **hasanjiveni@efulife.com** and the contact numbers of Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited is (021) 111-111-500 & email: info@cdcsrsl.com

iv. The corporate shareholders having CDC accounts are required to have their National Tax Number (NTN) updated with their respective participants, whereas corporate physical shareholders should send a copy of their NTN certificate to the Company or its Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited. The shareholders while sending NTN or NTN certificates, as the case may be, must quote company name and their respective folio numbers.

10. CONSENT FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING FACILITY

Pursuant to the provision to the Companies Act, 2017 members can also avail the video call facility, in this regard please fill the following and submit to registered address of the Company at least 10 days before the holding of Annual general meeting, if the Company receives consent from members holding aggregate 10% or more shareholding residing at the geographical location to participate in the meeting, the Company will arrange video conference facility in the city subject to availability of such facility in that city.

I / We _____, of_____, being a member of EFU Life Assurance Ltd. holder of_____ordinary share(s) as per registered Folio No./CDC A/c No._____hereby opt for Video Conferencing Facility.

11. UNCLAIMED DIVIDEND

As per the provision of section 244 of the Companies Act 2017, any shares issued or dividend declared by the Company which have remained unclaimed / unpaid for a period of three years from the date on which it was due and payable are required to be deposited with commission for the credit of Federal Government after issuance of notices to the shareholders to file their claim. The details of the shares issued and dividend declared by the Company which have remained due for more than three years was sent to shareholders, uploaded on Company website and Final notice was also issued in newspaper. In case, no claim is lodged with the Company in the given time, deposit the unclaimed / unpaid amount and shares with the Federal Government pursuant to the provision of Section 244 (2) of Companies Act, 2017.

12. TRANSMISSION OF THE ANNUAL AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS THROUGH QR-ENABLED CODE AND EMAIL

The Annual Report, including the Financial Statements of the Company, can be viewed using the following QR-enabled code. The same will be shared via email in case an email address is provided by the members. A printed copy of the above-referred statements can be provided to members upon request.

13. AVAILABILITY OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT ON THE COMPANY'S WEBSITE

The audited financial statement of the Company for the year ended December 31, 2024 has been made available on the Company's website, **www.efulife.com** which can be viewed using the following link **https://www.efulife.com / investor-relations / investor-information.**

14. REGISTRATION DETAILS OF PHYSICAL SHAREHOLDERS

As per Section 119 of the Companies Act, 2017 and Regulation 19 of the Companies (General Provisions and Forms) Regulations, 2018, all physical shareholders are advised to provide their mandatory information such as CNIC number, address, email address, contact mobile/telephone number, International Bank Account Number (IBAN), etc. to our Share Registrar at their below address immediately to avoid any non-compliance of law or any inconvenience in future:

CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400. Tel: Toll Free: 0800-23275, Email: **info@cdcsrsl.com**, website: **www.cdcsrsl.com**

15. DEPOSIT OF PHYSICAL SHARES INTO CDC ACCOUNT

As per Section 72 of the Companies Act, 2017 all existing companies are required to convert their physical shares into book-entry form within a period not exceeding four years from the date of commencement of the Companies Act, 2017.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan through its Circular No. CSD/ED/Misc./2016-639-640 dated March 26, 2021 has advised the listed companies to pursue their such members who still hold shares in physical form, to convert their shares into book entry form.

We hereby request all members who are holding shares in physical form to convert their shares into book-entry form at the earliest. They are also suggested to contact the Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited or any member/Stock broker of the Pakistan Stock Exchange to open an account in the Central Depository System and to facilitate conversion of physical shares into book-entry form. Members are informed that holding shares in book-entry form has several benefits including but not limited to secure and convenient custody of shares, conveniently tradeable and transferable, no risk of loss, damage or theft, no stamp duty on transfer of shares in book-entry form and hassle-free credit of bonus or right shares.

We once again strongly advise members of the Company, in their best interest, to convert their physical shares into book-entry form at the earliest.

Pakistan seeks simpler process for accessing climate funds

COORDINATOR to the Prime Minister for Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam presents a shield to IFC Global Director for Climate Jamie Fergusson in Islamabad on Monday. — APP

Romina meets IFC delegation, highlights importance of inclusive approaches to address climate change

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday called for streamlining access to climate finance for long-term adaptation and mitigation plans to make communities resilient against climate change.

The PM's aide made these comments in a meeting with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) delegation which promised to collaborate with Pakistan in addressing climate change challenges. A four-member team led by IFC Global Director for Climate Jamie Fergusson met Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday.

The meeting focused on strengthening the partnership between the IFC and the climate change ministry with an emphasis on enhancing the capacity of stakeholders across various sectors to address the impacts of climate change. The delegation discussed strategies to improve Pakistan's ability to respond to climate change, emphasising the importance of continued global support for developing nations.

Both sides highlighted the need for stronger partnerships to empower key stakeholders, including environmentalists, academics, and technical experts, to effectively combat climate change.

In her remarks, Ms Alam underscored the urgent need for increased accessibility to climate funding to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

She pointed out that despite contributing minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan is among the most vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change, including floods, droughts, and heatwaves. She stressed the importance of simplifying processes for developing countries to access climate funds, enabling large-scale projects aimed at reducing the impacts of climate change on communities and ecosystems.

Climate Change Secretary Aisha Humera Moriani discussed the "growing potential" of electric vehicles (EVs) in Pakistan's efforts to cut carbon emissions and improve air quality. She proposed strengthening collaboration with the EV sector, particularly in light of rising demand for two-wheelers in the country.

She highlighted the popularity of two-wheelers in Pakistan and suggested that promoting electric two-wheelers could significantly reduce carbon emissions from transportation, improve air quality in urban areas, and decrease reliance on fossil fuels.

The delegation acknowledged the importance of this initiative and expressed interest in further exploring cooperation with the EV sector as part of a comprehensive strategy to address climate change. The discussion also covered the broader need to promote sustainable transportation solutions to reduce Pakistan's carbon footprint.

In his remarks, Mr Fergusson recognised Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change and emphasised the necessity of global cooperation in supporting the country's climate efforts. He also reaffirmed the IFC's commitment to providing technical expertise and strategic guidance to help Pakistan implement projects that promote climate resilience and sustainable development.

Both parties agreed that stronger collaboration between Pakistan and international financial institutions and the exchange of resources and ideas would be vital for advancing the country's climate agenda.

Ms Alam reiterated her commitment to working closely with the IFC to secure the necessary resources for climate projects. She emphasised the importance of involving local stakeholders and communities to ensure that climate solutions were tailored to Pakistan's unique needs.

Another instalment of Rs9bn released to complete Ring Road by December-end

RAWALPINDI: The government of Punjab has released Rs9 billion more for Rawalpindi Ring Road (R3) to expedite work on the project and meet the deadline of December-end for its completion.

However, the contractor, Frontier Works Organisation, will not get Rs4 billion against the work already done due to the delay in the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec).

A senior official of the district administration told Dawn that Rs12 billion had already been spent on the project and payment made to the contractor. However, the FWO was yet to get Rs4 billion for the work it had already completed.

He said after Ecnec's approval of the revised PC-I, the Project Management Unit (PMU) would be able to release the funds to the contractor. The official said after paying Rs4 billion to the contractor, the remaining Rs5 billion would be enough to complete the road from Bambi to Thalian by June. The remaining funds would be released in the next fiscal year for the project worth Rs38 billion.

Deputy Project Director Ashfaq Sulheri told Dawn that Rs130 million had been paid to Pakistan Railways for a railway bridge to be constructed over the Ring Road. He said the PMU was working to complete the project by the December deadline set by the government. He said more than 45 per cent work on the project had been completed and the speed would further be improved in coming days. He said the road would be ready for black topping within three to four months.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Amir Khattak reviewed the Ring Road project at a meeting on Monday and said the project was a top priority of the government, adding, "We will try our best to complete it before the deadline."

He said funds required for the project had been released after which no delay in the project would be acceptable. He directed the deputy project director to update him about the progress on a daily basis. Also, he will inspect the site every three days and visit the entire route every week. In a briefing, the commissioner was told that the financial progress on the Ring Road project was 45 per cent. With the release of the required funds, the physical and financial progress will now be expedited.

In addition, the revised PC-I had been cleared by the Central Development Working party and was now to be presented at the Ecnec meeting. The total length of the Ring Road worth Rs38 billion is 38.5km. It will have five interchanges at Bambi, Chak Baik Khan, Adiala Road, Chaklri Road and Thalian. An industrial zone will be established around Ring Road. The road will be operated at a design speed of 120km/h with six lane controlled accesses. — Aamir Yasin

HEC notifies revised curricula

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan has notified four revised curricula in the disciplines of Political Science, Islamic Studies, Remote Sensing & GIS and Architecture. The curricula have been revised by National Curriculum Review Committees (NCRCs).

"The updated curricula aim to enhance academic standards, align with industry needs, and incorporate evolving market trends into relevant fields of study," says a press release issued here by HEC on Monday.

It said that NCRCs consisted of eminent professors, senior faculty and distinguished scholars from academia, representation from accreditation councils, R&D organisations and industry experts from relevant disciplines.

NCRC meetings were chaired by Prof. Dr. Muqarrab Akhar (Political Science), Prof. Dr. Shah Mehvashkin Hashmi (Islamic Studies), Prof. Dr. Anwar Rahman (Remote Sensing & GIS), and Muhammad Arif Changazi (Architecture). HEC Deputy Director Hidayatullah Kasi facilitated the NCRC proceedings as Secretary.

The revised curricula focused on the academic standards such as nomenclature of the degree programs, eligibility criteria, programme learning outcomes, schemes of studies, course learning outcomes, degree award requirements and options for electives to accommodate the in-demand specializations in line with international standards, indigenous needs and market demand. — Staff Reporter

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No event held in GB to mark wildlife day

Environmentalists censure govt, NGOs for not raising awareness; PM stresses importance of biodiversity

By Jamil Nagri and Syed Irfan Raza

GILGIT / ISLAMABAD: The World Wildlife Day on March 3 passed without any major event to mark the occasion in Gilgit-Baltistan, a region famed for its picturesque landscapes and biodiversity.

Unlike in the past, no ceremonies or events were organised by the government or non-government organisations in Gilgit-Baltistan this year.

GB is rich in flora and fauna because of its varied climatic conditions and ecosystem.

The region is home to several rare species, such as marco polo sheep, ibex, markhor, urial, blue sheep, lynx, snow leopard, leopard cat, brown and black bears, wolf, fox, marmot, chakor and ram chakor and golden eagle. Some of these species were on the brink of extinction due to illegal and unchecked hunting, negligence of the wildlife department and climate change-related issues.

According to a statement by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), World Wildlife Day served as a reminder of the deep connection between wildlife and people.

"As we face environmental challenges, it's crucial to remember how our future is intertwined with the health of the planet."

In a statement, UNDP Pakistan said that World Wildlife Day was a celebration of "Pakistan's rich biodiversity," from snow leopards in the northern mountains to the endangered Indus River dolphins.

Environmentalists have criticised the GB government for not commemorating the day.

Abbas Ahmad, an activist, said the GB government and non-government organisations were spending millions of rupees annually on the conservation of wildlife species. "In contrast, no practical measures have been taken to create awareness among locals."

Another environmentalist, Ashfaq Ahmad, said illegal poaching of wildlife species was underway across GB. Many snow leopards were killed illegally while the hunting of ibex was also going on.

PM's message

In his message on World Wildlife Day, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif said Pakistan was investing in a sustainable future.

PM Shehbaz said Pakistan was blessed with immense biodiversity, from snow leopards to blind dolphins. "These species are not just part of our natural heritage. They play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance and sustaining our environment and economy."

Protests in Baltistan over arrest of three religious scholars

Opposition leader, clerics demand their 'unconditional' release

By Our Staff Correspondent

GILGIT: Demonstrations were held in various areas of Baltistan division on Monday against the arrest of three religious scholars at the Pakistan-Iran border in Balochistan after they returned from Iran.

Leader of the Opposition in the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Kazim Mesum, along with religious scholars, demanded the immediate release of the three detained scholars.

A sit-in blocking Kargil Road in GB's Kharmang district continued for the third consecutive day, while another demonstration was staged on K2 Road in Shigar district.

Protesters said Syed Aga Ali Abbas from Kharmang, Sheikh Ghulam Abbas from Skardu and Sheikh Akhtar Hussain from Shigar were students at a religious institution in Iran. Holding pictures of the detained scholars, the protesters chanted slogans demanding their release.

The three scholars were returning from Iran and had entered Pakistan through the Rimdan-Gabd border crossing in Balochistan when they were allegedly detained by police on February 25. Since then, there has been no contact, raising serious concerns among their families and the community.

On Sunday, despite rain and snowfall, a large number of local people, including women, staged a sit-in blocking Kargil Road. Similarly, a large gathering of women staged a protest on K2 Road against the detention of the religious scholars. Earlier, a protest demonstration was also held in Gamba, Skardu, demanding the release of the scholars.

The protesters condemned the arrests, stating that the detention of the three religious scholars was unjustified and without any crime. They urged the government to conduct an immediate investigation and ensure the safe return of the detained scholars.

PROTESTERS hold a sit-in at the Kargil Road in Kharmang district, on Monday — Photo by the writer

Mr Mesum warned that there would be strong reactions across Baltistan over the arrest and shifting of the scholars to an unknown location. In a statement, he said the federal government would have to face consequences for the ill-treatment of the residents of Gilgit-Baltistan. He demanded the immediate release of the scholars.

Meanwhile, Anjuman-i-Imamia Baltistan has announced that protests will intensify if the detained scholars were not released.

CB urged to send civilians' cases to ATCs

Continued from Page 1

if he had challenged Section 94 of the Pakistan Army Act, which deals with cases that can be tried in both civilian and military courts.

"When a criminal court and a court martial have each jurisdiction in respect of a civil offence, it shall be in the discretion of the prescribed officer to decide before which court the proceedings shall be instituted..."

The section also states that if "[an] officer" decides that the case will be tried in military court, the accused should be taken into military custody.

The counsel replied that the offence, which falls under the Army Act, was not determined when the custody of the accused was transferred to military courts.

He added that he had also challenged the "unlimited discretion" of Section 94 in his petition.

The authority of the officer who decides the transfer of custody to military courts should not be unlimited," Mr Siddiq contended.

When the discretion enjoyed by the prime minister is subject to certain limits, why the authority of the commanding officer to decide the transfer of custody was unlimited, the counsel argued.

He also emphasised the need for "structuring the power" to transfer the custody to military courts.

During the hearing, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi observed whether investigations conducted by the police were done and the ones by military authorities were swift.

He also questioned the evidence available at the time of transferring the custody.

The counsel, however, argued that the root cause was not the availability of evidence on record but the "unlimited power" exercised by the commanding officer in relation to the transfer of custody.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail remarked whether the executive's discretion ended after Article 175 of the Constitution — outlining the jurisdiction of courts — underscoring the judiciary's independence from executive influence.

The counsel argued that the military trial of civilians was challenged before the Supreme Court under Article 245, which pertains to the deployment of armed forces in aid of civil power.

Justice Khan observed that when the events of May 9 took place, Article 245 had not been invoked by the government.

The counsel replied that Article 245 was in the field when the military trials were challenged before the Supreme Court. The hearing will recommence today (Tuesday).

Torkham tensions mount as forces trade fire

Continued from Page 1

both bullets and mortar shells, which caused minor damages to the steel structures. "Two residents were also injured when they were hit by mortar shrapnel while fleeing their homes", he said.

"A taxi driver died of heart attack while he was moving to a safe place amid intense firing," he added.

Meanwhile, tribal elders of various tribes in Khyber offered to mediate between the two neighbouring countries to find a lasting solution to the existing border issues.

Talking to *Dawn*, Malak Abdur Razaq Afridi said that tribal elders on both sides of the border were well aware of the sensitivities and they had the experience of resolving such issues, provided they were fully authorised to do so.

The Torkham crossing was abruptly closed on the night of February 21 after border security officials developed differences over the modification and renovation of the existing border structure on both sides.

The border closure brought all types of cross-border movement to a complete halt, with both sides refusing to talk to each other for the next two days.

Security officials held their first meeting on the third day of the closure but could not reach an agreement. They met again on March 2, failing to resolve the issue.

There was, however, optimism among the official and traders that the border could possibly be reopened any day during the current week, as Pakistani officials had expressed their desire to resume trade and pedestrian movement with an assurance from the Afghan side to adhere to the previous border restructuring protocols.

GOODS trucks are parked on a road leading to the Torkham border crossing, on Monday — Photo by the writer

Pims doctors examine Imran in jail

Continued from Page 1

relatives.

Mr Khan's family physician was not being allowed to visit him, fuelling concerns about his health, a PTI leader said.

On the other hand, speculations were rife in Islamabad that the former prime minister might be transferred to some other location. However, there was no official word about any such claims.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had said last month that Imran Khan would "soon be shifted elsewhere".

Climate resilience, water management projects initiated in Balochistan

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Initiatives of climate resilience and sustainable water management aimed at improving food security and supporting communities vulnerable to climate change in Balochistan and Sindh kicked off on Monday with the support of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.

Both initiatives highlight the critical need for integrated climate adaptation strategies to ensure water security, food resilience, and sustainable livelihoods in Pakistan's most vulnerable regions, the FAO said.

The FAO announced that the Balochistan government has notified the Integrated Water Resource Management project developed with the technical assistance of FAO.

The approval of the water sources management project is a major step towards sustainable development resource management, the FAO said.

The project has been funded by the World Bank under the Balochistan Integrated Water Resources Management and Development Project.

The new policy, along with the Balochistan Water Resources Management bill, establishes a legal framework to enhance institutional capacity, integrate surface and groundwater management, and promote gender-inclusive water governance, emphasised Dr Robina Wahaj, FAO Senior Land and Water Officer.

"This initiative aligns water management with climate adaptation strategies, ensuring a holistic approach to addressing governance challenges."

The FAO Balochistan head, Waleed Mahdi, called the project "a milestone in sustainable and inclusive water governance".

In Sujawal, Sindh, at the same time, the FAO has also launched the Building Resilience and Addressing Vulnerabilities to Emergencies (BRAVE) initiative aimed at strengthening climate resilience, improving food security, and supporting communities vulnerable to climate change.

Funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and implemented in Sindh, Balochistan, and Punjab, BRAVE will benefit 60 villages across three districts, with approximately 9,000 households per district.

The programme is led by IOM in collaboration with FAO, Unicef, CARE International, ACTED, and Islamic Relief.

During a key meeting in Sujawal, government officials, research institutions, and Brave partners launched the Extended Technical Working Group, which will drive climate-resilient interventions across agriculture, livestock, rangelands, forestry, renewable energy, and aquaculture.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Sujawal, Abdul Karim Sangrasi, called Brave a pivotal step in building long-term resilience against climate change.

The FAO head in Sindh province, Julius Githiga Muchemi, reaffirmed the FAO's commitment, and said that through collaborative knowledge sharing and innovative models, we aim to transform agri-food systems and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

Inflation drops to lowest in nearly a decade

Continued from Page 1

the people. "I strongly hope that inflation will decrease further."

In the first eight months of FY25 (July-February), inflation averaged 5.85pc compared to 27.96pc during the same period last year. Analysts attributed the decline to lower global commodity prices, stable exchange rates, higher base effect and better agricultural outputs.

The IMF has revised its inflation forecast for FY25 down to 9.5pc from the previous estimate of 12.7pc.

In February, urban inflation stood at 1.8pc year-on-year, while rural inflation was recorded at 1.1pc.

Food, core inflation

Food inflation for February recorded a negative growth of 0.9pc in urban areas and -4.3pc in rural areas, whereas non-food inflation was 3.4pc in urban areas and 6.4pc in rural areas. Food inflation was 9.4pc in October 2021. Since then, it has progressively increased, with a record 48.1pc reported in May 2023.

Interestingly, the PBS index indicates a decline in food prices. However, in the open market, retail prices of most food products — except wheat, wheat flour, and a few vegetables like onions and tomatoes — have not decreased for consumers.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, was recorded at 7.8pc in urban areas and 10.4pc in rural areas in February. Over the past 13 months, urban core inflation peaked at 18.4pc in July 2023 and remained at the previous month's level.

As a result, the State Bank of Pakistan lowered the interest rate to 12pc in its last monetary policy review. The next meeting on March 10 will decide the new policy rate.

Main contributors

In urban areas, the food items whose prices saw the month-on-month (MoM) decline in February included tomatoes (56.76pc), onions (31.49pc), potatoes (20.10pc), fresh vegetables (16.75pc), eggs (14.23pc), pulse gram (10.23pc), tea (10.05pc), besan (8.68pc), gram whole (5.46pc), wheat (2.97pc), pulse mash (2.82pc), wheat flour (2.21pc), chicken (1.51pc), pulse masoor (1.49pc), pulse moong (1.35pc), wheat products (1.25pc), mustard oil (1.19pc), fish (0.12pc) and milk products (0.10pc).

The MoM increase was recorded in prices of fresh fruits (18.99pc), sugar (9.35pc), butter (5.61pc), condiments and spices (1.59pc), bakery and confectionary (1.19pc), beverages (1.16pc), honey (1.12pc), vegetable ghee (0.66pc), meat (0.46pc), rice (0.39pc), cooking oil (0.35pc), readymade food (0.33pc), beans (0.22pc) and milk powder (0.03pc).

The MoM increase was also recorded in non-food items, including accommodation services (5.07pc), major tools & equipment (1.56pc), mechanical services (0.89pc), doctor (MBBS) clinic fee (0.80pc), motor fuel (0.75pc), construction wage (0.74pc), plastic products (0.65pc), dental services (0.51pc) and furniture & furnishing (0.48pc).

TENDER NOTICE

Bids are invited for the following:

Tender No.	Description	Closing Date/ Time
PD/C&EN/ PT/29806/ 25	Satellite based WAN communication services on call out basis	20 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/O&M/ PT/30270/ 25	Spares for Ariel gas compressor	20 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/E&C/ PT/30280/ 25	Fence lighting works, electrical works and dismantling of the same at well Adhi - 31 work over	20 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/E&C/ PT/30281/ 25	Fence lighting works, electrical works and dismantling of the same at well Adam West work over	20 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.

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

Extension in Bid Closing & Opening Dates

Closing and opening dates of the following tenders have been extended as follows:

Tender No.	Description	Published On	Revised Closing Date/ Time
PD/P&C/ PT/30072/ 25	Supply of LV MCC assemblies for produced water treatment and injection facility	07 Feb, 2025	27 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/P&C/ PT/29274/ 25	Supply of backwash filtration package for produced water treatment and injection facility	07 Feb, 2025	27 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/P&C/ PT/29869/ 25	Supply of transformers	23 Jan, 2025	27 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/P&C/ PT/29891/ 25	Supply of level gauges	23 Jan, 2025	27 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/P&C/ PT/29892/ 25	Supply of level indicators	23 Jan, 2025	27 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/D&CE/ PT/30123/ 25	Tubing rental along with running & pulling services for all PPL operated fields/ blocks on call-out basis	13 Feb, 2025	20 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/D&CE/ PT/29944/ 25	Tubing conveyed perforation (TCP) services for all PPL operated areas on call-out basis	13 Feb, 2025	20 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/O&M/ PT/30115/ 25	Spares for air cooler, compressor and control valve	07 Feb, 2025	20 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.
PD/O&M/ PT/30116/ 25	Supply of spares for frame III gas turbine	13 Feb, 2025	19 Mar, 2025 1030 hrs.

Bidders who have already submitted/send 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 PPRA website at **www.ppra.org.pk** Tender documents are available online and bids are also required to be submitted online through PPL's e-procurement portal at **https://eprocurement.ppl.com.pk** for details see 'Instruction for Bidders Section' of tender documents. PPL reserves the right to reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal.

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DAWN

OPINION

IMF scrutiny

AN IMF delegation is in Islamabad to assess progress on the Fund's ongoing $7bn funding programme amidst hopes that the review will not encounter any serious obstacles that could delay the next tranche. The mission will evaluate how Pakistan has done on quantitative performance criteria, structural benchmarks and indicative targets for the first half of the current fiscal year. There have been some "technical slippages", such as delays in meeting the deadlines for certain goals, like legislation on agriculture tax. Officials insist that they have covered all the bases, although the failure to meet the tax target will likely remain a major source of worry. Yet, the officials are confident that the IMF will ignore the slippages in the tax target because of a "higher-than-targeted primary budget surplus and greater-than-estimated revenue-to-GDP ratio". The FBR attributes the shortfall largely to reduced tax collection from imports, sluggish LSM growth and an unexpected drop in inflation. The IMF's response to the tax shortfall remains to be seen. However, the stock market's decline betrays investors' anxiety at the anticipated contingency measures under the Fund's pressure to gulp off the actual tax target.

The investors' anxiety notwithstanding, the IMF's scrutiny of Pakistan's performance is most likely to progress smoothly without any harsh new conditions for the second half of the present fiscal year, or punitive demands from the lender for tax slippages. That said, the ongoing review will be critical in determining how the economy moves forward. On its success depend the strengthening of economic stability, official flows from other multilateral agencies, and upgradation of the sovereign credit rating, which is crucial to Islamabad's plans to raise funds from international bond markets. Any hiccups in the programme would put paid to those plans and lead to a new wave of uncertainty and volatility. For now, the macroeconomic indicators suggest a temporary reprieve: the rupee has held steady, inflation has plunged to 1.4pc, the current account is running a surplus of over $600m, remittances have jumped to over $3bn a month, and exports are showing resilience.

These improvements are mostly due to financial support from the IMF and bilateral lenders, as well as stability in the global commodity markets. The price for this fragile stability has been massive though: a sharp slowdown in domestic growth as well as rising unemployment and poverty. With the second Trump presidency in the US shaking up the global economic and political order, the need for freeing the economy from the clutches of the forces of status quo and restructuring it to get it back on its feet has never been so compelling. The current IMF bailout could be the last opportunity to avoid a repeat of the past.

Diplomatic protocol

IT is a fact that KP — which shares a long border with Afghanistan — is directly affected by cross-border terrorism, while people on both sides of the frontier share centuries-old tribal, cultural, and linguistic links. Yet where the conduct of foreign policy is concerned, while the federating units, particularly those sharing borders with neighbouring states, ought to give their input, bilateral negotiations with foreign powers should be the sole prerogative of the centre. This should be kept in mind as the PTI-led KP government seeks to open dialogue channels with the Afghan Taliban regime. While meeting the consul-general of the 'Islamic Emirate' on Sunday, KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur reiterated that negotiations with the Afghan side through a tribal jirga would start once the terms of reference were approved by the federal government. While there can be little disagreement with Mr Gandapur's assertion that negotiations are key to establishing lasting peace, how these parleys are conducted, and by whom, needs further attention. The KP administration has been pushing the idea of direct talks with Kabul for some time now; the chief minister had mentioned the need for 'tribal diplomacy' at a meeting two weeks ago, while a similar proposal was also floated last year.

Considering our frigid ties with Kabul, and the fact that dialogue is preferable to confrontation, the Afghan Taliban should be engaged. But the centre must continue to lead this effort, with significant input from KP. Foreign policy should not be allowed to become a victim of political differences. At this time, different parties are in power in all four provinces and the centre; if all provinces were to pursue independent relations with neighbouring states, it would have a negative effect on the cohesion of our foreign policy. That is why external relations should remain the preserve of the centre, with all four provinces providing their input regarding the direction of ties with neighbours. The KP government has reiterated that talks with the Afghan Taliban will remain "aligned with security and foreign policies". The best way to maintain this alignment is for the peace initiative to be led by the foreign ministry, where professional diplomats aware of the on-ground situation are advised by elected representatives and the provincial administrations concerned. It would be inadvisable for the provinces to take solo flights on foreign policy.

Polio politics

THE dispute between the centre and Punjab over the detection of polio cases in Mandi Bahauddin is unnecessary and dangerous. While Punjab officials argue that the child in question does not meet the clinical criteria for polio, the National Institute of Health has confirmed the presence of the virus in her stool sample. At a time when Pakistan remains one of two countries still battling the disease, such discord hampers progress. The controversy surrounding the case in question highlights complacency. When health authorities contest scientifically confirmed diagnoses and present videos of children running about as 'evidence' against polio's presence, they misunderstand the nature of the disease. Mild cases, where children retain some mobility, are actually indicators of progress in immunisation efforts — not proof that diagnoses are incorrect. Detection of such cases represents a success of our surveillance system, not a failure of our vaccination drives. As the NIH epidemiologist rightly noted, "What may seem like bad news today is actually good news for tomorrow." This scientific approach must prevail over political considerations and provincial pride.

The path to eradication requires accepting hard facts. Each confirmed case — whether in Punjab, Sindh, or elsewhere — demands immediate response, not denial. Our surveillance systems must remain vigilant enough to detect even atypical presentations, especially as we approach the endgame of eradication. Moving forward, both federal and provincial authorities must prioritise unity over division. The centre should ensure transparent communication of test results and diagnostic criteria, while provinces must accept scientific findings without defensiveness. Joint training of healthcare workers on recognising varying presentations of polio will boost our detection capabilities. Pakistan's children deserve protection from a preventable disease that continues to threaten their futures. This requires putting aside jurisdictional disputes and embracing collaborative action. Only through acknowledging every case — mild or severe — can we develop targeted strategies to finally put polio behind us.

BY ARIFA NOOR

Is all well?

The government let its jitters turn a low-profile event into a successful effort of resistance.

IT'S been a good week for the government.

It truly has.

It completed a year with great fanfare (and advertising). There seems to be no immediate threat on the horizon, leading everyone in power or close to them to boast of a long run. No wonder, then, that the federal government has also expanded the cabinet, inducting friends, allies, and enemies alike. The parliamentarians also gave themselves a pat on the back and a raise to ensure everyone realised how happy they were with their own performance.

There was criticism here and there — of the rains, of the advertising that was excessive, and the expansion that seemed to have nothing to do with governance. This was water off a duck's back. After all, the IMF programme is on track, the rupee is stable, inflation is slowing down, and there has been no call from the US either. The horse and cattle show was also a success.

It truly is a case of *'sab ziz well, aireup chiche, sab ziz well'*.

And why wouldn't it be well? Not just for the successes recounted above but also the victory on the judicial front. The new judges have been inducted and, by 'coincidence', their placements — be they in the Supreme Court or the Islamabad High Court — will ensure that none of the 'difficult' judges will get to dominate now. There is now little chance of any instability due to judgements as such.

Elsewhere, too, another institution, has been tamed. For why else would government officials, while pitching Peca, claim that the law would only target those working on social media? Is this assurance the assumption that mainstream media is hardly a challenge (or dare one say a threat). It's only the 'out of control' social media which has to be tamed. And for this, Peca is simply the newest tool in the government's hand; it also has the defamation law passed by Punjab and the mythical firewall handy.

But if *sab ziz well*, and we believe the government when it says *sab ziz well*, then why was a vanilla event of the opposition stopped?

For once, the PTI wasn't protesting. It wasn't threatening to march on to Islamabad. It wasn't promising a never-ending dharna (which would end in a trek by a health-conscious chief minister). This time around, there were no claims or slogans or preparations. In fact, the PTI was doing what everyone has been advising them to — talk to and with other politicos.

And hence, the PTI and other senior, old-style politicians were going to sit in an auditorium in Islamabad and give speeches. It doesn't get more vanilla than this. And it doesn't get more routine that this because Islamabad is just not the seat of government but also the capital of NGOs. Everyone in this town has attended a seminar and/or spoken at one. The hotels in Islamabad run on the gas produced by the long speeches everyone gives.

Indeed, seminars are about as common in Islamabad as the foxes that populate it. (The four-legged ones have kind of disappeared, but I'm sure most readers know what I mean.) But someone, somewhere got her undie their collar at the thought of speeches, despite the rains.

So, the opposition kept getting ditched by the people whose venues it had booked. The first venue, it was told, was too close to the route cricketers took as they went to play their matches. The second one wasn't going to cross the cricketers' path but apparently a *baat billi* (black cat) did, because the security precautions were just as stringent everywhere in the city — people cannot collect in a group because the cricketers were going back and forth in some part of the city. The third also changed its mind (do the reasons even matter?). Finally, the fourth one turned out to be a charm. But only for a day — by the second day, the management had a change of heart leading to the NGO-type event taking inspiration from the Occupy Wall Street event — they climbed gates, forced open doors, and delivered thundering speeches. All in the hotel lobby because the Asma Jahangir Auditorium had been locked to keep the politicians out. The irony of something named after Asma Jahangir being inaccessible to politicians hasn't been lost on anyone.

And in the process, the politicos got much projection.

So the confident government let its jitters turn a low-profile event into a successful effort of resistance, and frankly, no one was surprised because shooting themselves in the foot is what those on Constitution Avenue excel at.

But was it just a jittery government?

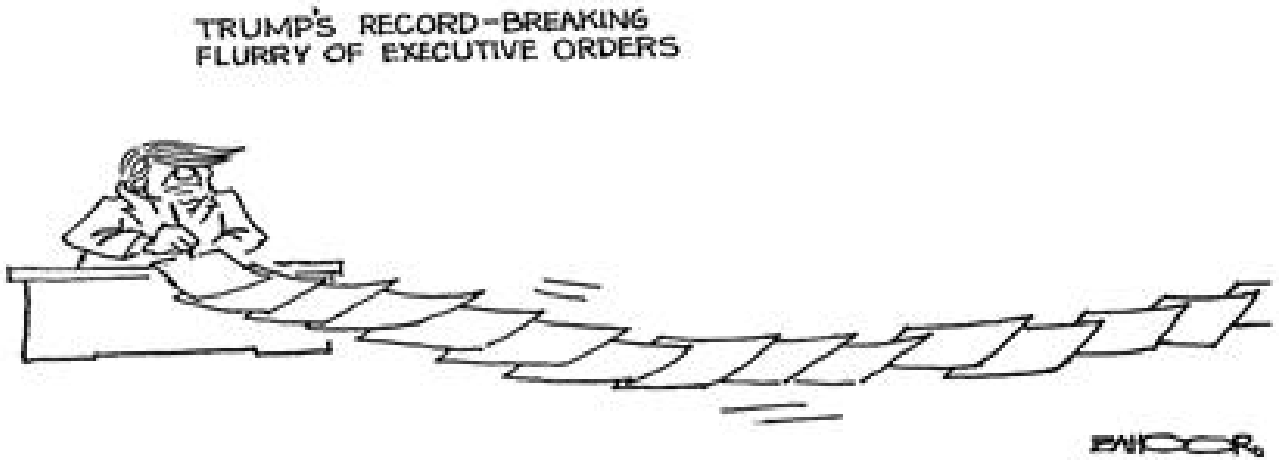
As an aside, most journalists in Pakistan do turn into conspiracy theorists at the best of times. So one wonders if the Noonies got jittery, or did someone else just want them to appear jittery? And embarrass it?

Or worse still, the objective wasn't to make the government look jittery but just to make it look bad. In the latter case, the PML-N should be worried, very worried. The time to look over their shoulder has begun.

Postscript: It's been five days since the cabinet expansion happened and the *dhermanis* were taken out of the closets and donned so that the oaths could be taken. But the portfolios have yet to be made official. The new contingent of ministers, which we were told was needed to run the country, is here, but it seems no one knows what tasks it is to perform. Pervez Khattak, Mustafa Kamal and the less important Noonies are still waiting — as are we.

Is it because there is much lobbying and jockeying at play or is there more at play? Two plus two is not adding up to four. But then, politics is not math, is it? ■

The writer is a journalist.



BY JAWED NAQVI

Gambling with World War III

TOO many opposite and unyielding opinions are ranged on the subject, which requires an explanatory note before coming to the point. The ungainly White House spat between Donald Trump and Volodymyr Zelensky has gripped everyone's attention. But let me make a small point here.

If anything, the wordy duel reminds one of an old Chinese saying: 'Don't interrupt the enemy if he is making a mistake.' Think about it. If Trump's controversial actions at home help to dismantle the global snooping menace of Five Eyes — the sobriquet for the dark club of intelligence agencies of the US, UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand, is it not a matter of relief for the rest of the world? Cynics may consider the views of Edward Snowden on the subject. It was his revelations about the Five Eyes intelligence alliance that exposed how the US and its allies spy on citizens and share their information.

On the diplomatic circuit, if Trump's actions in the war in Ukraine stop the meat grinder from wasting more human lives and also helps undermine the corrosive transatlantic military alliance of old colonial powers, should the rest of the world rejoice or go into depression?

Some discussants on the subject see Vladimir Putin as a greater threat to peace. Zelensky calls him a terrorist. Ukraine's constitution forbids him to talk to Putin. Airy-fairy duds don't load anywhere. In fact, a most crucial observation that was made in the Oval Office on Friday has been buried in the rush to take sides between Zelensky and his host and Putin.

The point we may have missed was Trump's sound advice to Zelensky showing him the door: "You are gambling with World War III." It's hard to remember an American president confessing to an ally he had been arming in a brutal war to be wary of the conflict turning into a nuclear war. Anyone can describe Trump as a threat to America, to democracy and so forth. No one is taking away the import of that criticism. But valid as it is, the timing of the criticism marks the distress of Jack Nicholson's complaint in *As Good As It Gets*. "I am drowning here, and you are describing the water."

Trump, in fact, made another self-appraisal for Zelensky to ponder. He said the Ukraine-Russia war should never have happened. It is a fratricidal war, indeed, just as the Afghans were made to range against each other with this or that ruse, only to be abandoned because of imperialism's attention deficit. We saw pretty much the same thing in Vietnam, pitting brother against brother. The Iraq war was as contrived as the Ukrainian conflict. The modus operandi was also the same: give the quarry the kiss of death. April Glaspie did to Saddam Hussein what years later Victoria Nuland would do to Zelensky. Both were seduced into ruinous wars and then pummeled with the bill for reparations.

Before the current stand-off, ordinary Russians and Ukrainians were invested in each other as members of a larger Slavic family. They shared a common history, most notably of jointly defeating Hitler, although Ukraine had its own variants of Nazi sympathisers too. The two peoples shared the same church, their cuisine, and much of their culture. Ironically, powerful Soviet leaders had Ukrainian links. Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev, and Konstantin Chernenko were born or raised in Ukraine.

> The point we may have missed was Trump's sound advice to Zelensky showing him the door.

Why was Trump speaking to Zelensky about the spectre of a nuclear holocaust should Ukraine continue to rib Russia with foreign weapons? It's possible, as some analysts believe, that he was warning European partners as much as Zelensky about the perils of persisting with a fruitless and calamitous conflict. Now that Russia and the US appear to be on the same page in the stand-off, where could the trigger for a catastrophe be lying?

There are several triggers, not least in the Middle East, while the South China Sea continues to be another volatile region. But the real Russian roulette that Trump was cautioning about is being played out in London by none other than the usual suspects. A 'coalition of the willing' is being hustled together. Keir Starmer and Emmanuel Macron, both struggling with terrible popularity ratings at home, insist they want to put 'boots on the ground' in Ukraine, ostensibly to strengthen Zelensky's hand in the event of a ceasefire. Credible analysts see this as a poisoned chalice for Putin. After all, Russia waded into Ukraine to vacate the possibility of having Nato members on its borders. European leaders know Putin would never accept them as neighbours.

Moreover, as implied by Trump in his second term in office, the West, more specifically Nato, had deliberately provoked Putin. The UK has been stressing that a Russian victory would pose a threat to Europe. Does the claim have any basis in fact? Or is it rooted in Britain's history of Russophobia? Ever since Churchill's iron curtain speech and the rise of James Bond, Russophobia has only prospered. The chorus in the Biden days was that Russia had lost the war. Trump pooh-poohed the claim and effectively said it isn't happening. His predatory fangs are out for Ukrainian minerals instead. He won't be unaware that the Ukraine war is also known as Hillary Clinton's revenge for Putin's indiscretion of stalling her dismantling of Syria à la Libya in Antony Blinken's company.

The businessman in Trump makes him instinctively averse to needless risks. He should have been rattled last month when a military helicopter crashed midair into a commercial airliner over Washington airport. The helicopter was carrying out a mock drill to evacuate an imaginary POTUS to safety during an imaginary nuclear attack. To make it eerier, Annie Jacobsen, in her insightful book called *Nuclear War*, had only recently described a helicopter crash involving the US president who was being rescued to a safehouse but ended up with multiple fractures and no one alive to help. ■

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OPINION

BY NIAZ MURTAZA

A year of misrule

AS the PML-N set-up marks one year in power today, I review its outcomes via a detailed framework that I have used for several past set-ups. It says the quality of an administration's outcomes depends on the quality of its strategies, which, in turn, depends on the quality of its team.

The outcomes occur in five domains (economic, political, social, security, and external) and functions (legislation, policy, projects, services, and institutional reform). Just by looking at the team, one can predict early how the governing set-up will do in five years. Looking at its weak team last year, I had said that the PML-N will do poorly. A year has validated this view. I focus on the federal set-up.

Politically, the year has been our annus horribilis since 1947 for a civilian set-up. Coming to power via rigged polls with the help of the establishment, the current set-up has unleashed an assault on key institutions, causing more damage in just one year than others did in a full term. This includes dubious legislative tweaks like the 26th and 27th amendments, disruption of social media and abuses against opposition groups like the PTI, PTM, and BYC. The aim seemingly is to deliver the real power wielders a docile set-up and society based on a misplaced view that this will deliver progress. The poor outcomes belie the view.

Economically, progress means economic stability, durable growth, equity, and sustainability. So far, we have only regained economic stability after the 2022 crisis, with low inflation and higher dollar reserves. But past regimes, too, gave us similar stability. Regaining economic stability after a crisis is not difficult. Under IMF-led reforms, it can achieve be achieved via administrative fiat in a few months. The State Bank chief ups interest rates and devalues the rupee. The finance guru cuts development outlays, ups import tariffs, and begs and borrows from Gulf countries and China. All this shrinks the twin deficits to contain the crisis — however, it also cuts growth and enhances the misery of the poor.

Durable growth comes from deep reforms in sick state units, the energy sector, subsidies, tax and tariff realms, and the bureaucracy, as well as developing a creative vision for a pro-poor economy to increase investment, productivity, sectoral growth and exports. Thus, higher-level progress goals require different tasks and skillsets than those linked to economic stability. If a set-up achieves the latter, it doesn't mean it can also achieve the former. Like past administrations, the PML-N is failing to achieve durable growth. Reforms have largely stalled and its vision is limited to distributing patronage-driven services such as different cards and laptops, which will only increase the fiscal deficit and not ignite equitable or durable growth. As Khurram Husain noted astutely on these pages, it may have already achieved peak stability and things may go downhill now given the lack of reforms.

The same is true externally. Ties have improved a bit with China, the US and the Gulf states, but haven't gone beyond that. So, while loans have been rolled over, we have yet to see the inflow of the billions the set-up was hoping for — which would have allowed it to defer serious reforms by loosening the current account binding constraint. Security tensions persist with India and Afghanistan, as both refuse to play ball.

Overall, too, the security status remains fragile, and groups like the BLA and TTP have launched several attacks. Parachinar is the latest flashpoint. Despite threats, attacks and visits, the Afghan Taliban have so far not stopped the TTP from operating from its soil. As with the economic and external situation, the PML-N and its patrons remain clueless on how to improve things. Finally, there have been no major initiatives in the social sector.

> Reforms have largely stalled under the current set-up.

So, the status is practically the same in all domains — plateaus with no chances of major gains soon, given the lack of team capacity. The size of the cabinet has doubled but not its capacities, as new appointees are seen by many to be inept, political choices. Neither the PML-N nor the establishment seem to want deep economic change, as it may unfurl major political and social changes in society that they can't control, leading to their political demise. So, their aim is to crush societal dissent and feverishly look for funds from big states that will allow them to postpone reforms as long as possible and maintain their political flat. But this strategy may not work for much longer. So, if our rulers don't wake up soon, we may be headed towards economic and security chaos. ■

The writer is a political economist with a PhD from the University of California, Berkeley, and has senior-level work experience across 50 countries.
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BY NAEEM SADIQ

Ignored challenge

IT is the season of mindlessness. Seminars on climate change are in, while family planning services are out. Taking loans is in, while thinking with one's own brain is out. Danish schools are in, while the 26.2 million out-of-school children in the country are out.

Pakistan has travelled too far in the wrong direction and seems in no mood to course correct.

There are at least four fundamental reforms that are needed for a turnaround. These include: addressing our burgeoning population; creating at least 25 administrative units, instead of continuing with the existing four huge and unmanageable provinces; putting an end to foreign loans; and placing every youngster from five to 16 years in a child-friendly school. Not undertaking these reforms is akin to opting for a miserable, chaotic, poverty-stricken, and insecure future.

It is best to follow Mark Twain's advice and begin by 'eating the frog' and upgrading our most critical, most uncomfortable, and the least talked-about issue to the top of our 'things to do' list. Here are some harsh statistics that describe our population: 40 per cent of the people live on or below the poverty line, and face a further decline in per capita income and an increase in the poverty rate. Over 26m of our children do not attend schools, while those who do are unable to read or understand a simple text even by the age of 10.

Over 3m children are involved in labour, 1.2m beg on the streets, 12m are malnourished, and 17,554 more arrive every day — including during holidays and weekends. (This calls for building 87 new schools every single day.) While the average global Total Fertility Rate has dropped to 2.2 and all 35 countries classified as developed economies have brought their TFR to well below 2.0, Pakistan remains mindlessly stuck at 3.6.

To expect any government in Pakistan to undertake a population planning programme on its own is a statistical improbability. The only option is for concerned citizens to initiate a dialogue and an advocacy movement to push the rulers for urgent and specific population control reforms. Begin by modifying the National Finance Commission Award, which currently incentivises provinces to boost their population in order to receive a bigger share of the 82pc fund allocated on the basis of population. This counterproductive incentive could be offset by retaining, say, 50pc of funds for the size of the population and 32pc for a reduction in the TFR achieved by each province.

The contraceptive prevalence rate in Pakistan is 34pc, while it is 67pc in India, 63pc in Bangladesh, and 77pc in Iran. There is a huge unmet need, and an estimated 17pc additional couples would want to use contraceptives if they were easily and inexpensively available. Pakistan should eliminate the 17pc 'luxury goods' tax imposed on imported contraceptives, and simultaneously encourage their local production and availability at subsidised rates — especially in urban slums and rural areas. The excellent Lady Health Workers programme ought to be revitalised and expanded with better training and wages. The government could encourage and ensure that every Basic Health Unit and private clinic across Pakistan also provides family planning information, counselling and services.

Family planning cannot be divorced from the social, cultural and economic conditions of our society. The poor wish to get their daughters married as soon as possible and to have sons as old-age insurance. A wise government could financially motivate the people by creating incentives for a) families that comply with the condition that girls must be at least 18 years before they get married (a law still to be enacted by three provinces); b) girls completing 10 years of education; c) couples who space their children and limit their offspring to two. The state could help reduce poverty by ensuring a minimum legal wage for all workers — currently, only 40pc of workers receive a minimum wage — and oldage pension EOBI — currently provided only to 10pc of workers.

> The state must prioritise its population problem.

Initiating an open discourse, effective use of media, premarital counselling and well-designed incentive programmes, as well as promoting girls' education, expanding family planning services and seeking support from religious scholars, intellectuals and healthcare professionals are some of the lessons we ought to have learnt by now. However, none of this shall happen unless citizens speak up and the state shifts its focus and resources from raising parliamentarians' salary and purchasing cars for bureaucrats to the grave issue of a galloping population within its boundaries. ■

The writer is an industrial engineer and a volunteer social activist.
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FROM THE PAST PAGES OF DAWN

1975 | Fifty years ago

Threat to peace

PEKING: China today [March 3] condemned the incorporation of occupied Kashmir into India and said it posed a threat to peace in the region. A commentary in the official People's Daily said: "Chinese people resolutely support the Kashmir people in their just struggle for the right to self-determination." By incorporating occupied Kashmir into the Indian Federation, the newspaper said, India had not only "violated the United Nations resolutions (calling for a referendum to decide its status) and trampled underfoot the right of the Kashmir people to self-determination, but has harmed peace and tranquility in South Asia". "The Kashmir people will never cease their struggle to realise self-determination," the newspaper concluded. — News agencies

[Meanwhile, as reported by news agencies from New Delhi,] Indian Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi ... described the "agreement" between her Government and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on Kashmir as a "great essay in harmony" and hoped that Pakistan would realise that it could not "exploit the people of the northern state or continue to mislead world opinion". ... Pakistan, Mrs Gandhi said, was not happy because the accord had "strengthened India".

1950 | Seventy-five years ago

Envoy denies talks

CAIRO: Bahaa el-Dine Tokan Bey, Jordan's Minister in Cairo, denied today [March 2] the news about peace treaty negotiations between "Israel" and Transjordan. The Minister, however, said there was a move to make amendments in the Rhodes Armistice Agreement signed in April last year. If the two countries agreed on a certain amendment, it would be added to the original Armistice Agreement, he said.

Meanwhile it was reported from Tel Aviv today the "Israeli" Cabinet approved last night "settlement" terms between "Israel" and Jordan and preparations were being made for signing the terms of this settlement. — *Dawn* Cairo correspondent

[Separately, *Dawn*'s Cairo correspondent reports] the Palestine Arab Government has sent to the Arab League Secretariat a strongly worded protest against not inviting it to the League Council meetings, saying no Arab country has the right to represent Arab Palestine when all Arab Governments have recognised the Palestine Arab Government. The Arab League meeting is expected to discuss economic agreements among the Arab States, to be followed by complete economic unification.

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.

Focus on traditional medicines is vital

THE regulation of homoeopathy and tibb in Pakistan has for long remained a neglected domain in the country. This is unlike China where a separate category of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) exists across which regular and extensive research is conducted by even mainstream physicians and scientists. This body of research is carried by reputed global journals, which in itself is an undeniable acknowledgement of its authenticity.

However, in Pakistan, the same happens to be totally different despite the existence of the National Council for Homoeopathy (NCH) and the National Council for Tibb (NCT). Indeed, these bodies that are responsible for governing education and professional practice in their respective fields, function independently, but face serious challenges that hinder their effectiveness.

Given that their regulatory framework is based on the Unani, Ayurvedic and Homoeopathic Practitioners Act of 1965, it is hardly surprising because the framework has become seriously outdated and is unable to address contemporary challenges.

At present, the two councils collectively comprise 43 members, and they operate out of separate secretariats. Despite having well over six decades of formal recognition, the councils have not been able to improve educational and professional competency standards in the fields which remain below par.

Moreover, the councils' core responsibilities — education regulation, practitioner registration, and maintaining standards — have not undergone the desired improvements. As a result, these traditional systems of medicine continue to be viewed as peripheral to the mainstream healthcare sector.

Recognising the urgency of reforms, a high-powered government committee has proposed merging the NCH and NCT into a single entity; the National Council for Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Systems of Medicine.

As such, the proposal aims at streamlining governance, enhancing regulatory effectiveness, and introducing globally recognised standards. It is understood that the draft legislation for this new body is currently being considered. If enacted, it will bring multiple benefits.

There will be a reduction in council membership from 43 to 11, ensuring efficiency and faster decision-making. There will be uniform regulation for all traditional, complementary and alternative medicine (TCAM) systems, even incorporating disciplines from TCM.

We will have standardised education and professional development programmes aligned with international norms, besides a structured oversight mechanism to ensure stringent ethical compliance and research-based practice.

Consequently, there will be improved job security and career progression pathways for the young practitioners.

Moreover, the proposed council will have a balanced composition, including provincial representation, qualified practitioners, and oversight from the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

It is also anticipated that the restructuring will introduce mandatory continuous professional development (CPD) training, formal training for dispensers and assistants, and a robust quality assurance framework.

Pakistan can modernise and integrate traditional medicine within a cohesive regulatory structure to enhance public health facilities, elevate professional standards, and position the country as a regional leader in TCAM practices.

Rabi Baz
Hyderabad

Exercise in futility?

THE Sindh government recently launched an initiative to provide free breakfast to children in primary schools. The programme, funded by international organisations, aims at addressing two major issues simultaneously: malnutrition and low enrolment.

The project's estimated cost is Rs50-70 per child per day, and its initial phase will cover three cities: Karachi, Hyderabad and Khairpur. The programme is envisioned as a three-year effort to improve attendance at schools by attracting out-of-school children. While the initiative represents a significant policy shift, it does raise critical some questions about feasibility, transparency and effectiveness regarding the implementation of the programme.

Historically, similar programmes in Pakistan have failed to deliver the desired outcomes owing to corruption, logistical issues, and lack of oversight. There are more critical issues that deserve attention.

Sindh has more than 30,000 schools without basic facilities, and over 6,000 schools remain closed due to structural damage or teacher shortages. However, the government continues to rely on short-term solutions instead of addressing the systemic issues.

The success of the latest government initiative depends on several factors, including accessibility in remote areas. Many villages in Sindh are inaccessible due to poor infrastructure, making timely delivery of meals a daunting task.

Moreover, ensuring the quality and safety of food in such conditions requires stringent standards and regular inspections. The government must allocate additional resources to address these logistical hurdles to ensure that the programme benefits the most vulnerable children.

While the initiative is a welcome step, it must be part of a broader, more sustainable strategy to address the education crisis. Besides, transparency, community involvement, and logistical efficiency are critical to its success.

Ali Gul Laghari
Johi

Illegal migrants

ACCORDING to a recent report, 28,000 Pakistanis applied for protection across the European Union (EU) between October 2023 and October 2024. Italy was the main receiving country for asylum applications by Pakistanis, followed at a distance by France, Greece and Germany.

People leave their country due to a variety of reasons, including political instability, an ineffective judicial system, high population growth, serious economic disruption and the constant threat of terrorism.

The challenges being faced by the people on a daily basis owing to lack of economic opportunities compel them to put their lives at risk and take the perilous route to Europe.

It is only unfortunate that these illegal migrants are not welcomed in European countries or elsewhere. They have become a headache for them, posing an economic and political threat.

The lack of accountability and poor implementation of laws in the country facilitate human trafficking. Recently, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested some human traffickers from different parts of Punjab, but the illegal practice has continued unabated.

It is high time for the government to take strict action to curb the growing human trafficking issue, and adopt effective policies in this regard. Improved economy will definitely help big time.

Sameer Usmani
Karachi

Resilient Karachi

ON a recent visit to Karachi, I had quite a few memorable moments. Notwithstanding, the city's colossal challenges, ignorance and disinformation have also conspired to tarnish the city's reputation. As I observed, people in Karachi go through the challenges of daily life while scoring small victories against overwhelming odds.

The spirit and resilience of Karachi were on display during my interaction with an auto rickshaw driver based in Malir. He usually starts his day at 6am with a modest breakfast.

When he leaves his home in the morning, his children are still asleep.

By the time he returns past midnight, the children are, again, asleep. Yet, he and his family go through life with a smile. He spends his 18-hour work day dodging not just potholes on city roads, but also snatchers and muggers.

At a biryani outlet, I met an attendant who hailed from Mirpurkhas. After a 12-hour shift every day, he takes a long bus ride to the one-room rental he shares with his family, and which is usually dark on arrival due to loadshedding. However, the hope in his eyes was still comforting.

On the other end of the spectrum, I had a chance to interact with some major non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating in the critical domains of health and education. They are doing great work despite the odds.

Karachi's complications often bring it into disrepute. But the never-say-die spirit is amazing. A visit to the city's railway station is enough to realise the massive number of people arriving in the city every day, seeking economic and social justice. Like the millions before them, they continue to become part of a city that contributes to the national kitty like no other Pakistani city hopes, or even plans, to do. This is a vital characteristic.

M. Majid Ali
New Jersey, USA

▶ **REACTIVE APPROACH:** It has become an unfortunate routine to read in newspapers about road accidents involving dumpers and motorcycles. Why are we reactive instead of being proactive? Issues related to drivers' licences, driving skills, road permits and fitness of vehicles should be monitored by the relevant authorities on a regular basis. On their part, motorcyclists ride carelessly and violate traffic rules. Many of them do not even have a licence. The authorities need to nab the culprits to improve compliance.
Akbar B. Yasir
Karachi

▶ **BULEDA SCHOOL:** The government school in Buleda, Balochistan, lies in a deplorable state, with crumbling walls, windows and roof. Also, there is a critical shortage of qualified teachers. The school needs clean drinking water, electricity supply and washrooms to function smoothly. None of them is there. The government should improve the school infrastructure and increase the number of qualified teachers.
Jhanu Lal
Buleda

▶ **BARRIER TO DEVELOPMENT:** One of the major barriers to national development is that our politicians and stakeholders focus on developing their own conglomerates, ventures and projects instead of strengthening the public sector, private industries and communities. As a result, the public sector remains underdeveloped, and industrial growth fails to benefit the masses. This has led to disparity in wealth distribution as well.
Dr Hasan Ali Mughal
Rawalpindi

▶ **BANKING FACILITY:** The absence of an automated teller machine (ATM) in Madkhay area of Awaran district is a cause of growing nuisance for the local people who have to travel as far away as Khuzdar just to withdraw cash. The long journey is not only time-consuming, but also costly. Installing an ATM in Madkhay would help the people and save their precious time. The government should not overlook the issue any further.
Shahpar
Turbat

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: dawnreadersadvocate@gmail.com

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Treasury MPAs resent 'curbs' on meetings with Imran

Call for assembly session outside Adiala Jail

By Umer Farooq

PESHAWAR: Treasury members in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly on Monday resented "restrictions" on meetings with incarcerated PTI leader Imran Khan despite court orders and called for a sitting of the house outside Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail where the former prime minister has been detained.

During an assembly session herewith Deputy Speaker Suriya Bibi in the chair, the lawmakers said that sitting should continue until party leadership, personal physician and wife Bushra Bibi were allowed to see Imran in jail.

Higher education minister Mooma Khan Afridi complained that the former prime minister was denied meetings despite the court's orders.

He said the PTI approached all available forums for relief, but to no avail.

"Imran Khan is the hope for this country. How long will this injustice towards him continue? I demand a provincial assembly session outside Adiala Jail until his free trial is held and the PTI leadership and personal physician are allowed to meet with him," he said.

PTI MPA Shahzullah Jan said that the political leadership decided the country's policies and criticised the establishment for saying that anybody, who had issue with the policy, should leave the country.

He insisted that the Adiala Prison's administration didn't follow the jail manual.

"We know who is doing all this. The jail manual is being violated on the orders of a colonel," he alleged.

The lawmaker said during detention, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and PPP leader Asif Ali Zardari used to meet 100 people at a time.

He said that after Mr Imran became the prime minister, the country would have an independent foreign policy and the military would be asked to protect borders only.

Mr Jan said the PTI leadership as well as the KP Assembly should be taken on board before the launch of any military operation in the province.

He flayed "stolen public mandate, imprisonment of political leaders, and imposition of undeclared martial law" in the country.

Earlier, opposition members questioned transparency in the distribution of financial assistance to deserving people during the last Ramazan.

Adnan Khan of the JUI-F said the provincial government had decided to task political representatives to distribute the Ramazan Package cash handouts to people and even Rs1 billion was given away to 100,000 people, but no one engaged him for it in Barang though he was an elected member from the district. He requested the chair to refer the matter to the relevant house committee for discussion and recommendations.

PPP member Ahmad Karim Kundi said if such matters were not referred to the house's committees, the National Accountability Bureau and anti-corruption establishment would investigate it.

Arbab Usman of the ANP said he put the same question to the government five months ago but got no response.

"I asked several persons in my area but they didn't receive the financial assistance," he said, calling for a "performance audit."

JUI-F lawmaker Riaz Shaheen said according to the department's reply to the question, 2,000 people received the financial assistance in Kurram tribal district, but he wondered when Zakat committees hadn't been formed, who distributed the financial assistance.

He said that he had submitted a list of deserving people from the area who had never received cash handouts.

Law minister Aftab Alam Afridi said almost 40 per cent of the names of the deserving people were dropped from the financial assistance list as they didn't fulfil the criteria prescribed for the Benazir Income Support Programme and Ehsas Programme. He said that more names were added. The minister asked the chair for a vote as the treasury didn't favour the referring of the question to the relevant house committee.

Housing minister Dr Amjad said the financial assistance was provided through BISP, so the government had no role in the matter. He opposed the referring of the question to the house committee.

JUI-F member Rehana Ismail said the upcoming Ramazan Package would also face the same issues.

She said the cash handout's distribution should be done in a transparent manner.

Treasury member Abdul Salam Afridi said the government had reserved a 10 per cent job quota for employees of the Civil Secretariat and Provincial Management Services, while employees of other departments were ignored and no quota was reserved for them.

He said the KP Public Service Commission advertised posts.

"One advertisement mentioned 55 seats for the entire province but another advertisement had 35 posts but only the Civil Secretariat's employees were entitled to apply for them. The second advertisement should be withheld and the matter should be sent to the house's committee for consideration," he said.

The law minister said that the issue could be discussed and the rules revisited. The chair later referred the matter to the assembly's committee through voting.

The house also passed a resolution, moved by MPA Obaidur Rehman, for electric supply to the Dir district.

The resolution read that the Koto hydropower project in Dir district, which was inaugurated in 2015 and completed in 2019, produced 41 megawatts, with Nepra receiving one unit for Rs8.24 and earning Rs1.7 billion.

The resolution said that electricity should be provided to Dir district at the rate of Rs8.24 per unit and supply the rest to the national grid otherwise the Nepra rate should be enhanced from Rs8.24 to Rs30 per unit and the district's income should be enhanced from 10 per cent to 20 per cent.

The assembly also passed the KP Control of Narcotics Substances Amendment Bill, 2025, which was tabled by excise and taxation minister Shaheen Rehman.

The chair later put off the sitting until 2pm on April 7.

Parachinar sit-in against road closures continues

By Our Correspondent

KURRAM: Residents protested the prolonged closure of roads in the district headquarters Parachinar here on Sunday for the second consecutive day.

They complained that the blockade of roads to and from Kurram for the last five months had left a population of over 0.5 million without access to essential food items and medical care.

The protesters, who staged a sit-in outside the Parachinar Press Club, stayed put despite fasting amid chilly weather. They included people of all ages, including elderly.

Elders Malik Zarta, Mosarat Bangash and others said that closure of roads for the last five months has deprived not only the city of Parachinar but also over a hundred adjoining villages of food and medical services, causing severe hardships for over 0.5 million residents of Upper and Lower Kurram.

They said the sit-in would continue until the roads are opened.

Shoulders regretted the closure of roads in Ramazan and said the blockade of rations to residents was particularly distressing, as it had forced them to break their fast with plain water.

They demanded that the roads be opened and protected immediately.

In Lower Kurram, too, residents held a protest sit-in, demanding relief for victims of the recent Bagan attack and action against culprits.

The district administration said that efforts were being made to open the roads in the relief of the people, ensuring delivery of food items and other essential goods.

President of the Kurram District Bar Association Amir Abbas said in a statement that peaceful protest was people's right, so police shouldn't stop residents from exercising that right.

THE BANK OF PUNJAB

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5	LEA-16-4980	Suzuki Cultus	2016
6	LEA-16-4982	Suzuki Cultus	2016
7	LEA-16-4983	Suzuki Cultus	2016
8	LEA-16-4985	Suzuki Cultus	2016
9	LEA-16-4986	Suzuki Cultus	2016
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EFU GENERAL INSURANCE LTD

NOTICE OF MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 92nd Annual General Meeting of the Shareholders of EFU General Insurance Limited will be held at **ISE Auditorium, ISE Towers, 55-B, Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, Islamabad** on **Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 11:30 a.m.** and through electronic means to transact the following businesses:

A. ORDINARY BUSINESSES

1. receive, consider and approve the Audited Financial Statements (Consolidated and Unconsolidated) for the year ended December 31, 2024 together with the Chairman's review, Directors' and Auditors' reports thereon.
2. consider and if thought fit to approve the payment of Final Dividend at the rate of 55 % i.e. Rs. 5.50 per share as recommended by the Board of Directors and also approve Interim Cash Dividends of 45% i.e. Rs. 4.50 per share already paid to the Shareholders for the year ended December 31, 2024.
3. appoint Auditors of the Company for a term ending at the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting and fix their remuneration. The Board of Directors recommends the appointment of KPMG Taseer Hadi & Co., Chartered Accountants as Auditors of the Company for the year 2025.

By Order of the Board
Amin Punjani
Company Secretary

Karachi:
February 26, 2025

NOTES:

1. PARTICIPATION IN AGM THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEANS

In light of the clarification issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan vide Circular No.4 of 2021 for ensuring the participation of members in general meeting through electronic means as a regular feature, the Company has also provided the facility for attending the meeting via a video-link to its shareholders. The members are encouraged to participate in the meeting online by following the below guidelines.

The shareholders who intend to attend and participate in the Annual General Meeting through video-link are requested to please provide the below information to the Company Secretary at e-mail address: **amin.punjani@efuinsurance.com**, at least 24 hours before the time of AGM i.e. latest by 11:30 a.m. on Monday, March 24, 2025.

Folio/CDC Account No.	Name	CNIC No.	Cell No.	Email Address

Upon receipt of the above information from shareholders, the Company will send login details to their email address, which will enable them to join the said AGM through video conference on Tuesday, March 25, 2025 at 11:30 am.

2. A member entitled to attend and vote at the General Meeting is entitled to appoint another member as a proxy to attend and vote in respect of him. Form of proxy must be deposited at the Company's Registered Office not later than 48 hours before the time appointed for the meeting.
3. Guidelines for attending the meeting and appointing proxy by the CDC Account Holders are being sent to all the members.
4. The Share Transfer Books of the Company will be closed from March 19, 2025 to March 25, 2025 (both days inclusive). Transfers received in order by the Company's Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400 by the close of business on March 18, 2025 will be considered in time to attend and vote at the meeting and for the entitlement of Dividend.
5. Members are requested to notify/submit the following, in case of book-entry securities in CDC to respective CDC participants and in case of physical shares, to the Company's Share Registrar, if not earlier provided / notified:
   a. Change in their addresses;
   b. Valid and legible photocopies of Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) for individuals and National Tax Number (NTN) both for individual and corporate entities.

6. ELECTRONIC DIVIDEND MANDATE

Under Section 242 of the Companies Act, 2017 it is mandatory for all listed Companies to pay cash dividend to their shareholders only through electronic mode directly into the bank account designated by the entitled shareholders.

In order to receive dividends directly into their bank account, shareholders are requested (if not already provided) to fill in Bank Mandate Form for Electronic Credit of Cash Dividend available in the Annual Report and also on the Company's website and send it duly signed along with a copy of CNIC to the Share Registrar of the Company, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400 in case of physical shares.

In case shares are held in CDC, the electronic dividend mandate form must be directly submitted to shareholder's brokers / participant / CDC account services as the case may be.

In case of non-receipt of information, the Company will be constrained to withhold payment of dividends to shareholders.

7. SUBMISSION OF VALID CNIC / SNIC (MANDATORY)

As per SECP directives, the dividend warrants of the shareholders whose valid CNICs, are not available with the Share Registrar could be withheld. All shareholders having physical shareholding are, therefore, advised to submit a photocopy of their valid CNICs immediately, if already not provided, to the Company's Share Registrar at the following address, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400 without any further delay.

8. ZAKAT DECLARATION (CZ-50)

Zakat will be deducted from the dividends at source under the Zakat and Usher Laws and will be deposited within the prescribed period with the relevant authority. In case you want to claim exemption, please submit your Zakat declarations under Zakat and Usher Ordinance, 1980 and Rule 4 of Zakat (Deduction & Refund) Rules, 1981 CZ-50 Form with the Company's Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400 or in case of book-entry securities in CDC to respective CDC participants. The shareholders while sending the Zakat Declarations must quote the company name and their respective CDS A/c No. or Folio No.

9. DEDUCTION OF WITHHOLDING TAX ON THE AMOUNT OF DIVIDEND

Pursuant to SECP directives vide Circular No.19/2014 dated October 24, 2014, SECP has directed all companies to inform shareholders about changes made in Section 150 of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001. We hereby advise shareholders as under:

i. The Government of Pakistan through the Finance Act, 2019 has made certain amendments in Section 150 of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001 whereby different rates are prescribed for the deduction of withholding tax on the amount of dividend paid by the companies. These tax rates are as under:
   a. for filers of income tax returns: 15 %
   b. for non-filers of income tax returns: 30 %

   To enable the Company to make tax deduction on the amount of cash dividend @ 15% instead of 30%, all the shareholders whose names are not entered into the Active Taxpayers List (ATL) provided on the website of FBR, despite the fact that they are filers, are advised to make sure that their names are enlisted into ATL before the date for payment of the cash dividend otherwise tax on their cash dividend will be deducted @ 30% instead of @15 %.

ii. In the case of shares registered in the name of two or more shareholders, each joint-holder is to be treated individually as either a filer or non-filer and tax be deducted by the Company based on shareholding of each joint-holder as may be notified to the Company in writing. The joint-holders are, therefore, requested to submit their shareholdings otherwise each joint-holder shall be presumed to have an equal number of shares.

iii. For any query/information, the investors may contact the Company and/or the Share Registrar at the following phone numbers and email address. The contact number of Company Secretary is (021) 32313471-90 (Ext: 9444) and email: **amin.punjani@efuinsurance.com** and the contact numbers of Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited is 0800-23275 & email: **info@cdcsrsl.com**.

iv. The corporate shareholders having CDC accounts are required to have their National Tax Number (NTN) updated with their respective participants, whereas corporate physical shareholders should send a copy of their NTN certificate to the Company or its Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited. The shareholders while sending NTN or NTN certificates, as the case may be, must quote company name and their respective folio numbers.

10. CONSENT FOR VIDEO CONFERENCING FACILITY

Pursuant to the provision of the Companies Act, 2017 the members can also avail the video conferencing facility. In this regard, please fill in the following and submit it at registered address of the Company at least 10 days before the holding of the annual general meeting. If the Company receives consent from members holding an aggregate 10 % or more shareholding residing at the geographical location to participate in the meeting, the Company will arrange a video conference facility in the city subject to the availability of such facility in that city.

I / We, _____ of _____, being a member of EFU General Insurance Limited holder of _____ ordinary share(s) as per registered folio / CDC No. _____ hereby opt for a Video Conferencing Facility.

11. UNCLAIMED DIVIDEND

As per the provision of Section 244 of the Companies Act, 2017, any shares issued or dividend declared by the Company that have remained unclaimed/unpaid for a period of three years from the date on which it was due and payable are required to be deposited with the Commission for the credit of Federal Government after issuance of notices to the shareholders to file their claim. The details of the shares issued and dividends declared by the Company which have remained due for more than three years were sent to shareholders, uploaded on the Company website and a Final notice was issued in the newspaper. In case, no claim is lodged with the Company in the given time, the Company will deposit the unclaimed/unpaid amount and shares with the Federal Government pursuant to the provision of Section 244(2) of the Companies Act, 2017.

12. TRANSMISSION OF THE ANNUAL AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS THROUGH QR-ENABLED CODE AND EMAIL

The Annual Report, including the Financial Statements of the Company, can be viewed using the following QR-enabled code. The same will be shared via email in case an email address is provided by the members. A printed copy of the above referred Annual Report can be provided to members upon request.

13. AVAILABILITY OF AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT ON THE COMPANY'S WEBSITE

The Annual Report including audited financial statement of the Company for the year ended December 31, 2024 has been made available on the Company's website **www.efuinsurance.com** which can be viewed using the following link: **https://efuinsurance.com/conventional/financials/financial-reports.php**

14. REGISTRATION DETAILS OF PHYSICAL SHAREHOLDERS

As per Section 119 of the Companies Act, 2017 and Regulation 19 of the Companies (General Provisions and Forms) Regulations, 2018, all physical shareholders are advised to provide their mandatory information such as CNIC number, address, email address, contact mobile/telephone number, International Bank Account Number (IBAN), etc. to our Share Registrar at their below address immediately to avoid any non-compliance of law or any inconvenience in future.

CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block-B, S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400. Tel. Toll Free: 0800-23275, Email: **info@cdcsrsl.com**, website: **www.cdcsrsl.com**

15. DEPOSIT OF PHYSICAL SHARES INTO CDC ACCOUNTS

As per Section 72 of the Companies Act, 2017 all existing companies are required to convert their physical shares into book-entry form within a period not exceeding four years from the date of commencement of the Companies Act, 2017.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan through its Circular No.CSD/ED-Misc./2016-639-640 dated March 26, 2021, has advised the listed companies to pursue their such members who still hold shares in physical form, to convert their shares into book entry form.

We hereby request all members who are holding shares in physical form to convert their shares into book-entry form at the earliest. They are also suggested to contact the Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited or any member stockbroker of the Pakistan Stock Exchange to open an account in the Central Depository System and to facilitate conversion of physical shares into book-entry form. Members are informed that holding shares in book-entry form has several benefits including but not limited to secure and convenient custody of shares, conveniently tradeable and transferable, no risk of loss, damage or theft, no stamp duty on transfer of shares in book-entry form and hassle-free credit of bonus or right shares.

We once again strongly advise shareholders of the Company, in their best interest, to convert their physical shares into book-entry form at the earliest.

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IPPs can opt for audit or arbitration, lenders told

Minister says govt to rationalise solar net metering, offer cheaper power to select consumers

By Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday assured major international lenders, including the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and Asian Development Bank, that independent power producers (IPPs) unwilling to renegotiate contracts could opt for either a forensic audit or international arbitration, following recent protests over 'forced contract revisions'.

Power Minister Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari also informed the lenders during a meeting that the government would soon "rationalise" solar net metering while also offering cheaper electricity to select consumers for incremental consumption at 'marginal cost' to boost faltering demand.

A couple of weeks ago, a group of international lenders, excluding the IMF, sent a joint letter to the government expressing concern over what they described as non-consultative revisions to IPP contracts, in which they had invested billions of dollars. They warned that such actions could negatively impact the investment climate at a time when Pakistan is seeking further investment in the power sector's transmission network and privatisation programme.

The Power Division arranged a special meeting with the lenders and financiers of IPPs which was also attended by IMF resident representative Malyie Bosici. Mr Leghari told the power sector international development partners that negotiations with the IPPs were free, fair and transparent, with the option to walk away or seek arbitration and a forensic audit, an official statement said.

The lenders' delegation, led by World Bank's Country Director Najy Benhassine, included representatives from the IMF, ADB, International Finance Corporation, German bank KFW and its embassy, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, United Nations Development Programme and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

The minister briefed the delegation on the government's reforms aimed at improving efficiency and discipline in the power sector, with a focus on making electricity prices more competitive and affordable for all consumers, particularly the industry.

Explaining the importance of efforts to rationalise power tariff for the national economy, Mr Leghari assured the participants that negotiations with the IPPs are being held as per the terms of their agreements.

Last week, the government claimed to have secured about Rs1.521 trillion in future payment savings through negotiations with 27 IPPs, while another unwilling producer would undergo a forensic audit. These savings included Rs431 billion from terminating contracts with five IPPs, Rs258bn from revising tariff contracts with eight bagasse-based IPPs, and Rs922bn from tariff revisions with 14 thermal IPPs.

Mr Leghari said the government was actively engaging its development partners through an inclusive approach in policy formulation and execution. He emphasised that maintaining transparency had allowed the government to reduce approximately 3,000MW from the Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP) out of a total committed 17,000MW, resulting in significant cost savings on expensive power generation.

Mr Leghari also informed the participants about key power sector reforms, including the transition from 'Take or Pay' to 'Take and Pay' contracts, the elimination of furnace oil-based plants, and the conversion of imported coal to local coal. He said an extensive study of power generation revealed that Pakistan had not previously followed a least-cost policy. Moving forward, he emphasised, least-cost generation would be the guiding principle.

About circular debt, the minister informed the delegation that the government aimed to eliminate it within the next five to eight years. He said that eliminating electricity duties and rationalising subsidies were key reform measures to control rising electricity tariffs. "Rationalisation of net metering is also on the cards which is adding Rs150bn burden on the rest of the consumers."

The minister emphasised the urgent need for long-term packages to support long-term planning and induce incremental demand through marginal pricing, as surplus power remained unused, adding to capacity charges. He also updated the participants on the wholesale electricity market, stating that the government had decided not to purchase any additional power in the future.

He also apprised the delegation of the privatisation of power distribution companies, efforts to improve Discos' board governance, and reforms at the Power Planning and Management Company. They were also briefed on measures to remove transmission constraints through the construction of new lines, reactive power compensation devices, battery storage systems, etc.

Plunging lint output to hit textile industry

- Surging reliance on duty-free imports to cost $5bn
- Steps needed to revive growers interest in cotton crop

By Amjad Mahmood

LAHORE: Pakistan's cotton industry is facing an alarming crisis as national production plunges to the second-lowest level in the country's history, falling nearly 50 per cent short of the official target and 34pc below last year's output, reveals the Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PSGA) final report for the crop season 2024-25 released on Monday.

Interestingly, despite this sharp production decline, approximately 365,000 bales of unsold cotton are stockpiled in ginning factories, sparking fears of an unprecedented reduction in cotton cultivation for the upcoming season.

For the first time, Sindh has surpassed Punjab in cotton production, a development attributed to record sugarcane cultivation in Punjab replacing cotton, combined with unfavourable weather conditions. According to PCGA figures, total cotton production stood at just 5.525 million bales. Punjab produced 2.738m bales and Sindh 2.807m bales—both showing a sharp decline from last year.

Purchasing activity in the domestic market has also plummeted as textile mills have acquired only 5.1m bales this year, compared to 7.9m bales in the previous season. Exporters bought just 47,000 bales, a dramatic fall from 293,000 bales last year. Only 2,075 bales have been exported—a stark indicator of the sector's collapse.

Cotton Ginners Forum Chairman Ihsan ul Haq warns that Punjab has seen 15 to 52pc reduction in white lint production in its cotton belt, while Sindh has suffered production losses ranging from 36 to 70pc. Shockingly, four districts in Punjab recorded zero cotton output this season.

Unless immediate corrective measures are taken, he cautions that next season's cotton harvest may drop even further, forcing Pakistan's increased reliance on expensive imports.

Pakistan Cotton Brokers Association Secretary Sardar Ayub points out that early sowing for the 2025-26 season has commenced. Still, growers don't seem enthusiastic due to the government's cold shoulder and weak market situation owing to low demand, as last year's stock is already waiting for buyers.

One of the major factors crippling the domestic cotton market is the government's Export Finance Scheme (EFS), which grants tax exemptions on imported cotton and yarn while imposing an 18pc sales tax on locally produced goods. This policy has encouraged cheaper imports, undermining local ginners and farmers.

Pakistan imported 2m bales of cotton and around 1.25m bales of yarn in 7MFY25. Additionally, reports confirm that another 600,000 to 700,000 bales have entered the country from Afghanistan, further saturating the market with tax-free cotton.

Cane caused devastation

The unchecked expansion of sugarcane cultivation, driven by government-backed incentives, has further worsened the situation. Despite a 15 to 20pc drop in per acre yield due to adverse weather, millers exported a record 758,000 tonnes of sugar from July to January 2024-25. This boosted sugar prices from Rs12,200 to Rs15,500 per 100 kg bag in the local market and pushed cane purchase prices from Rs400 to Rs525 per 40 kg, making it more profitable than cotton. As a result, farmers have abandoned cotton fields for sugarcane sowing, deepening the crisis.

Mr Haq warns that a powerful lobby appears to be actively promoting sugarcane cultivation at the expense of cotton, endangering Pakistan's textile backbone and risking billions of dollars in future imports of cotton and edible oil.

Amid this crisis, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has formed a 12-member committee led by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal to review possible reforms to the EFS and present recommendations within two weeks as industry experts are urging policymakers to implement immediate, cotton-friendly strategies to boost domestic consumption and reduce the country's growing reliance on costly imports of cotton and edible oils, which is likely to drain $5 billion from the national economy this year to meet the domestic crop shortfall.

Industry leaders hope that abolishing tax exemptions on imports will revive domestic cotton farming and reduce the ballooning import bill.

Sajid Mahmood, Head of the Technology Transfer Department at the Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI), Multan, says that a major reason for the decline in cotton production is the lack of investment in cotton research and development.

"Over the past several years, there has been no significant investment in cotton research and seed improvement, depriving farmers of modern technology and high-yielding varieties. Lack of support price has shifted the farmers towards other crops, leading to a cut in cotton acreage."

TOTAL cotton production stood at just 5.52 million bales, with 2.72m and 2.81m bales produced by Punjab and Sindh, respectively, PCGA data shows.—APP/file

Exports shrink 5.5pc in February

Trade deficit widened by 33.43pc to $2.29bn

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: The exports of merchandise contracted 5.57 per cent in February, marking the first negative trend in the current fiscal year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics said on Monday.

Growth in export proceeds fell to a single digit in October 2024 and the pace progressively slowed in the following months, eventually leading to a negative trend in February. The slowdown in export proceeds may worry economic policymakers.

Analysts believe that exports often fall from November to January owing to seasonal changes.

The growth momentum in exports from Pakistan picked pace in July 2024 owing to improved orders and stability in the exchange rate. Demand from North America and European countries was anticipated to pick up pace from January onwards.

The exports grew 11.81pc in July, followed by 16pc in August, 13.52pc in September, 10.64pc in October, 8.98pc in November, 0.62pc in December and 4.59pc in January.

Textile exporters are optimistic US retailers and buyers are visiting Pakistan to place orders, with many orders already in the pipeline. A similar trend was observed from buyers in the European market.

The exports reached $2.44bn in February against $2.58bn in the corresponding month last year. On a month-on-month basis, exports drastically decreased by 17.35pc.

In the first eight months of FY25, export proceeds stood at $22.02bn against $20.36bn over the corresponding months of last year, an increase of 8.12pc.

Global buyers have redirected clothing sourcing from Bangladesh and China and placed orders with Pakistan in the past few months. It allows exporters to capitalise on the opportunity and capture the market.

The impact of the recent rise in gas tariffs for captive power plants (CPPs) along with a phase-wise 20pc levy on supply of natural gas/RLNG to the textile industry CPPs will be visible in the following months. In FY24, Pakistan's merchandise exports rose 10.54pc to $30.64bn from $27.72bn in the preceding year.

Trade deficit

According to the PBS data, imports grew 7.40pc to $35.81bn in July-February FY25 from $35.19bn over the last year. Imports surged to $4.74bn in February from $4.31bn last year, an increase of 10.03pc. Month-on-month, imports decreased 9.89pc.

The IMF revised its import forecast downward by $3.3bn from $60.9bn to $57.2bn for FY25, converging with the government's projection of $57.3bn. In FY24, imports fell 0.84pc to $54.73bn compared to $55.19bn in FY23.

The trade deficit in July-February FY25 increased by 6.31pc to $15.78bn from $14.84bn over the last year. In February, the deficit increased by 33.43pc to $2.29bn from $1.72bn last year. The trade gap contracted to $24.08bn in FY24 from $27.47bn in the preceding year.

Petroleum dealers call off strike

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: All Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (APPDA) on Monday put off a strike call after assurance extended by the Petroleum Division that their sale margins would not be adversely affected by the proposed pricing deregulation.

The association had announced a countrywide strike for March 4 over the government's planned oil price deregulation without consulting with the relevant stakeholders.

A large delegation of petroleum dealers from all four provinces and Azad Kashmir met Petroleum Minister Dr Musadik Malik and Secretary Mohi Aghha on Monday.

An APPDA leader Noman Butt announced after the meeting that talks with the government were successful, and there would be normal business on Tuesday (March 4) instead of a closure.

He said the minister had assured the dealers that their sale margins would remain unaffected even after deregulation to ensure quality products and better consumer service. The minister agreed that low margins could not guarantee better service and fuel quality.

Mr Butt said the minister also promised to coordinate with all relevant stakeholders to stop or at least smuggling of Iranian oil products, adversely affecting the Pakistani economy and legitimate petroleum businesses.

Earlier, the APPDA had alleged that the proposed deregulation was set to give into complete foreign control the country's oil market at the cost of Pakistan's energy security. It had claimed that Pakistan lacked the oil storage capacity required for the free market, and in the given conditions, such a decision, if taken, would be suicidal. Therefore, the government should re-examine the proposal's strategic ramifications and employment losses before making a final decision.

The APPDA believed that the 'unfortunate decision' of deregulation would disrupt the entire supply chain from top to bottom and eventually give a strong foreign player a monopoly on the Pakistani oil market.

The association had been advocating that Pakistani oil refineries would have no choice but to close since they lacked the financial capacity to compete with strong foreign players. This would lead to foreign exchange loss to the nation. The dealers also claim that the deregulation of lubricants and HOBC (High Octane Blending Component) has not benefited consumers in any way, but it has resulted in a cartelising oligopoly.

Digital literacy for youth

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Ltd (PPL) has launched a first-of-its-kind employment-based digital literacy programme to transform the lives of underprivileged youth by equipping them with cutting-edge digital skills and securing online jobs with international organisations.

According to a company press release, the 16-week programme trained 15 students from Sui, Dera Bugti, Mastuj, Kashmore, Kandhkot, Dadu in Full Stack Engineering and Data Sciences at the X Loop Training Centre in Karachi. The programme was conducted in collaboration with Dawood Global Foundation (DGF) and X Loop Digital.—Staff Reporter

Banks earn Rs153bn

KARACHI: Listed banks' profitability clocked in at Rs153 billion, down one per cent year-on-year and 2pc quarter-on-quarter in October-December 2024, according to a research report of Topline Securities.

"Our analysis we have taken all listed banks that have announced their financial results except for Bank of Khyber (BOK), Samba Bank (SBL), and Silk Bank, which have not yet announced their results," said the report.

Despite the decline in interest rates, the sector's net interest income clocked in at Rs523bn, up 5pc YoY and 4pc QoQ in 3Q2024, led by volumetric growth and favourable re-pricing impact. Interest income declined by 4pc YoY and 11pc QoQ to Rs1.6trillion, whereas interest expense declined by 8pc YoY and 20pc QoQ to Rs1.1tr.

On the other hand, non-interest expense rose by 30pc YoY and 42pc QoQ to Rs329bn in 4Q2024 due to NBP's one-time pension expense. In the full year 2024, NBP has booked total pension expense of Rs571m.

This takes the sector's cost-to-income ratio to 47pc in 4Q2024, compared to 40pc in 4Q2023 and 82pc in 3Q2024.—Staff Reporter

Stocks shed 1,265 points on IMF uncertainty

By Muhammad Kashif

KARACHI: Trading on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) remained bearish for the fourth straight session as uncertainty about the outcome of the first IMF review turned investors cautious amid low volumes. As a result, the benchmark KSE-100 index witnessed a steep fall on Monday.

Ali Najib, Head of Sales at Insight Securities, said the session started on a lackluster note, being Ramzan's first working day. Since the initial trading, investors opted to trim their positions, which forced the benchmark index to fall through two barriers — 113,000 and 112,000.

The KSE100 index called the day at 111,987 level, posting a loss of 1,265 points or 1.12 per cent day-on-day.

"The reasons behind this trend was market vibes regarding likely delay in IMF current review conclusion as revenue shortfall of Rs606 billion in 8MFY25 could likely become the hurdle to unleash $1.1bn tranche attached with this review on time," he remarked.

Ahsan Mehanti of Arif Habib Corporation said stocks fell sharply lower near the earnings season close on a weak economic outlook. He added that foreign outflows, weak rupee, lower global crude oil prices and uncertainty over the IMF review fuelled bearish sentiments.

Topline Securities Ltd said the lack of a positive trigger drove the negative sentiment, and Engro Holdings' earnings falling short of expectations wiped out 428 points. The shorter trading hours also put pressure on the market. Key stocks contributing to the downturn included Engro Holdings, United Bank, MCB Bank, Millat Tractors, and Pakistan Petroleum, which together accounted for a drop of 731 points in the index.

Conversely, Engro Fertilizer, Hub Power, Packages Ltd and Meezan Bank witnessed some value-hunting, adding 74 points to the index.

The market participation dropped significantly as the trading volume plunged by 55.5pc to 208.88 million shares while the traded value tumbled 54.7bpc to Rs11.808n day-on-day.

Stocks contributing significantly to the traded volume included National Bank (23.79m shares), WorldCall Telecom (17.59m shares), Pakistan International Bulk Terminal (11.71m shares), The Bank of Punjab (11.55m shares) and Citi Pharma (10.72m shares).

PAKISTAN STOCK EXCHANGE

THE TOP FIVERS

GAINERS		LOSERS		LEADERS*	
Hoechst Pakistan	174.39	Shifa International	29.08	National Bank	23.79
Packages Ltd	20.59	Bata Pakistan	27.62	WorldCall Telecom	17.59
Sitara Chemical	20.23	The Thal Industries	26.04	PIBT	11.71
Highnoon Lab	15.04	Unilever Foods	25.48	The Bank of Punjab	11.55
Nimir Industrial	13.38	Shield Corporation	20.47	Citi Pharma	10.72

INDICATORS

	Midday	Previous	Change
KSE 100-SHARE INDEX (Points)	111,986.89	113,251.67	▼ 1,264.78
KSE 30-SHARE INDEX (Points)	34,675.98	35,193.84	▼ 517.86
MARKET CAPITAL (Rs billion)	13,640.539	13,980.815	▼ 140.275
TRADING VALUE (Rs billion)	11.881	22.778	▼ 10.896

ACTIVITY

Total listed	532
Active	438
Gainers	86
Losers	287

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign	▼ $0.10m
Companies	▲ $0.99m
Banks	▲ $0.89m
Mutual Funds	▲ $0.17m
Individuals	▼ $0.11m

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Walesa blasts Trump over communist-style Zelensky grilling

WARSAW: Poland's freedom icon Lech Walesa and several other communist-era dissidents on Monday slammed Donald Trump over his clash with Volodymyr Zelensky, comparing the US president's actions to "communist courtrooms".

In their Oval Office meeting on Friday, Trump berated Zelensky, telling him to be more "thankful" for US support against the invading Russian army in the three-year war and that without US assistance, Ukraine would have been conquered by Moscow.

In a letter addressed to the US president, Walesa and around 40 other Polish former dissidents said they had watched Trump's conversation with Zelensky "with horror and disgust". "The atmosphere in the Oval Office during this conversation reminded us of the hearings by the Security Service and in the communist courtrooms," former Polish president Walesa and fellow dissidents said in the letter.

"We find your expectations of respect and gratitude for the material aid provided by the United States to Ukraine, which is fighting against Russia, offensive," they told Trump.

Walesa is feted as an icon of freedom as he led a 1980 shipyard workers' strike, forcing the then-authorities to recognise the communist bloc's first and only free trade union, Solidarity. He and several other top dissidents were arrested after martial law was imposed in 1981. He then won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983.

After the fall of communism, Walesa in 1990 became Poland's first democratically elected president since World War II. Poland is a staunch ally of its neighbour Ukraine and has advocated ramped up military aid to the war-torn country.

On Friday, following the heated exchange in the White House, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, in a show of support to Zelensky, assured Ukrainians they were "not alone".—AFP

Royal Society of top scientists faces calls to expel Musk

LONDON: Britain's Royal Society will hold a crunch meeting this week following calls to expel the world's richest man, technology billionaire Elon Musk, from the prestigious institute of scientists.

Founded in 1660, the Royal Society describes itself as a "fellowship of many of the world's most eminent scientists" and is a key voice in the global scientific community. Past members have included Albert Einstein, Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, Dorothy Hodgkin, Benjamin Franklin and Stephen Hawking.

But after members raised concerns about X owner Musk, who was elected a fellow in 2018, the organisation said it would now discuss "the principles around public pronouncements and behaviours of fellows".

Nobel prize winners were among more than 3,000 people who signed an open letter published last month arguing that Musk had broken the Society's code of conduct by promoting "unfounded conspiracy theories". Researchers say changes Musk made to X after his 2022 takeover of the social media site, formerly known as Twitter, have led to a spike in misinformation.

The 53-year-old has also repeatedly used his own account to spread falsehoods including inaccurate claims about Covid-19, vaccines, miscarriages and heart problems.—AFP

FORENSIC experts work on the car which drove into a crowd in Mannheim, Germany, on Monday.—Reuters

Two killed, several hurt as car hits crowd in Germany

Scholz calls incident a 'senseless act of violence'

MANNHEIM: A driver struck a crowd in southwest Germany on Monday, killing two people and seriously hurting several more, authorities said, adding that a 40-year-old German suspect was arrested at the scene.

Armed police shut down and evacuated the inner city of Mannheim after a car was driven through a pedestrian shopping area, with authorities saying they were working to determine the "perpetrator's motivation". Two car ramming attacks in other German cities since December have killed eight people, while Mannheim was the scene of a stabbing attack at an anti-Islam rally last May that killed a policeman and wounded five other people.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz condemned the incident as a "senseless act of violence". "Once again we mourn with the relatives of the victims of a senseless act of violence and fear for the injured," Scholz said in a post on X, adding: "We cannot accept this."

Security was a major theme in last month's general election, which was won by the centre-right CDU/CSU under Friedrich Merz. The incident "is a stark reminder to us: we must do everything we can to prevent such crimes... Germany must become a safe country again," Merz wrote on X.

The driver on Monday ploughed through a pedestrian area where a carnival market was located with dozens of food stalls, rides and games. "A car drove into a group of people in Mannheim's city centre. Two people died and several others are seriously injured," Baden-Wuerttemberg state's Interior Minister Thomas Strobl said.

'It's heartbreaking'

Strobl added that the suspect arrested at the scene was a 40-year-old German man from the neighbouring state of Rhineland-Palatinate. "The police are working hard to clarify what happened, the background to the crime and the perpetrator's motivation," Strobl added.

"It's heartbreaking," cafe owner Kasim Timur, 57, was quoted as telling news site *Der Spiegel*, adding that one of his staff members had seen seriously injured people, among them children. "We only see wounded people and the dead person, and we don't know what to do," another shopkeeper was quoted as saying by the local daily *Mannheimer Morgen*.

Police spokesman Stefan Wilhelm said residents had been urged "to avoid the inner city area" amid the major police operation. Officers with heavy weapons cordoned off the area and police helicopters were seen in the air.

Bild daily said 25 people were injured in the incident, with pictures showing multiple ambulances in the area near the city's landmark water tower.

A reporter at the scene for news channel *NTV* said that "at least one person is lying covered under a tarpaulin" and that children's shoes were among the clothes and debris scattered on the ground. The intensive care unit of Mannheim's university hospital declared a disaster alert, readying for a wave of casualties needing emergency treatment.

German cities have seen several violent attacks in recent months, including stabbing sprees and car ramming attacks.—AFP

UN rights chief worried about 'direction' of US policy

GENEVA: The United Nations rights chief expressed deep concern on Monday about a "fundamental shift in direction" by the United States under President Donald Trump, warning that divisive rhetoric is being used to deceive and polarise people.

"We have enjoyed bipartisan support from the US on human rights over many decades... I am now deeply worried by the fundamental shift in direction that is taking place domestically and internationally," the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Turk, said in a speech which did not mention Trump by name.

"Policies intended to protect people from discrimination are now labelled as discriminatory... Divisive rhetoric is being used to distort, deceive and polarise. This is generating fear and anxiety among many," he said. Turk's speech to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva — a body which Trump disengaged from in February — are his strongest remarks so far on the impact of the new US administration's policies.

Since taking office on Jan 20, Trump has issued a series of executive orders aimed at diminishing diversity, equity and inclusion programmes across the federal government and the private sector. USAID programmes were also paused for 90 days, while his administration reviews if they align with its 'America first' policy.

The UN human rights office's chronic funding shortages may be exacerbated by US foreign aid cuts. The United States donated $35 million last year which accounted for about 15 per cent of the total voluntary contributions received in 2024.

"Sweeping cuts to domestic social safety nets, climate finance and foreign aid signal a massive setback for human rights protection, for conflict prevention, and for global stability", Turk said.—Reuters

Japanese judge Yuji Iwasawa appointed ICJ president

THE HAGUE: The International Court of Justice on Monday appointed Yuji Iwasawa as its new president, replacing Nawaf Salam, the new prime minister of Lebanon.

The 70-year-old will head the court until Salam's term was due to expire on Feb 5, 2027, the ICJ said in a statement. Iwasawa has been a member of the court since June 2018. Before joining the ICJ, he was professor of international law at the University of Tokyo and chair of the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

Often dubbed the "world court", the ICJ, which sits in the Peace Palace in The Hague, rules in disputes between nations. It is the UN's highest court. It is sometimes confused with the International Criminal Court, also based in The Hague, which tries individuals for the world's worst crimes including suspected war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The ICJ is currently dealing with several especially high-profile cases. It is weighing on a case brought by South Africa that Israel is allegedly committing genocide in its Gaza offensive.

The ICJ is also deliberating a case between Ukraine and Russia over Moscow's 2022 invasion. And the court is preparing a so-called advisory opinion on the responsibility of nations with regard to climate change.—AFP

Clock ticking down to Trump tariffs on Canada, Mexico, China

WASHINGTON: Time is running short for Canada, Mexico and China to avert sweeping tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump, with the planned levies to take effect on Tuesday over what he deems an "unacceptable" flow of drugs.

Trump unveiled — then paused — blanket tariffs on imports from his country's major trading partners Canada and Mexico in February, accusing them of failing to stop illegal immigration and drug trafficking. The halt is due to expire on Tuesday.

But sweeping levies of up to 25 percent will likely snarl supply chains for key sectors like automobiles and construction materials, risking a hike in consumer prices. This could complicate Trump's efforts to fulfill his campaign promises of lowering the cost of living for households.

Trump has also threatened a further 10-pc tariff on Chinese goods, piling on an additional 10-pc rate that has already taken effect. "There's no doubt that the administration is trying to solve the long-standing fentanyl and immigration challenges, and these tariffs have given the administration leverage as we've seen with the response so far by Canada and Mexico," said Ryan Majerus, a former US trade official.

Washington is also trying to rebalance trade ties and improve conditions for US companies, he said. But the use of emergency economic powers to impose tariffs is novel, "and it remains to be seen how this will all play out in potential lawsuits," warned Majerus, a partner in international trade at law firm King & Spalding.

JPMorgan analysts warned on Friday that Tuesday's tariffs would "create a significant new headwind to economic activity" and boost consumer costs. They added that the planned levies on all three countries would lift the US effective tariff rate to nine percent — from 1.4pc in 2017.

Up to Trump

Mexico's president Claudia Sheinbaum said on Monday that her country has contingency plans ready, whatever the decision Trump takes. "There is constant communication in different areas, both security and trade, and we will wait to see what happens," Sheinbaum added.

Over the weekend, US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told Fox News that even as Mexico and Canada have reasonably addressed Washington's border concerns, they would still face tariffs.

He took aim at illicit fentanyl entering the United States, saying its ingredients came from China. But Lutnick left the door open to potential changes in Trump's tariff plans: "Exactly what they are, we're going to leave that for the president and his team to negotiate." Lutnik added that duties on China were likely set unless Beijing stopped making ingredients for fentanyl.

While Washington has targeted China over chemicals for the drug, many of these components have legitimate medical uses too — making prosecution tricky. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has stressed that less than one percent of the fentanyl and undocumented migrants that enter the United States come through the Canadian border.

He said on Sunday that Ottawa would keep working to ensure there are no fresh levies this week. But he added that Canada would "have a strong, unequivocal and proportional response" if levies took effect.

Trudeau's government has taken a series of steps to address Trump's concerns including a Can$1.3-billion ($903-million) plan to enhance border security.—AFP

NEWSMAKERS

OFUNATO (Japan): A helicopter conducts firefighting operations from the air on a wildfire site, on Monday.—Reuters

PARIS: Activists from the association 'People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals', dressed as prehistoric humans, take part in a demonstration in front of the French Fashion Institute to denounce the use of fur in fashion industry.—AFP

A SIGNAGE showing 6G is on display during the exhibition.—AFP

AI, trade tensions and EU's slow 5G mark opening of mobile industry's show

BARCELONA: The highly anticipated Mobile World Congress (MWC) Barcelona 2025 officially kicked off on Monday at the Fira Gran Via, with excitement over AI's potential to transform gadgets clashing with concerns over trade tensions fuelled by the United States, and a call for the European Commission to do more to back the high-speed mobile internet technology.

The MWC drew around 100,000 attendees in Barcelona, the day before fresh American tariffs come into force on Chinese goods. A dense crowd packed the halls between stands blazing with screens from early Monday morning, hunting out the latest devices and innovations from manufacturers or set to participate in debates about the future of the industry.

Many exhibitors at the MWC hail from China, whose products will be hit by an additional 10 per cent import tariff on top of the 10pc already imposed by President Donald Trump since he took office in January.

Higher costs for trade could impact the entire global tech and smartphone market if Trump keeps the China tariffs in place and extends them to other major economies like the European Union, as he has threatened.

Renate Nikolay, the European Commission's deputy director-general for communications networks, said that the "challenging geopolitical context" means "it's crucial for Europe to ensure our tech sovereignty and our strategic autonomy in critical sectors".

The GSMA global telecom industry body says that around 30pc of European mobile connections were via 5G by the end of 2024.—AFP

GOUDA (Netherlands): A painting entitled 'Woman Carrying Embers', by Flemish-Dutch master Pieter Brueghel the Younger circa 1626, on display at an exhibition at the Museum Gouda. Dutch police, an art sleuth and journalists from an arts magazine have investigated the painting and confirmed it was the same one stolen from the National Museum in Gdansk, Poland, during the communist era in 1974.—AFP

MANILA: A man uses a school bag to protect a child from the sun as they leave school, on Monday. Soaring temperatures shut down schools in nearly half the Philippine capital as the torrid season started in the tropical Southeast Asian country.—AFP

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Pope suffers two episodes of 'acute respiratory failure'

ROME: Pope Francis suffered two new breathing attacks on Monday, requiring two separate bronchoscopies, the Vatican said, as the 88-year-old pontiff struggles to recover from pneumonia.

"Today, the Holy Father experienced two episodes of acute respiratory failure, caused by a significant accumulation of endobronchial mucus and consequent bronchospasms," it said in a statement on Pope Francis's 38th day in hospital, the longest of his papacy.

The Argentine pope was admitted to Rome's Gemelli hospital on Feb 14 with bronchitis, which developed into pneumonia in both lungs, sparking alarm across the globe.

The Vatican said in its nightly medical bulletin that two bronchoscopies were performed on the pope in order to "aspirate abundant secretions". It said the pope had resumed "non-invasive mechanical ventilation" in the afternoon — the use of an oxygen mask — noting that he was "alert, focused and cooperative." As it has since the start of the pope's hospitalisation, the Vatican said Pope Francis's prognosis remains "reserved," an indication that doctors cannot predict the likely outcome of his condition.

On Sunday evening, the Vatican had said the pope's condition was stable, after he suffered a breathing crisis on Friday. The leader of the world's almost 1.4 billion Catholics had required the oxygen mask on Friday and Saturday, but not on Sunday, when he participated in mass and spent the rest of the day alternating rest with prayer.

Pope Francis had also on Sunday received Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's secretary of state, and Edgar Pena Parra, a Venezuelan archbishop who is also a senior Vatican official. The Jesuit, who has been pope since March 2013, is being treated in a special suite reserved for pontiffs on the 10th floor of the Gemelli.

Pope Francis, born Jorge Bergoglio, missed his traditional Angelus prayer for a third straight Sunday and the Vatican issued a written text instead. In it, the pope thanked well-wishers for their prayers, saying: "I feel all your affection and closeness and, at this particular time, I feel as if I am 'carried' and supported by all God's people. Thank you all."—AFP

Israeli-Palestinian film wins Oscar

LOS ANGELES: *No Other Land*, a film about Israeli displacement of a Palestinian community, won the documentary feature film Oscar on Sunday, and its directors appealed to the world to help end the conflict and accused the United States of blocking a solution.

The film's co-directors, Palestinian activist Basel Adra and Israeli journalist Yuval Abraham, spent five years making the film, which shows Israeli soldiers tearing down homes and evicting residents to create a military training ground and the encroachment of Jewish settlers on the Palestinian community.

The documentary highlights the parallel realities in which the two friends live — Abraham with his yellow Israeli number plate that lets him travel anywhere, Adra confined to a territory that only ever gets smaller for Palestinians.

"*No Other Land* reflects the harsh reality that we have been enduring for decades and still resist as we call on the world to take serious actions to stop the injustice and to stop the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people," Adra said on taking the stage.

Standing beside his co-director, Abraham added: "We made this film, Palestinians and Israelis, because together our voices are stronger."—Agencies

RIYADH: Lebanese President Joseph Aoun is received by Deputy Emir of Riyadh Prince Mohammed bin Abdulrahman upon his arrival in Saudi Arabia's capital, on Monday.—Reuters

Israeli fire kills two Palestinians in Gaza

Stabbing in coastal city of Haifa kills one person

CAIRO: Israeli fire killed at least two people in Rafah and wounded three others in Khan Younis in the south of Gaza.

At least two people were killed by Israeli drone fire in Rafah, and three people were wounded by a helicopter that fired on Khan Younis, medics said.

Residents said Israeli tanks stationed near the eastern and southern borders of Gaza intensified gunfire and tank shelling into the outskirts throughout the night. A Palestinian official with a group allied to Hamas said a state of alert had been declared among fighters.

In a statement, the Israeli military alleged its forces fired at a motorboat in the coastal area of Khan Younis violating security restrictions in the area and posing a threat. The military said in another incident in southern Gaza, its forces identified two suspects who were moving towards them and posing a threat. Israeli forces "fired at the suspects to eliminate the threat and identified casualties," it said.

Separately, a stabbing in Israel's coastal city of Haifa killed one person on Monday and ended with the Israeli Arab assailant dead, in the country's first fatal attack since the Gaza ceasefire began in late January. The stabbing came one day after Israel blocked aid to the Gaza Strip during an impasse over extending the truce in the Palestinian territory.

Monday's attack happened at a bus and train station in Haifa, a coastal city in northern Israel home to a mixed Jewish and Arab population. "A terrorist exited a bus, stabbed multiple civilians, and was subsequently neutralised by a security guard and a civilian at the scene," police said.

Israel's Magen David Adom emergency service said they pronounced dead a man aged around 70, and treated four other wounded people. Police identified the assailant as a member of Israel's Druze Arab minority.

Attacks by members of the Arabic-speaking Druze community are rare, however.

Food prices surge

The Hamas-run Gaza interior ministry called on residents to provide information about merchants raising food prices in the wake of the new blockade. Tamer al-Barawi, a Gaza businessman, said that with shops suddenly empty, the price of a sack of flour had risen to 700 shekels ($28) from 40 shekels. Prices for cooking oil, fuel, and vegetables had also surged.

"It is catastrophic and things might become worse if the ceasefire isn't resumed or there is no intervention by the local authorities against greedy merchants," he said via a chat app.

Israel raised the stakes on Sunday by imposing a total blockade on all supplies, including food and fuel, meant to sustain the 2.3 million Gazans living among the ruins after the 15-month conflict. Salama Marouf, head of the Gaza government media office, urged Gazans not to panic, saying there was enough food in markets for at least two weeks. The economy ministry had initiated an effort to compel merchants not to increase prices.

Aid agencies have warned that goods could spoil and that they don't have limitless means to stockpile goods on the Gaza border. —Agencies

Dutch robber confesses nine years on

THE HAGUE: Dutch police have finally cracked the case of a petrol station robbery nearly a decade on after the thief handed himself in, apparently wracked by a guilty conscience.

The cold case dates back to Jan 18, 2016. A robber stole a few hundred euros from a petrol station in the southern Dutch town of Terneuzen. The cashier was able to give a detailed description of the thief and police opened an investigation, but could not find their man and the case remained unsolved.

"Until now," police reported in a jubilant statement. "A 28-year-old man who now lives in Arnhem probably had a guilty conscience and recently handed himself in to police in his hometown," authorities said.

The man voiced regret for the crime and said he wanted to pay back the cash. Prosecutors are now weighing how to proceed with the case.—AFP

Iran's VP Zarif resigns

TEHRAN: Iran's former foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who negotiated the landmark 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, has resigned as vice president, state media said on Monday.

"Zarif's resignation letter was received by President Masoud Pezeshkian, who has not yet responded," the official IRNA news agency reported, without giving further details.

In a Monday post on X, Zarif said he had "faced the most horrible insults, slander and threats against myself and my family, and I have gone through the most bitter period of my 40 years of service. "To avoid further pressure on the government, the head of the judiciary recommended that I resign and... I accepted immediately," he added.

Pezeshkian, who took office in July, named Zarif as his vice president for strategic affairs on Aug 1 but Zarif resigned after less than two weeks, before returning to the post later in the month. Zarif was Iran's top diplomat between 2013 and 2021 in the government of moderate president Hassan Rouhani.—AFP

FC soldier martyred

Continued from Page 1

mess from the FC fort in Kalat area.

Police and CTD officials started investigation into the incident while security forces launched a search operation to trace out the elements involved in the attack.

The martyred FC soldier was identified as Lance Naik Attaullah while the injured were sepoys Waheed, Zahid, Abbas and Mushtaq. The condition of one of the injured is stated to be serious.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid homage to the martyr and extended condolences to the bereaved family. CM Bugti said terrorism and cowardly acts could not affect the province's peace and stability.

Earlier on Sunday, CM Bugti while talking to the media in Quetta expressed alarm over the security situation in Balochistan.

He said the rise in acts of terrorism is the result of the previous government's policy of appeasement of militant groups like the banned TTP, noting that several Taliban 'commanders' released during Imran Khan's tenure had re-established their camps.

Admitting that the security situation in Balochistan is alarming, the chief minister pledged that terrorists will not be allowed to control even an inch of land of the province.

He said that the influx of weapons from Afghanistan after the US withdrawal had exacerbated the situation in Balochistan, with terrorists now using thermal technology to carry out attacks from up to two kilometres away.

The CM, however, expressed the confidence that his government would soon bring acts of terrorism under control through smart strategies, emphasising the need for increased federal government's support to enhance the capacity of law-enforcement agencies.

He also mentioned plans to upgrade security in "8 Areas" to "A Areas" to improve governance and security. He announced that an Apex Committee meeting has been called for Tuesday (today) to formulate a strategy, and underperforming deputy commissioners will be replaced immediately.

Missing persons' issue

Discussing the issue of missing persons, Mr Bugti described it as highly complex, suggesting that some groups involved in forcibly blocking roads might be behind disappearances of people to put pressure on the provincial government.

Small-budget sex worker romp *Anora* bags best picture, four other Oscars

Brazil wins its first Oscar for *I'm Still Here*, and Latvia's *Flow* adjudged the best animated film

HOLLYWOOD: Independent film *Anora* — the tale of a sex worker whose marriage to the son of a Russian oligarch quickly unravels — was the big winner at the Oscars on Sunday, scooping five awards including best picture.

Sean Baker's black comedy also took home the Academy Awards for best director, best editing, best original screenplay and best actress for 25-year-old star Mikey Madison. "This is a dream come true," said Madison.

"I grew up in Los Angeles, but Hollywood always felt so far away from me. So to be here standing in this room today is really incredible." A shell-shocked Madison later told reporters backstage she was still processing a win that looked set to open career doors — even though she had no idea what was next.

"I just know that tonight I'm going to go home to my new puppies and probably clean up their mess," she laughed. Her win was something of an upset, as the buzzed 1990s megastar Demi Moore, who had been the odds-on favorite to cap a late career flourish with a golden statuette for body-horror flick *The Substance*. Baker used one of his four acceptance speeches to urge support for independent movies.

"I want to thank the Academy for recognising a truly independent film. This film was made on the blood, sweat and tears of incredible indie artists," he said. The five wins by *Anora* — out of six nominations — was an impressive haul for a movie made for just $6 million, a tiny sum by Hollywood standards.

The film's triumph came at the expense of *Conclave* — a film about the secretive and cut-throat election of a new Catholic leader that had been lost an uncanny timeliness by the real-life health woes of Pope Francis.

The Vatican intrigue, starring Ralph Fiennes and Isabella Rossellini, earned top honors from Britain's BAFTAs, and the Hollywood actors' SAG Award, but had to settle on Sunday for best adapted screenplay, despite having been seen as a favorite heading into the night.

(LEFT to right) Filmmaker Sean Baker, actor Adrien Brody and actress Mikey Madison pose with their awards.—AFP

Full list of Oscar winners at the 97th Academy Awards

Best picture	*Anora*
Best actor	Adrien Brody, *The Brutalist*
Best actress	Mikey Madison, *Anora*
Best director	Sean Baker, *Anora*
Best supporting actor	Kieran Culkin, *A Real Pain*
Best supporting Actress	Zoe Saldana, *Emilia Perez*
Best original Screenplay	*Anora*
Best adapted Screenplay	*Conclave*
Best animated Feature film	*Flow*
Best animated short film	*In the Shadow of the Cypress*
Best international feature	*I'm Still Here*, Brazil
Best documentary feature	*No Other Land*
Best documentary short	*The Only Girl in the Orchestra*
Best original score	*The Brutalist*
Best original song	El Mal from *Emilia Perez*
Best sound	*Dune: Part Two*
Best production design	*Wicked*
Best live action short film	*I'm Not a Robot*
Best cinematography	*The Brutalist*
Best makeup and hairstyling	*The Substance*
Best costume design	*Wicked*
Best visual effects	*Dune: Part Two*
Best film editing	*Anora*.—Reuters

'Defying Gravity' and Conan

The more than three-and-a-half hour Oscars broadcast was a relatively staid affair, with little of the political tub-thumping that has characterised previous editions.

Unlike last year's host Jimmy Kimmel, host Conan O'Brien ignored President Donald Trump and, despite an astounding week of politics around the war in Ukraine, the ceremony had only one mention of the conflict, and only one speech concentrated on the situation in Gaza.

Instead, the gala was a more traditional Hollywood event, kicked off with glossy high production glitz. *Wicked* stars Ariana Grandy and Cynthia Erivo began the show with a soaring medley honoring the land of Oz that brought the house down, including a rapturously received *Defying Gravity* from their nominated film.

O'Brien took aim in his opening monologue at the controversy that has surrounded *Emilia Perez*, whose transgender star sank the film's Oscar hopes when a series of offensive tweets were unearthed.

Brazil won its first Oscar for best international feature for *I'm Still Here*, and Latvia's *Flow* won the award for best animated film.

Culkin, Brody and Saldana

With the exception of Madison, the acting prizes went where they had been expected to go. Kieran Culkin looked his usual flustered self as he took the best supporting actor Oscar for *A Real Pain*. "I've already lost whatever speech I prepared," he said. "I have no idea how I got here. I've just been acting my whole life. It's just been a part of what I do." Adrien Brody won his second career Oscar for his role as Laszlo Toth, a Hungarian Jewish architect making a new life in the United States after World War II in *The Brutalist*. Brody, whose first statuette was for 2002's *The Pianist*, joins an elite club of double winners including Marlon Brando and Jack Nicholson.

Oscars show producers tried to play Brody off the stage twice during his lengthy acceptance, offering one of the few moments of levity in an otherwise serious speech.

"Please, I've done this before," he said. *Emilia Perez* star Zoe Saldana won for best supporting actress, and she emotionally thanked her family.

"My grandmother came to this country in 1961, I am a proud child of immigrant parents with dreams and dignity and hard-working hands, and I am the first American of Dominican origin to accept an Academy Award," she said. "I know I will not be the last."—AFP

Office of the Project Director (Surbandar Jetty)

GWADAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

GOVERNMENT OF BALOCHISTAN (PAKISTAN)

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TENDER NOTICE

TE-E-4250359942

The Gwadar Development Authority invites bids from eligible Bidders for remaining Dredging work of Fish Landing Jetty Surbandar at Gwadar.

Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required.

Note: In All Procurements of GDA Whether through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, it is Mandatory for All Bidders to Get Registered at Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB.

S. No	Class of Object	Tender Fee	Bid Security
1.	REMAINING DREDGING WORK OF FISH LANDING JETTY SURBANDAR, AT GWADAR	(PKR) 2,000	2%

PROCUREMENTS shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014.

ELIGIBILITY OF BIDDERS:

- 2 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity worth PKR. 170,000,000 Million each in Previous 10 Years
- Accumulated Turnover of at least PKR.148, 980,535 Million in 3 Subsequent Previous Years.
- Presence in Active Tax Payer List.
- BRA Registration Certificate.
- The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan

PROCEDURE OF PROCUREMENT:

Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure.

BID SECURITY:

The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank.

TENDER DOCUMENTS:

Tender Documents: The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bpprа.gob.pk, (PKR 2000/- as applicable tender Fee / bidding documents charges) to be deposited in the head of GDA Accumulated Collection or Fund account 3002-0081-0083-6601 through Bank Al-Habib Ltd. Gwadar Branch.

ISSUANCE OF TENDER DOCUMENTS:

Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bpprа.gob.pk

LAST DATE OF BID SUBMISSION:

Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 20 March, 2025 till 11:00 AM through supplier dashboard.

TENDERS OPENING:

All tenders will be opened on same day at 12:00 PM on EPPS System.

Address: Office of the Project Director (Surbandar Jetty), GDA, Gwadar Development Authority, Gwadar. Phone No: 086-9201010 Email: info@gda.gov.pk.

Project Director (Surbandar Jetty)

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Arab FMs hold closed-door talks over Gaza

• Cairo plan suggests 'Governance Assistance Mission' in place of Hamas • Proposal to be presented to Arab League summit today • Hamas rejects any form of 'non-Palestinian' set-up • Europe wants aid restored

CAIRO: As Arab foreign ministers met behind closed doors on Monday ahead of an Arab League (AL) summit focused on a plan to counter President Trump's proposal to take over Gaza and expel its residents, some European states urged Israel to "immediately" stop blocking aid flowing into the war-ravaged enclave.

The ministers in Cairo held a "preparatory and consultative" session centred on an Arab plan to rebuild Gaza without displacing its 2.4 million residents, an AL source said.

The source added the plan "would be presented to Arab leaders at Tuesday's summit for approval".

Earlier, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty held separate meetings with Arab counterparts, including from Jordan, Bahrain, Tunisia, Iraq and Yemen, as well as the Palestinian top diplomat.

FM Abdelatty called for "moving forward with early recovery projects" in Gaza.

The Trump plan has united Arab world in opposition, with Saudi Arabia hosting a consultative meeting of Arab leaders last month to discuss "joint efforts in support of the Palestinian cause".

Trump appeared to soften his stance on the plan recently. "I think that's a plan that really works, but I'm not forcing it," Trump said. "I'm just gonna sit back and recommend it."

Aid must continue

Aid for Gaza "must not be blocked", the office of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Monday, renewing calls for a "sustainable ceasefire".

"We've been clear that aid must get into Gaza, so it must not be blocked," a spokesperson for Starmer's office said, after an Israeli decision to stop supplies.

Germany also urged Israel to "immediately" stop blocking aid flowing into Gaza.

"Unimpeded access for humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip must be guaranteed at all times," foreign ministry spokesman Sebastian Fischer told a press briefing.

Hamas future

Egypt's plan for Gaza drawn up as a counter to Trump's ambition for a Middle East Riviera would sideline Hamas and replace it with interim bodies controlled by Arab, Muslim and western states, according to a draft seen by Reuters.

Who will run Gaza after the conflict remains the unanswered question in talks over its future. Hamas rejected the idea of any proposal being imposed on Palestinians by other states.

Under the Egyptian plan, a Governance Assistance Mission would replace the Hamas-run government in Gaza and be responsible for humanitarian aid and for kick-starting reconstruction. "There will be no major international funding for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Gaza if Hamas remains the dominant and armed political element on the ground controlling local governance," a preamble outlining the draft said.

Egypt, Jordan and Gulf Arab states have for been scrambling to formulate a diplomatic offensive to counter Trump's plan. A number of ideas have been proposed, with Egypt's committee of Palestinians in Gaza and elsewhere to help Gaza recover as quickly as possible".

Stabilisation force

Senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters the group knows of no such proposal by Egypt.

"The day after in Gaza must only be decided by the Palestinians," he said.

"Hamas rejects any attempt to impose projects or any form of non-Palestinian administration, or the presence of any foreign forces on the land of the Gaza Strip."—Agencies

KKH blocked as snowfall adds to miseries of travellers

By Jamil Nagri

WORKERS from the GB Works and Communication Department remove snow from a road in Khamang district, on Monday.—Photo by the writer

GILGIT: A fresh spell of snowfall on Monday increased the difficulties of people in Gilgit-Baltistan and Kohistan area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with the Karakoram Highway (KKH) blocked after landslides and flights cancelled on consecutive days.

Snowfall continued in all four districts of the Baltistan region namely Skardu, Shigar, Kharmang and Ghanche. The lower areas received one inch while upper areas received up to three inches of snow, disrupting routine life.

Most people stayed indoors as the Met Office predicted snowfall to continue for the next 24 hours.

A large number of passengers travelling to and from GB areas were stranded on roads, as the Karakoram Highway was blocked mainly at two locations in Diamer and Kohistan region.

Flights between Islamabad and Gilgit and Islamabad and Skardu were also cancelled due to the weather.

Meanwhile, Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority issued instructions for tourists and passengers to avoid unnecessary travel, as roads turned slippery.

Upper areas of Astore received more snowfall on Monday.

In the evening, an avalanche hit houses and shops in upper Gadai area of Astore. Officials said some homes and shops in the market area have been damaged. Locals voluntarily evacuated people from the affected structures.

They demanded immediate restoration of roads. It was also learnt that people in upper areas were facing acute shortage of medicines and groceries.

Hunza and Nagar districts also received snowfall.

Some residents protested against not availability of electricity.

The unusual snowfall has also disturbed the cultivation of lands and agriculture activities that had just started in some areas, as harsh winter is usually over by this time of the year.

Stuck in limbo, SBP amendment bill continues to worry opposition

Shibli Faraz writes to Senate chairman for intervention

By Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: Controversy over the stalled State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) amendment bill refuses to die out, with the opposition in the Senate continuing to raise its voice against what it considers a violation of rules and parliamentary norms.

Leader of the Opposition in the Senate Syed Shibli Faraz has expressed alarm over the fact that the bill was stuck in limbo even after majority of members present in the house voted for it.

In a letter written to Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani, a copy of which is available with *Dawn*, Senator Faraz recalled that SBP amendment bill moved by Senator Mohsin Aziz was put to vote on Feb 17. Voice voting was conducted followed by physical headcount and the bill was supported by majority of the members present in the house.

But unfortunately the voting results were not announced by the deputy chairman, thus violating Section 238(6) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate 2012, the opposition leader said.

The members of opposition protested against this blatant violation of rules and democratic principles. "We demand announcement of the voting count," the letter stated.

It pointed out the violation of the sanctity of parliament by disregarding its established rules was a serious affront to the democratic principles that underpin the legislative process. "When its rules are violated whether through disruption or disregard for parliamentary decorum, it undermines the institution's credibility and rule of law. Such violations not only hinder the proper functioning of parliament, but also erode public trust in the legislative system, potentially fostering a sense of disorder & disrespect," it added.

"The sanctity of parliament must be upheld to preserve its integrity ensuring that it remains a forum for debate, decision making and democratic governance."

The opposition leader requested the Senate chairman for his personal intervention to ensure that the unfinished agenda be brought to its finality, in order to restore the integrity and credibility of this house. "Failing which the future proceedings of the house will lose its legitimacy, honour and also damage public confidence in parliament's ability to act in the best interest of the people," it stated. The opposition in the Senate had staged a protest on Feb 17 after Senate Deputy Chairman Syedal Khan withheld the results of the count after hesitantly allowing voting on a motion for the immediate consideration of the SBP amendment bill.

The bill moved by Senator Mohsin Aziz of PTI had already been cleared by the standing committee on finance. No objection had been raised by the government when the bill was introduced in the house and referred to the standing committee concerned, but just before the passage of the bill, law minister sought its deferment asserting that it was a money bill and could be brought in the House only after federal government consent.

The bill proposes that the minimum credit limit of commercial banks should not be less than 60pc of their total deposits from that particular province.

Senator Aziz said the draft law would not affect the federal consolidated fund and did not involve a single penny from the government exchequer, adding that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan collectively received less than 2pc of the total loan portfolio of private banks — even lower than the amount of Zakat.

Senators belonging to BAP, including former caretaker premier Anwarul Haq Kakar, also voted in favour of the bill besides Senator Hidayatullah of ANP, two senators from PPP and one from PML-N.

Pakistan slams blocking of Gaza aid in Ramazan

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) has issued a statement condemning in the strongest possible terms the Israeli decision to block critical humanitarian aid from entering Gaza during the holy month of Ramazan.

"This latest action is part of Israel's systematic campaign to deny much needed humanitarian aid to millions of Palestinians in dire need," the FO said.

"This constitutes yet another blatant violation of international law by the occupying power and could imperil the ceasefire agreement."

Pakistan called on the international community to ensure unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza and to hold Israel accountable for "the imposition of collective punishment through denial of humanitarian aid to millions of civilians".—AFP

US orders pause in cyberoffensive against Russia

KARACHI: US President Donald Trump's administration is pausing its offensive cyber operations against Russia, officials say, as a diplomatic push continues to end the Ukraine war, *BBC News* reported.

The reasoning for the instruction has not been publicly stated, and it is not clear how long the halt might last. The defence department has declined to comment.

The directive reportedly came before Trump ended up in a televised row with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky at the White House on Friday.

The halt of American cyber operations against Russia came from Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth in new guidance to US Cyber Command, officials told the *BBC*'s US partner *CBS News*.

It leaves questions over the strength of the US fightback in the cyber arena against alleged Russian hacking, election interference and sabotage efforts that have targeted the Western nations which have sided with Ukraine during the war.

Hundreds or thousands of personnel could be affected by Hegseth's order, according to *The Record*, a cybersecurity publication that first reported it. Operations aimed at strengthening Ukraine's digital defences are likely to be among those affected.

In a statement, a senior defence department official said they would not comment on the issue due to operation concerns, but added: "There is no greater priority to Secretary Hegseth than the safety of the Warfighter in all operations, to include the cyber domain."

National Security Adviser Mike Waltz denied that a policy change had been discussed, but acknowledged in an interview on CNN that there would be "all kinds of carrots and sticks to get this war to an end".—Monitoring Desk

JCP forms body to thrash out criteria for CB appointments

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) constituted a five-member committee on Monday to hash out criteria for the appointment of judges, as well as selection of judges, for the Constitutional Benches of the Supreme Court and the four high courts.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail will be the committee's chairman. Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan and Senator Farooq Hamid Naek will represent the government while Senator Syed Ali Zafar will represent the opposition.

Muhammad Ahsan Bhoon, who was appointed as member of the JCP last week, and Niaz Muhammad Khan, the JCP's interim secretary, will be the other members of the committee.

During the last meeting of the commission on Feb 28, the JCP had decided to constitute a committee to draft objective criteria for appointment of judges under Article 175A (4) of the Constitution and for selection of judges for the Constitutional Benches (CB) under Articles 191A and 202A.

The committee will propose a set of legal instruments for thrashing out the criteria as a valid legal document.

The decision to form the committee was made after Justice Aminuddin Khan suggested the inclusion of five more judges to the bench during the previous meeting. But the PTI representatives argued that the CB head should not have the authority to decide which judge should be made part of the bench. Instead, they suggested, all SC judges should be included in the constitutional bench.

Two senior members of the commission — Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Munib Akhtar — had also opposed the addition of more judges to the Constitutional Bench. The PTI chairman, Gohar Ali Khan, and Senator Syed Ali Zafar had insisted that a procedure for adding more judges to the CB be thrashed out first before making additions.

During the last meeting, the JCP had expanded the Supreme Court's Constitutional Bench to 13 members by adding five judges.

The meeting, chaired by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Yahya Afridi, decided by a majority of its total membership the nomination of Justice Hashim Khan Kakar, Justice Salahuddin Panhwar, Justice Shakeel Ahmad, Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim as judges for the Constitutional Bench.

The CB earlier comprised Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Mohammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A. Malik, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Muneer Hilali, Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan.

Zelensky says 'will not be simple' to replace him

• Truce will test Russia's commitment to end war, says France • UK asserts 'no agreement' on partial truce yet

LONDON: Volodymyr Zelensky told British media on Sunday it would not be easy to replace him as Ukraine's president, but repeated his offer to step down in exchange for Nato membership for his country.

US Republicans had suggested he may have to resign after US President Donald Trump dramatically turned against him during a contentious Oval Office meeting about the war with Russia on Friday.

"If they replace me, given what is going on, given the support, simply replacing me will not be simple," Zelensky said.

"It's not enough to just hold an election. You need to also not let me run. This will be a bit more difficult. Looks like you will have to negotiate with me," he added.

"And I said that I am exchanging for Nato. Then I fulfilled my mission."

While European leaders rallied around Ukraine, Republican officials appeared on news programmes questioning whether any deal could be reached with Russia so long as Zelensky remains.

"We need a leader that can deal with us, eventually deal with the Russians, and end this war," National Security Adviser Mike Waltz told CNN.

"And if it becomes apparent that President Zelensky's either personal motivations or political motivations are divergent from ending the fighting in this country, then I think we have a real issue."

Republican Mike Johnson, speaker of the House of Representatives, also questioned whether Zelensky was fit for the job.

"Either he needs to come to his senses and come back to the table in gratitude, or someone else needs to lead the country," Senior Democrats have angrily pushed back since the debacle on Friday, saying Trump has come dangerously close to an all-out embrace of Russia.

A FLOAT portraying Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump forming a 'Hitler-Stalin-Pact 2.0' to squash Ukraine and its President Zelensky is pictured during the parade to celebrate Rose Monday (Rosenmontag) in Duesseldorf, on Monday.—AFP

On Monday, Zelensky said he would work with Europe to set terms for a possible peace deal to present to the United States, after allies gathered in London pledged to spend more on security and assemble a coalition to defend any truce in Ukraine.

European leaders closed ranks in support of Kyiv, with Zelensky saying afterwards the summit cemented their commitment to work towards peace.

"We need peace, not endless war," he said on Telegram.

"In the near future, all of us in Europe will shape our common positions — the lines we must achieve and the lines we cannot compromise on," he added.

"Those positions will be presented to our partners in the United States."

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer likewise said that Britain, France "and others" would work with Ukraine on a plan to stop the fighting, which they would then put to Washington.

And French President Emmanuel Macron, flying back from the summit, told *Le Figaro* newspaper that France and Britain wanted to propose a partial one-month truce.

Starmer and Macron have said they are prepared to deploy British and French troops to Ukraine to help preserve any truce.

With no guarantee of US involvement, "Europe must do the heavy lifting", Starmer said.

Test for Russia

France said the plan for the one-month truce would test Moscow's commitment to ending the war.

A day after the London summit, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot also warned that the Ukraine "front line keeps getting closer to us".

Macron said the one-month truce in Ukraine "in the air, at sea and on energy infrastructure" although not, initially at least, covering ground fighting.

Such a move "would allow to prove the good will of (Russian President) Vladimir Putin if he commits to a truce," Barrot told France Inter radio.

"And it's then that real peace negotiations would start. We want a solid peace and a durable peace," he added.

In an initial phase it is "a way of verifying that Russia is willing to end this war," Barrot said, emphasising that no withdrawal of Russian troops on the ground was envisaged during the truce.

However, UK armed forces minister Luke Pollard said "no agreement has been made on what a truce looks like".

"But we are working together with France and our European allies to look at what is the path to how... we create a lasting and durable peace in Ukraine," Pollard told *News Radio*.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a UK government official added: "There are various options on the table, subject to further discussion with the US and European partners but a one-month truce has not been agreed."—Agencies

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SPORT

Freiburg miss chance to climb fourth with Augsburg stalemate

BERLIN: Freiburg missed a chance to grab fourth spot after a goalless draw away at Augsburg on Sunday.

Freiburg came into the game riding high after four straight victories but were held by a dominant Augsburg defence.

Augsburg had the better of the goalscoring chances and had a shot at claiming all three points in stoppage time, but Steve Mounie hit the post.

"There were opportunities to be dangerous, but we didn't manage to produce them often enough," Freiburg coach Julian Schuster told DAZN.

Freiburg, who have never played Champions League football, finish the weekend in fifth, one point behind fourth-placed Mainz.

Augsburg, who lingered dangerously close to the relegation spots earlier in the season, extended their unbeaten run to eight games and are now six points behind the European spots.

Earlier on Sunday, Holstein Kiel booted their slim chances of avoiding the drop with a 1-0 win away at fellow strugglers Union Berlin.

Kiel's Armin Gigovic scored the only goal, finishing the net after 43 minutes.

Gigovic collected a pass from Shuto Machino on the turn and slotted home from close range to give the Storks the lead in the German capital.

Phil Harres had the ball in the net for Kiel with 61 minutes gone, but the strike was ruled out for offside.

The loss was the latest setback in a bad week for Union.

On Friday, Union lost an appeal against a DFB decision to strip them of a point — and award Bochum all three — from a 1-1 draw at home in December.

Bochum, who like Union are battling to avoid the drop, were awarded a nominal 2-0 victory after their goalkeeper was hit in the head by a lighter thrown by a member of the Berlin crowd.

Kiel's victory, just their fourth of the season and their first away from home, lifted the promoted side off the bottom of the table, one point behind Bochum who occupy the relegation playoff spot.

The Berliners sit two spots and seven points ahead of Kiel, with 10 games remaining.—AFP

MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Julian Alvarez controls the ball during a training session at the club's ground on Monday. Real Madrid host Diego Simeone's Atletico side on Tuesday at Santiago Bernabeu in their Champions League last-16 first leg, with the return at the Metropolitano Stadium across town on March 12. In Tuesday's other last-16 clashes, an injury-hit Arsenal face PSV Eindhoven while last season finalists Borussia Dortmund take on French side Lille. Elsewhere, Belgian champions Club Brugge lock horns with Premier League side Aston Villa for the second time in this season's Champions League. Club Brugge won 1-0 when the teams met in Belgium in the league phase in November. —AFP

Barcelona reclaim top spot with triumph over 10-man Sociedad

BARCELONA: Barcelona returned to the top of the La Liga table and wrested back control of the title race with a comfortable 4-0 home victory over 10-man Real Sociedad on Sunday.

Barcelona's sixth straight league win moved them into first place with 57 points from 26 games, one ahead of Atletico Madrid. Defending champions Real Madrid are third with 54 points after a 2-1 defeat at Real Betis on Saturday.

"We're happy about the way we played. It was important to win today, to go first in the table. We're happy and we feel that we've working really well," said defender Ronald Araujo, who scored a goal and bagged an assist.

Sociedad attempted to catch Barca off guard straight after the whistle and thought they had taken the lead through Sergio Gomez's deflected strike, only for the VAR to disallow the third-minute goal for offside.

The visitors' early momentum then evaporated after they went down to 10 men when defender Aritz Elustondo handled over Barcelona's Dani Olmo in the 17th minute and was shown a red card as the last man.

It did not take long for Barcelona to make their advantage count.

Hansi Flick's side opened the scoring in the 25th minute with a fine team effort that started with Lamine Yamal dribbling past two players before squaring for Olmo, whose chipped pass was volleyed home by Gerard Martin for his first professional goal.

Three minutes later, Marc Casado matched the achievement when Olmo's long-range shot deflected off of him and into the net.

Barcelona kept up the pressure after the interval and created chance after chance, adding a third goal in the 56th minute when a rebound from goalkeeper Alex Remiro's save was headed in by Araujo.

With a sizeable lead in hand, Flick made a triple substitution to preserve his players for their Champions League last-16 first-leg clash with Portuguese side Benfica on Wednesday.

Barcelona continued to look dangerous despite the changes and scored a fourth when striker Robert Lewandowski smartly redirected an effort from Araujo to net his 21st league goal of the season and wrap up the victory.

The goal was Lewandowski's 34th in all competitions this season, more than any other player in Europe's top five leagues and the most he has scored for Barcelona in a single campaign since joining the Catalan giants in 2022.

Sociedad, who have managed just four away wins this season, are ninth.

"The red card, after that the game changed completely, we came here to try and dominate the ball," said Real Sociedad defender Javi Lopez.

"A sending off changes everything... they also had luck on their goals and that makes it very difficult against one of the best teams in the world."

Elsewhere on Sunday, Valencia snatched a thrilling 3-3 draw at Osasuna thanks to a remarkable backheel volley by Umar Sadiq.

The Nigeria striker notched a brace, the second of those his spectacular finish from Sergi Canos' cross after 87 minutes to earn his team an important point in the relegation battle.

Valencia are 18th, one point ahead of Deportivo Alaves who drew 1-1 at Mallorca earlier.

Leganes, 16th, beat Getafe 1-0 to move three points clear of the drop zone.—Agencies

BARCELONA: Ronald Araujo (C) of Barcelona heads to score against Real Sociedad during their La Liga match at Estadi Olimpic Lluis Companys.—Reuters

United crash out of FA Cup as Fulham win shoot-out

MANCHESTER: Manchester United's dismal season hit a new low as the FA Cup holders crashed out after a 4-3 penalty shoot-out defeat against Fulham in the fifth round on Sunday.

Ruben Amorim's side trailed to Calvin Bassey's first-half opener at Old Trafford before Bruno Fernandes equalised to force a 1-1 draw after extra time.

Fulham keeper Bernd Leno was the hero in the shoot-out as he saved from Victor Lindelof and Joshua Zirkzee, with the visitors converting all four of their kicks.

Roud off at half-time, it was another wretched result for United in a season that sees them languishing in 14th place in the Premier League.

The 13-time FA Cup winners had reached the final for the last two seasons and beat Manchester City to lift the trophy last year.

But there will be no trip to Wembley this season for United, who have only the Europa League left as a silverware chance.

It has been another testing week at Old Trafford, with 200 job cuts announced and United struggling to draw with Everton and barely beat lowly Ipswich Town.

Amorim admitted that life is "hard" just now for United and this was the latest hammer blow to the under-fire Portuguese coach, who only arrived in November to replace the sacked Erik ten Hag.

United head to Real Sociedad for the Europa League last 16 first leg on Thursday before hosting Arsenal in the Premier League.

"It's hard. We had the best chances in the game but in the end the penalties can go both ways and today it was not our day," Amorim said. "I know that we are losing games and losing trophies during this season but the goal is to win the Premier League.

"I don't know how long it's going to take. But if you think like that, we can suffer a little bit in these defeats."

Fulham's reward for beating holders United is a home quarter-final tie in a London derby against Crystal Palace.

Manchester City were handed a tough trip to Bournemouth in quarter-final, while Aston Villa travel to second-tier Preston.—AFP

FULHAM'S Calvin Bassey celebrates after scoring against Manchester United during their FA Cup fifth round match at Old Trafford.—Reuters

Late Pedro penalty earns Lazio victory over Milan at hostile San Siro

MILAN: Lazio's Mattia Zaccagni (R) scores against AC Milan during their Serie A match at San Siro.—AFP

MILAN: An added time penalty earned Lazio a 2-1 win over AC Milan at the San Siro on Sunday, where the hosts had equalised despite going down to 10-men and endured a hostile atmosphere from their own fans protesting the club owners.

Milan are ninth in the standings on 41 points, having been overtaken by AS Roma who beat Como 2-1 earlier on Sunday, while Lazio provisionally moved into fourth place on 50 points.

The game began under a subdued atmosphere, with the Milan Curva Sud ultras leaving their sector empty until the 15th minute in protest against the owner Gerry Cardinale, along with the manager and players in a disappointing season.

The home fans missed little from their own side as it was all Lazio in the early stages.

"It's not an easy period for the club, the players can feel everything that's going on around them," said Milan coach Sergio Conceicao.

"When you play in an atmosphere like that your boots become boiling hot.

"It's not easy... and I have to say tonight the team showed the desire to change things. We managed to level with 10 men and could have even won the game."

Boulaye Dia was sent through by Nicolo Rovella one-on-one with the keeper but Mike Maignan was quick off his line and spread himself well to save with his foot.

A pullback from the byline by Nuno Tavares was almost put into his own net by Milan defender Strahinja Pavlovic and Gustav Isaksen's shot from distance went just wide of the upright and Lazio took a well-deserved lead in the 28th minute.

Adam Marusic had his shot palmed away by Maignan but the ball fell to Mattia Zaccagni in the six-yard box for an easy tap-in at the back post.

A clearly unhappy Conceicao sent on Joao Felix for Yunus Musah but it was Lazio who came closest to scoring again with Zaccagni volleying just wide and the hosts were jeered off the pitch at the break.

Milan piled forward after the break, Felix firing over with a shot on the turn and Santiago Gimenez glanced a header just wide but their chances of a comeback were dealt a hammer blow in the 67th minute when Pavlovic was sent off.

The defender was shown a red card for a foul on Isaksen when Lazio launched a counter-attack but six minutes from the end Samuel Chukwueze powered a header past Ivan Provedel, getting on the end of a Rafael Leao cross.

Milan looked to have salvaged a point, until Maignan took down Isaksen in the box and Pedro converted from the spot to condemn Conceicao's side to a third successive league defeat.

Conceicao may have begun life at Milan with an Italian Super Cup success in January, but since then it has gone downhill with his side also exiting the Champions League to Feyenoord, and their bid to reach next year's edition now looks over.

Meanwhile, Roma continued their revival under new coach Claudio Ranieri. Goals in the second half from substitutes Alexis Saelemaekers and Artem Dovbyk turned an engaging match in Roma's favour and put them in eighth place.

Roma are four points behind Bologna who sit sixth — in the division's Conference League spot — after beating Cagliari 2-1 earlier on Sunday.—Agencies

Greenwood, Gouiri fire Marseille to win over Nantes

PARIS: Olympique de Marseille stayed second in Ligue 1 as Amine Gouiri and Mason Greenwood scored in a 2-0 home victory over Nantes on Sunday.

Nice posted their fourth straight league win with a 3-1 success at Saint-Etienne on Saturday to move level on points with Marseille, but Roberto De Zerbi's men responded with a fourth win in five outings.

They sit 13 points behind runaway leaders Paris St-Germain but remain in a strong position to qualify for next season's Champions League.

"We deserved the victory. We had a lot of chances, even if it wasn't our best match at the Velodrome," Marseille coach De Zerbi said.

Marseille had the ball in the net early on but Adrien Rabiot's strike was ruled out following a VAR review for an offside in the build-up.

The hosts stepped up a gear after half-time, but Gouiri and Greenwood were both guilty of missing chances.

Marseille did finally break the deadlock in the 73rd minute, as Greenwood played in Valentin Rongier who teed up Gouiri to tap into an empty net and make it three goals and as many assists in five league games since signing from Rennes.

Greenwood secured the three points a few minutes later, curling in his 15th Ligue 1 goal of the campaign after bundling his way past two challengers.

Earlier on Sunday, Olympique Lyonnais beat Brest 2-1 despite coach Paulo Fonseca being sent off late on and then squaring up to referee Benoit Millot.

Two goals from Alexandre Lacazette turned the game around for Lyon after Kenny Lala's penalty gave Brest an early lead. Sixth-placed Lyon moved within four points of the Champions League places.

Strasbourg are just two points further back in seventh after Emanuel Emegha's 10th Ligue 1 goal of the season gave Liam Rosenior's men a 1-0 win at Auxerre.

Rennes continued to power clear of relegation danger under Habib Beye with a 4-0 victory at bottom club Montpellier, while Toulouse thrashed Angers by the same scoreline.—AFP

MARSEILLE: Olympique de Marseille's Amine Gouiri (R) shoots to score against Nantes during their Ligue 1 match at the Velodrome Stadium.—AFP

Blatter states innocence in court over fraud case

MUTTENZ: Former FIFA president Sepp Blatter said he was innocent when he appeared in a Swiss court on Monday alongside France football great Michel Platini, 2½ years after they were both cleared of fraud.

Blatter and Platini were acquitted in 2022 at a lower Swiss court following a seven-year investigation into a payment of 2 million Swiss francs to Platini. The Swiss federal prosecutor has appealed against that decision, leading to a new hearing at the Extraordinary Appeals Chamber of the Swiss Criminal Court in Muttenz, near Basel. The prosecutor asked for the judgment to be set aside in full.

Blatter told the court on Monday he was not guilty of fraud.

"When you talk about falsehoods, lies and deception, that's not me. That didn't exist in my whole life," he said. "We had principles in my family — we take only money we have earned," he added. "I am innocent."

The 2022 indictment accused Blatter and Platini of deceiving FIFA staff in 2010 and 2011 about an obligation for FIFA to pay the Frenchman, who was president of the UEFA at the time.

"They falsely claimed that FIFA owed Platini, or that Platini was entitled to, the sum of 2 million Swiss francs for advisory work. This deception was achieved through repeated untruthful claims made by both accused parties," the indictment said.

The case wrecked Platini's hopes of eventually succeeding Blatter, who resigned from FIFA in 2015 following a separate corruption scandal.

Blatter and Platini were suspended in 2015 by FIFA for ethics breaches, originally for eight years, although their exclusions were later reduced.

The pair were cleared in the 2022 case after a judge accepted that their account of a "gentlemen's agreement" for the payment was credible. The judge also said serious doubts existed about the prosecution's allegation that it was fraudulent.

The Swiss federal prosecutor is seeking a sentence of 20 months, suspended for two years, against Blatter and Platini.

"We did nothing wrong, nothing," Blatter, 88, told reporters outside the court at the end of hearing.

Platini, denied the accusation of fraud "100%," the 69-year-old's lawyer said. "The court of first instance was right to find that the disputed payment of 2 million francs was lawful," Platini's lawyer Dominic Nellen said.—Reuters

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NZ in confident mood for last-four clash against 'strong' South Africa

DUBAI: New Zealand go into their Champions Trophy semi-final against South Africa in Lahore on Wednesday buoyed by beating the Proteas at the same venue in a tri-series last month.

The Black Caps lost to India in their final Group 'A' match on Sunday in Dubai but Tom Latham said it would have no bearing on the encounter for a place in the final.

More relevant is that New Zealand chased down 305 against South Africa in Lahore after Kane Williamson scored 133 and also beat hosts Pakistan in the tri-series.

"We're fortunate that we had a tri-series in Pakistan and against South Africa," said the wicket-keeper Latham.

"We've got a chance to look back on those experiences and give our best in a semi-final, which is pretty cool."

New Zealand were already into the last four of the Champions Trophy prior to Sunday's loss to India in Dubai.

They also already knew they would have to head back to Pakistan for their semi-final.

"It is something that's out of our control," Latham said of the travelling, with India playing all their games in Dubai after refusing to go to hosts Pakistan.

"We don't decide the schedule and for us it's about turning up at each game regardless of where it is and trying to play our best brand of cricket as best we can.

"Obviously it's a chance at making an ICC final," said Latham.

"We know there's a lot of hard work to do to get to that point."

South Africa topped Group 'B' ahead of Australia with two impressive wins and one washed-out match.

"We know how strong South Africa are," said Latham.

"They've got all bases covered in terms of batting, bowling and in the field. As you look at it, I'm sure it'll be a fantastic game."

New Zealand's fielding has been outstanding on their way to the semi-finals — Glenn Phillips took a spectacular one-handed flying catch at backward point to dismiss Virat Kohli on Sunday.

"I think we've seen throughout the tournament some of the catches that the guys have been taking," said Latham. "For us it's an attitude thing."

HENRY SHRUGS OFF DEFEAT AHEAD OF SEMI

New Zealand will head into their Champions Trophy semi-final against South Africa with confidence intact despite suffering their first defeat of the tournament, pace-man Matt Henry said.

Henry, who took 5-42 as New Zealand's bowlers restricted India to 249-9, said the Black Caps would not read much into the defeat.

"I wouldn't have thought so — we've been playing some really good cricket this tournament," he told reporters.

"Obviously we're going to get on the plane this morning and we'll take our learnings from this game but also understand the conditions when we go to Pakistan.

"We've played a few games in the tri-series there and we'll be ready to face that semi-final."

While India's spin quartet took nine out of 10 wickets in Dubai, led by Varun Chakravarthy's 5-42, Henry was full of praise for New Zealand's pace-led attack.

He also said New Zealand had no preferences before the India match as to which team they would rather face in the semi-finals.

"All teams have their strengths. Obviously [we're] playing South Africa who have been playing some fantastic cricket and are a very well-balanced side," he said.

"They've obviously got a lot of power in their batting line-up but they've got a serious bowling attack as well."Semi-final cricket, finals cricket, it's always exciting and it's always great when you're playing against the best teams."—Agencies

DUBAI: Australian cricketers play football during a training session at the ICC Academy ground on Monday.—AFP

Australia ready for Indian spin challenge, says Smith ahead of semi-final

DUBAI: Australia captain Steve Smith says his team are confident they can counter India's quality spin attack in their ICC Champions Trophy semi-final in Dubai on Tuesday.The two teams will face off at the Dubai International Stadium in a rematch of the 2023 ODI World Cup final won by Australia in Ahmedabad.

Australia beat rivals England by five wickets in their opening match but their next two games were abandoned because of rain in the Pakistani cities of Rawalpindi and Lahore.

India made it three wins from three in Group 'A' with a victory over New Zealand on Sunday delivered by their four spinners on a tricky pitch.

Match starts at 2:00pm (PST)

Varun Chakravarthy took 5-42 in Dubai in only his second ODI to boost his hopes of selection.

"Yeah, I mean, not just Chakravarthy, I think the rest of their spin is quality as well," Smith told reporters on Monday.

"So I think for us, the game is probably won and lost how we play their spin, particularly in the middle overs, the way we get through there. It's going to be a challenge...

"I think there's going to be some spin, by the looks of it. Yeah, we've got to counter that... We've got a few options of ways we can go about it."

The world champions are missing several key players including fast bowlers Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc to injuries.

But Smith said they could call upon part-time spinners, including Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne, to support leg-spinner Adam Zampa and occasional off-spinner Glenn Maxwell on a track he believes "looks a dry surface".

"We've got a lot of part-time options that could certainly play a role on here and a couple of front-liners as well," he said.

Cooper Connolly, a batting all-rounder who bowls left-arm spin, has joined the squad as a replacement for Matthew Short, who was ruled out of the rest of the tournament due to a thigh injury.

But Smith played down any perceived disadvantage.

Both Australia and Group 'B' winners South Africa flew to Dubai from Pakistan without knowing who they would play in the semi-finals, the line-up for which was decided after the India-New Zealand match.

India have been slammed for playing all their games at one venue, in Dubai, while other teams shuttle between three Pakistani cities and the UAE. India refused to play in host nation Pakistan due to political reasons.

"We guessed right in the end," Smith said on his team travelling to Dubai.

"We had a little reset and a chance to have a couple of days here outside of a pretty strict sort of bubble, I suppose, in Pakistan with the security and stuff. It's been nice to just have a couple of days chill here, a bit of training."

Australia beat India by six wickets in the 2023 World Cup final, with Head hitting an unbeaten 137.

"I mean, there's pressure every time you play in a big game," said Smith of Head.

"But, as we know, Travis has stood up in many of those in the past. And, you know, he looked in great touch the other night against Afghanistan.

"I'm sure he's going to be looking to come out here and play the same way he's played for a long time, with good intent, good aggression."

ZAMPA EYES BEST FORM

Zampa says he is below his best at the Champions Trophy but will still be ready to take big wickets in the semi-final.

The leg-spinner took 2-48 in the washed-out group match against Afghanistan and 2-64 in the five-wicket win over England in Lahore to help Australia reach the last four of the ODI tournament.

The veteran spinner may be key to Australia's hopes of victory in Dubai, where India won their three group matches on spin-friendly wickets.

"Personally, I don't think I'm bowling quite at my best but I like to think the beauty about me, when I'm not quite at my best and not feeling that great out there, is my ability to still contribute and take those big wickets," Zampa said.

"So, yeah, [I am] obviously working on some stuff at the moment to hopefully get back to my best.

"But as I said, the ability to still do a job for the team and get those big wickets is still there, which to me is really important."

INDIA BRACE FOR 'NERVY' TIMES

Skipper Rohit Sharma warned his India team on Monday to expect "fightbacks" and "nervy times" against Australia in the Champions Trophy semi-final.

"Look, it [Australia] is a great opposition to play against," Rohit told reporters in Dubai.

"All we have to do is what we have been thinking about the last three games and we have to approach that game in a similar fashion.

"We understand the opposition and how they play and stuff like that."

Australia are on paper a weaker team from the one that beat India by six wickets in the 2023 World Cup decider.

"Look, Australia have been such a great team over the years," the Indian captain said. "So we will expect some fightbacks, we will expect some nervy times as well in the middle.

"But that is how the game is being played these days. And you are talking about a semi-final."

India went in with four spinners including two all-rounders in their last group match in Dubai and came up trumps with Chakravarthy.

Rohit said he will be tempted to keep the same combination against Australia.

"He just showed what he is capable of," Rohit said of man-of-the-match Chakravarthy, a wrist spinner with many variations up his sleeve.

"Now it is up to us to think and see how we can get that combination right.

He did everything that was asked for... it is a good headache to have."

India have been slammed for playing all their matches at one venue, in Dubai, while other teams shuttle between three Pakistani cities and the UAE.

Rohit dismissed the notion it gives India an advantage.

"Even for us it is a little bit of a question mark as to which pitch is being played," said Rohit.

"Because there are four or five surfaces that are being used here. I don't know which pitch is going to be played in the semi-finals."But whatever happens we will have to adapt and see what is happening and what is not. And this is not our home, this is Dubai."—Agencies

AUSTRALIAN pacer Ben Dwarshuis bowls during a net practice session at the Dubai International Stadium on Monday.—AFP

Cricket integrity has been hit for six but it's no big deal for players

By Umaid Wasim

LAHORE: It was a quiet Sunday, the buzz of the Champions Trophy conspicuous by its absence in Lahore. The last-four lineup had been confirmed; the stage reached at which any tournament across any sport huddles towards its crescendo.

Any excitement, if there was any, was discreet, unnoticeable. India's takeover of the first International Cricket Council tournament in Pakistan in nearly three decades was complete.

Pakistan was left picking the pieces, it now has to start afresh in its bid to inject enthusiasm back into the tournament. On Sunday, none of the semi-finalist teams were in the country. They were all in Dubai, with South Africa and Australia having flown there just to learn their fate — whether they will be staying on to play their semi-final against India or whether they will fly back to Pakistan. For one team it was going to be a meaningless trip.

It shouldn't have been that way, not if the schedule was made on merit. Instead, it was made on India's whims.

After refusing to travel to Pakistan — and forcing through a hybrid arrangement that will work for both parties in the future — India, as in all ICC tournaments, wanted to play the last round-robin match. It's a move that allows it to control its destiny and there is an excuse for that too — the broadcasters want it that way.

India's final Group 'A' game against New Zealand — which eventually became a decider for top spot — should've been played on March 28, a day after the Pakistan-Bangladesh clash.

That would've brought the group to a close, shifting focus on the last round of matches in Group 'B'. It would've seen only the team that was due to face India in the semis make the trip to the UAE instead of both teams packing their bags.

But then, where's the advantage for India?

"People don't want to hear it, but India has Third Worldized the management of international cricket," Indian-American writer Sadanand Dhume wrote on X. "It does not even pretend to be fair-minded. The point of power is to flaunt it — the cruder the better."

India's power show is blatant. Batting great Sunil Gavaskar, speaking to the India Today news channel, flaunted his country's standing in the game.

"People keep moaning and moaning," he said, in response to former England skippers Michael Atherton and Nasser Hussain calling out India's advantage by playing all their matches in Dubai during the Champions Trophy.

There was also a pointed remark by Gavaskar at India providing the largest chunk of broadcast revenue for the ICC and "paying their salaries".

"The time has come for India to shut their ears and ignore them," he went on to say.

The question remains how long can some voices be ignored. West Indian legend Sir Vivian Richards didn't maintain his silence at the ICC's continued favouritism of India.

"People may have a point when they say that. I guess that's due to politics — I don't want to get into the political side of things," he told reporters in India during an event of the International Masters League on Sunday. "But I believe the people who are responsible, in terms of the governing and the ruling of the game in itself which is the ICC, they're the ones who I think got the problem.

"I would like them to come up with an answer, why? If they are the governing body of cricket, why is that happening at present? I honestly believe one of the things that can bring all of us together, fans and everyone, even enemies together, [is] sports."

Sports — and cricket — couldn't bring India and Pakistan together. The divide forced South Africa to make a useless day-trip to Dubai before they came back to Lahore to Monday, alongside New Zealand, ahead of Wednesday's semi-final between the two sides.

Writing in his column for *The Nightly*, former Australia pacer Mitchell Johnson noted that it wasn't the first time the ICC has come under fire for how it handles matters related to India.

"The ability to adapt is important but it is equally critical to maintain some uniformity in tournament logistics to uphold the integrity of the competition," he noted.

LARGELY UNBOTHERED

The players taking part in the Champions Trophy, though, are largely unbothered. Apart from South Africa's Kagiso van der Dussen, no one else has spoken about the advantage for India.

"Obviously, we had a bit of a hectic schedule playing a couple of games in Pakistan, back and forth in between cities," Australia spinner Adam Zampa said on Monday. "With the nature of this tournament, not knowing where we are for the first semi-final, it's kind of nice to get here."

New Zealand batter Tom Latham said the travel and schedule was "beyond our control", with his team knowing they will have to fly back to Lahore for their semi-final.

"We don't decide the schedule and for us it's about turning up at each game regardless of where it is and trying to play our best brand of cricket," he said on Monday.

The players seem to taking it in their stride. But neither Zampa or Latham have had to make an unnecessary trip. South Africa — who played England on Saturday — had to do it despite finishing top of Group 'B', the advantage gained lost. The trip could make the difference between them and a final but batter Henrik Klaasen brushed it aside.

"We knew that was a big possibility that we might fly up and down. So yeah, there's nothing really too [un] common about it. It's not ideal for the bodies, but at least we had some time to get out and walk around and get loose. I actually just had some nice steak to be fair," Klaasen said on Monday.

"But other than that, we knew it's going to happen and it's part of the scheduling. So two teams had to do it and unfortunately, we were one of them. We haven't really travelled a lot in this competition. It was obviously just a crazy 18 hours, to be fair."

Klaasen noted that with South Africa not playing a match in Dubai, they could have a slight advantage.

"Both the teams playing in Lahore, they [New Zealand] played a game and they had to travel six hours after the game," he said. "We at least had time off to spread our legs and just recover as well before we had to come back. So, in that aspect, there's not a lot of difference.

"I think our bodies will be in a better position than their bodies. But mainly, it's part of professional cricket at this moment and you just have to suck it up and go back and see if you can recover well and just get the job done at the end of the day."

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DAWN

KARACHI Tuesday, March 4, 2025

METRO South

KARACHI

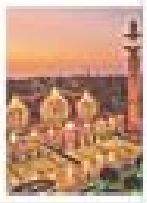
Sunset	06:38 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow)	06:51 am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum	15°C
Maximum	30°C
Humidity	70%
Outlook	Sunny

KARACHI RAMAZAN TIMING

FIQH-E-HANAFIA	FIQH-E-JAFFRIA
Iftar (today) 6:37pm	Iftar (today) 6:48pm
Sahr (Tomorrow) 5:33am	Sahr (Tomorrow) 5:29am



Gas supply 'improved' after PM takes notice

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: People in most parts of the city on Monday heaved a sigh of relief as the Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) finally improved the gas supply during Sehri and Iftar after the intervention of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The gas utility said that it had increased gas pressure by average 10 per cent to improve gas flow and started opening gas distribution centers 30 to 45 minutes before Sehri and Iftar timings to improve system pressure in the areas with low network capacity.

However, suffering of people in some parts of the city could not come to an end despite the prime minister's directive to improve the gas supply during Ramazan.

Though the gas utility claimed to have improved the gas supply, several areas still faced severe low pressure which, the gas utility officials said, was due to excessive use of compressors by domestic consumers.

An SSGC press release said the prime minister had taken immediate notice of the complaints on Sunday regarding gas supply to domestic customers during Sehri and Iftar.

It said that responding to the domestic customer complaints and directives of the PM to address these complaints regarding ensuring provision of gas during Sehri & Iftari times, emergency meetings were held at both the secretary and minister levels with the managing directors and senior management of the gas companies.

The press release said it was arranging an additional 20 MMSCFD gas to enhance transmission line pack to meet the rising demand.

A LARGE number of vehicles are stuck in a traffic jam on Sharesa Faisal during evening rush hours on Monday — PPI

CM orders crackdown on profiteers to curb 'artificial' price hike

- Says authorities are empowered to auction seized goods under anti-profiteering law to prevent market manipulation
- Four non-custom paid vehicles used by customs officers impounded by excise officials, meeting told

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: Amid the ongoing price hike, which occurs during every Ramazan, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday ordered a crackdown on profiteers and directed the administration to seize and auction hoarded goods in accordance with the existing anti-profiteering laws to ensure effective price control.

In a typical pattern, the prices of essential commodities and traditional edibles have sharply increased, with the administration failing to enforce the officially notified prices in the province, particularly in Karachi. While the market forces and chain of supply are stated to be the key factors behind the price hike, a weak oversight by the administration — which doesn't have ample staff to take action against the profiteers across the city — leaves people at the mercy of retailers.

In 2023, over 100 section officers (SOs) of different provincial departments had been given magisterial powers to take action against profiteering and hoarding during Ramazan in Karachi alone.

Presiding over a high-level meeting on price control, the CM issued strict directives to regulate the prices of essential commodities across the province, emphasising that artificial price hikes and hoarding would not be tolerated.

According to a press statement issued from the CM House, the chief minister reminded the officials that the anti-profiteering law empowered the government to seize and auction hoarded goods to prevent market manipulation. He therefore directed the administration to ensure seizure of the hoarded goods and auction them under the law.

The Karachi commissioner

Continued on Page 14

Cuts in flour, roti prices bring no relief to consumers

By Aamir Shahzad Khan

KARACHI: Commissioner Hasan Naqvi has reduced the price of various varieties of flour and roti but consumers could not get any relief from these measures.

As per a notification issued on March 3, the retail price of three varieties of wheat flour (flour No 2.5, fine flour and chakki flour) has been slashed to Rs87, Rs92 and Rs100 per kg from Rs89, Rs96 and Rs105 per kg prevailing on December 26, 2024.

However, in the retail markets, consumers are paying Rs100 per kg

Continued on Page 14

Minor girl raped, found abandoned on road

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Unknown criminals kidnapped a 12-year-old girl in Surjani Town, subjected her to sexual assault and torture before throwing her out of a car in the Scheme-33 area on Monday, police said.

Surjani Town SHO Ghulam Hussain Pirzada said the girl had left her home in Yusuf Goth on Sunday to purchase something from a nearby shop, but she could not return. Her family informed the police who launched a search and later lodged an FIR in the morning.

Later, the SHO said, they received a phone call and photo of the girl from the Sachal police, who had found her near Madina Chowk.

The Madadgar 15 police said that they were informed about a girl who was thrown out of a moving car. They rushed to the scene and rescued her. She was taken to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, where doctors examined her.

Police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed told *Dawn*: "The victim was disoriented and sustained multiple physical injuries. Findings are highly suggestive of sexual violence."

"The victim could not communicate and appeared to be mentally challenged," she said, adding that for assessment and rehabilitation, she had been referred to the department of psychiatry at the National Institute of Child Health.

Shopkeeper shot dead by robbers

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A shopkeeper was gunned down by robbers in Scheme-33, police said on Monday.

The Sachal police said Khan Muhammad, 65, was shot and killed during a robbery at Abdullah Shah Ghazi Goth late on Sunday night.

They said that three muggers riding a motorcycle arrived there, attempted to enter the shop at gunpoint. When the shopkeeper put up resistance, they opened fire and fled.

He suffered a single bullet wound in the chest and was taken to the nearby Memon Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead. Later, the body was shifted to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre for medico-legal formalities.

A case has been registered under Sections 393 (robbery or attempt to commit robbery), 302 (premeditated murder) and 34 (common intention) of the Pakistan Penal Code on the complaint of deceased's brother Maula Dad against three unknown robbers.

Reckless driving claims woman's life in Bahria Town

A reckless driver claimed the life of a woman inside Bahria Town Karachi (BTK) on Sunday night, police said on Monday.

Gadap City SHO Sarfaraz Jatoi said that victim Rehana Aziz, 58, was standing on the main Jinnah Avenue signal along with her daughter when a fast-moving car hit her. She suffered critical injuries and was taken to Bahria Hospital where she was declared dead.

BTK security guards intercepted the car along with the errant driver, Mohammad Umer, and handed him over to the police for legal action.

Setback for prosecution as suspect in Mustafa murder case refuses to record confession before magistrate

Shiraz tells court investigators promised him lesser punishment if he confessed

By Sumair Abdullah

KARACHI: The case of prosecution suffered a setback on Monday when a suspect in the Mustafa Amir murder case informed a judicial magistrate that he was not willing to record his confessional statement.

Investigating Officer (IO) Muhammad Ali brought Syed Shiraz Hussain Bokhari before Judicial Magistrate (South) Aasim Aslam to record his confessional statement under Section 164 of the criminal procedure code.

Allowing the IO's application, the suspect's handcuffs were removed as he sat in the judge's chamber, separate from the police.

After an hour of reflection, the suspect changed his stance and informed the court that he would not make any statement.

In its detailed order, the court noted that while the suspect was sitting in the chamber, he was informed that he was before a first-class magistrate.

He was also informed that he was not bound to make a confessional statement and that any statement he made would be recorded in writing and could be used as evidence against him during the trial.

Additionally, he was informed that whether he chose to confess or not, his custody would be handed over to the IO for production before the anti-terrorism court (ATC).

The order stated: "...accused Shiraz said that he is the only eyewitness in this case."

Quoting the suspect, the order stated that he claimed that prime suspect Armaghan had "brutally" murdered Mustafa Amir in his presence and he was helpless at that time and now being dragged into the case as a co-accused.

The court noted that the suspect claimed that he was pressured to make a confessional statement and he was induced with the promise of a lesser punishment. He also alleged that he was maltreated by police officials at the police station.

After hearing the suspect, the court ruled that the suspect did not want to make any statement; therefore, it declined the IO's application.

"It is a well-settled principle of law that whether the accused makes or refuses to make any confession before the court then he should be remanded to judicial custody but in the instant case an accused is under police custody by the order of the Honourable Anti-Terrorism Court, hence, this court is not authorised to decide the custody of accused," the court ruled.

The court directed the IO to immediately produce the suspect before the court concerned for a decision on his custody.

In compliance with the magistrate's directive, the IO produced the suspect before the administrative judge of the ATCs at the Judicial Complex inside the central prison.

However, the administrative judge returned the custody and instructed the IO to present the suspect before the appropriate court.

It is pertinent to mention that both suspects are set to be produced before the concerned ATC on Tuesday (today) after the completion of their police remand.

Three Islamabad-based universities to open campuses in Karachi

Education ministry allows Nust, NUTECH and Comsats University to establish campuses in Sindh

By Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Three major institutes of higher learning — National University of Sciences and Technology (Nust), National University of Technology (NUTECH) and Comsats University — will establish their campuses in Karachi, it emerged on Monday.

In a landmark move, Federal Minister for Education, Science and Technology Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has given approval for setting up campuses of Nust, NUTECH, and Comsats University in Karachi. This initiative aligns with the prime minister's vision of expanding quality education, which is essential for the country's economic growth, said a press statement issued by the ministry of education.

It mentioned that a temporary campus of Comsats University will be set up on Hub Road. Additionally, a Rs4.6 billion PC-I has been submitted for the development of a dedicated campus for Comsats University.

However, the education ministry did not share any further details regarding the establishment of Nust and NUTECH campuses in Karachi.

It is worth mentioning that Dr Siddiqui, the chairman of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, hails from Karachi and the establishment of these campuses in the city would greatly benefit local students.

Sources in Comsats told *Dawn* that, in the past, several attempts were made to establish Comsats campuses in Sukkur, Gujar Khan and Dera Murad Jamali, but unfortunately, those projects could not be executed.

Currently, in addition to its main campus in Islamabad, Comsats University has six other campuses across the country, including in Wah, Abbottabad, Attock, Lahore, Sahiwal and Vehari. The establishment of a Comsats campus in Karachi is widely considered as a positive development.

Earlier in 2024, Dr Siddiqui had announced that the National College of Arts (NCA) and Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design (PIFD) would open their campuses in Karachi. He had inaugurated the Karachi chapter of the PIFD in November last.

Call for early appointment of CUI rector

However, besides this initiative, Dr Siddiqui also asked to ensure the early appointment of a rector for Comsats University Islamabad (CUI) to facilitate the smooth functioning of one of the country's major public-sector universities, said a faculty member of Comsats.

The CUI has been facing administrative challenges, as it has been without a regular rector since July 2023. Several other key offices within the university are also being run through ad hoc arrangements. Recently, President Asif Ali Zardari, as the CUI chancellor, barred the acting rector from making any major policy decisions.

Last month, the Ministry of Science and Technology officially conveyed the president's directive and stated that it has come to the notice of the chancellor's office that the acting rector of CUI is making significant decisions, including appointments and promotions of teaching and non-teaching staff, especially for positions of BS-17 and above in CUI.

The letter further stated that the President of Pakistan/Chancellor, CUI, has directed that the acting rector shall not make any appointments or promotions of teaching and non-teaching staff to prevent further legal complications.

The appointment of a permanent rector for CUI has faced prolonged delays. The university has been functioning under an ad hoc arrangement since July 2023, when the then rector, Dr Muhammad Afzal, stepped down. Subsequently, then president Arif Alvi appointed Dean Dr Sajid Qamar as a temporary rector, a position he continues to hold.

Recently, the National Assembly Standing Committee on Science and Technology, chaired by MNA Khawaja Shiraz Mehmood, had urged the government to expedite the appointment of a permanent rector to ensure effective decision-making and long-term planning at the university.

Apart from the rector's position, several other key administrative posts, including those of registrar, treasurer and controller of examinations, are also being managed on a temporary basis. Additionally, many deans are serving in acting capacities.

In September last year, following a competitive process and interviews, a panel of three educationists was recommended to the president's office for the final selection of a rector. After an extensive review, President Zardari, as the chancellor of Comsats, approved Dr Shahid Munir's appointment and the Ministry of Science and Technology issued a notification confirming his selection on Sept 23, 2024.

However, Dr Munir did not assume the role, as he was appointed vice chancellor of the University of Engineering and Technology Lahore on the same day. Since then, the appointment process for a new rector remains incomplete, raising concerns about the university's administrative stability.

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PRAYER

Fajr	5.33
Zuhar	12.43
Asr	5.01
Maghreb	6.37
Isha	7.53

Starting time in Gazetti

REFLECTIONS

"REMEMBER THAT PIETY AND NOBLENESS OF ALL YOUR ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO SINCERITY AND PUNCTUALITY OF YOUR PRAYERS."

— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)

7580-1427

Rally planned against 'anti-Sindh' water projects on Women's Day

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Representatives of working-class women, political and human rights organisations on Monday announced a 'Mehnatkash Aurat Rally' on March 8 to mark International Women's Day.

Speaking at a press conference here at the Karachi Press Club, they announced that thousands of women workers, farmers and victims of environmental destruction and anti-Sindh projects from across the province will participate in the rally.

The rally — with slogans 'Class Resistance against the Looting of the Indus River, Our Land, and Our Environment' — will begin at 3pm on March 8 from the Youth Auditorium and proceed to the Arts Council of Pakistan, they added.

They were of the view that working women were engaged in a continuous struggle for social, political and economic justice.

It was emphasised that the ecocide of the ancient Indus Delta, the disappearance of the mangrove forests and the submergence of agricultural lands into the sea. The coastal villages and towns are being swallowed by the advancing sea, forcing millions to migrate. The lack of water, or its untimely availability, is turning fertile lands barren by reducing crop production, lowering cotton yields by as much as 25 per cent, and triggering a severe food crisis.

ACTIVIST Zahra Khan speaks at the press conference — PPI

The cities have been facing acute water shortages, groundwater levels are depleting and unbearable heat waves are intensifying.

The speakers emphasised that Sindh had always resisted every act of water aggression. "It has been through mass resistance that the anti-Sindh and anti-environment Kalabagh Dam project was defeated. Even today, the construction of controversial canals, which rely on the theft of Indus River water, poses another grave threat," they added.

They added that beyond water theft, agricultural lands were also being seized under the pretext of corporate farming. They said the grabbing of large-scale lands and water will have devastating consequences for Sindh's cities, villages, coastal areas and millions of residents.

Given this dire situation, every citizen of Sindh, whether from the villages or cities, whether a farmer or a labourer, must recognise the looming threat and play their historical role. "That is why working-class women have decided to mark International Working Women's Day with a strong stance against anti-Sindh water projects, land grabs under corporate farming, and the worsening environmental crisis," they stated.

The press conference was addressed by Human Rights Commission of Pakistan chairman Asad Iqbal Butt, Nasir Mansoor of the National Trade Union Federation, Tahir Hasan Khan of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists, Zehra Khan of the Home Based Women Workers Federation and others.

CM orders crackdown on profiteers

Continued from Page 13

informed the meeting that over 250 "Bachat Bazaars" (discount markets) were operating in the city to provide relief to citizens. The CM stressed that these markets must be well-organised and effectively regulated to ensure smooth operations and prevent traffic congestion.

Mr Shah also directed the deputy commissioners, through divisional commissioners, to regularly visit markets to monitor prices and curb unnecessary inflation.

He ordered that price lists be printed and distributed promptly and instructed officials to monitor price compliance closely throughout Ramazan. Additionally, he emphasised that major retail stores should also be compelled to maintain reasonable prices.

Tampered vehicles

During another meeting, the chief minister directed Excise Minister Mukesh Chawla to begin impounding non-customs paid (NCP) vehicles and those with tampered chassis numbers that were being operated in the city.

The excise minister informed the CM that his department had already impounded four vehicles being used by customs officers in the city.

He said that these vehicles did not have valid number plates, and their chassis numbers had been tampered with.

The chief minister issued clear directives to both the excise police and the district police to take action against such vehicles, impound them, and report back to him.

The meeting was attended by Provincial Ministers Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Shah, Ziaa Langar, Special Assistant for the Bureau of Supply & Prices Usman Ghani Bloggo, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah and others.

Roti prices

Continued from Page 13

for flour No 2.5 followed by Rs159 per kg for fine flour and Rs120 per kg for chakki flour. It announced reduction in chapati (100 grams) price to Rs10 per piece from Rs12 rectified on June 5, 2024.

The rates of naan (120 grams), (140-150 grams) and (180 grams) have been reduced to Rs15, Rs18 and Rs23 per piece from Rs16, Rs20 and Rs25.

However, majority of the roti makers are selling chapati at Rs15 per piece. The average (ordinary) naan is priced at Rs25 per piece, while some big players are demanding Rs30 per piece for it.

SHC issues notices on plea against selection of educational boards' heads

SPLA urges Bilawal to stop Sindh govt from appointing 'inexperienced' individuals

By Ishaq Tarooli

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) has issued notices to the chief secretary (CS), officials of the universities & boards department and other respondents in a petition impugning the selection process to appoint chairmen in various educational boards in the province.

Headed by Justice Muhammad Faisal Kamal Alam, a two-judge bench also got the advocate general Sindh on notice for March 5.

The petitioner, Altaf Ahmed Memon, also cited the search committee and eight candidates — retired bureaucrat Muhammad Mishah Tunio, Brigadier Syed Waseem Akhtar, Dr Asif Ali Memon, Ghulam Hussain Solo, Manzoor Rajpar, Mudasrar Ali Rajput, Dr Rafiq Ahmed Chandio and Dr Zahid Ali Channar, who were shortlisted by the committee and their names forwarded to the chief minister for approval — as respondents in the petition.

Later Brigadier Akhtar, the top-scoring candidate for the appointment of chairman to one of the eight educational boards of Sindh, had withdrawn his name and thus a new summary was sent to the chief minister.

The counsel for the petitioner argued that the search committee could not select the candidates as it was only for selection and appointment of the vice chancellors for the universities.

Referring to an earlier judgement of the SHC handed down in the case of Mushtaq Ahmed Sangrasi versus the province of Sindh and others, he also contended that the summary dated Feb 3 mentioning eight names for such appointments placed before the chief minister Sindh, was not within the parameters of law.

He submitted that the SHC in its judgement had held that the role of the search committee was confined to appointment of the vice chancellors and the recommendations made by the search committee could not be extended beyond its legal mandate.

The petitioner sought directions for the respondents to immediately halt and withdraw the appointment process of the chairmen in the Sindh educational boards through the search committee and to ensure that all future appointments to be made strictly in compliance with the relevant law and statutory provisions.

Meanwhile, the Sindh Professors & Lecturers Association (SPLA) have urged PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to stop the chief minister from experimenting with the educational boards as inexperienced individuals were being appointed as chairmen instead of educational experts.

SPLA president Munawar Abbas and secretary general Ghulam Mustafa Kalko in a statement also warned that such move would be strongly resisted and asked the PPP chief to take notice of anti-education policies of the chief minister.

They expressed serious resentment over the reported appointment of retired bureaucrats and former military officials as the heads of educational boards in the province.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

My client has agreed to purchase from MR. BASHARAT HUSSAIN son of Mr. Mirza Hidayatullah, through his constituted sub-attorney MR. ZEESHAN YOUSUF son of Mr. Muhammad Yousuf, through his attorney MR. SALMAN MALIK son of Mr. Imtiaz Malik, All that open vacant PLOT NO. W/045 measuring 02 acres, situated in NORTH WESTERN INDUSTRIAL ZONE (NWIZ), PORT QASIM AUTHORITY, Karachi, with valid subsisting and marketable title, free from all encumbrances, charges, demands, taxes, fees, dues, duties, land rent, sales tax, premium, development charges, non-utilization fees, penalties, claims, burdens, disputes, litigations, mortgages, liens, etc., of any nature whatsoever with vacant peaceful physical possession.

All persons/institutions having any claim, right, title or interest in the said Plot in any manner whatsoever are hereby required to inform (1) General Manager, Industrial Management Department, Port Qasim Authority, Karachi, and (2) the undersigned, within seven days under registered A/D cover along with documentary evidence, failing which all claims/objections received thereafter shall be considered and treated as waived and the sale and transfer of the said Plot shall be completed in favour of my client.

TUFAIL H. EBRAHIM
ADVOCATE HIGH COURT & CORPORATE COUNSELLER
F-67, BLOCK 5, KDA-5, CLIFTON, KARACHI-75600
TEL: 35875403-04, 35875957, FAX 35875958
EMAIL: tufailebrahim@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client has agreed to purchase from MR. MUHAMMAD ARIF CHOSKI son of Mr. Usman Dawood Choski, Muslim, adult holding NICOP No. 81006-1259997-5, through his constituted attorney MR. MUHAMMAD IQBAL PEERANI son of Hashim Ali Muhammad, All that open vacant PLOT NO. W/046 measuring 03 acres, situated in NORTH WESTERN INDUSTRIAL ZONE (NWIZ), PORT QASIM AUTHORITY, Karachi, with valid subsisting and marketable title, free from all encumbrances, charges, demands, taxes, fees, dues, duties, land rent, sales tax, premium, development charges, non-utilization fees, penalties, claims, burdens, disputes, litigations, mortgages, liens, etc., of any nature whatsoever with vacant peaceful physical possession.

All persons / institutions having any claim, right, title or interest in the said Plot in any manner whatsoever are hereby required to inform (1) General Manager, Industrial Management Department, Port Qasim Authority, Karachi, and (2) the undersigned, within seven days under registered A/D cover along with documentary evidence, failing which all claims/objections received thereafter shall be considered and treated as waived and the sale and transfer of the said Plot shall be completed in favour of my client.

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TEL: 35875403-04, 35875957, FAX 35875958
EMAIL: tufailebrahim@gmail.com

BEFORE:- DR. HATIM AZIZ SOLANGI JUDGE IN THE BANKING COURT NO.V, AT KARACHI
Block # 48-C, Pakistan Secretariat, Saddar, Karachi
SUIT NO. 40 OF 2025

Fox Gulf Leasing Company Limited ... PLAINTIFF
VERSUS
1. SAAD MUSHTAQ AWAN SON OF MUSHTAQ AHMED AWAN ... DEFENDANTS

The Administrator/Defendants

Rs.1,010,000/- ALONG WITH AGREED MARK UP AND ATTACHMENT AND SALE OF HYPOTHECATED ASSETS Under Section 9 of the Financial Institutions (Recovery of Finances) Ordinance No. XLVIII of 2001. You are hereby called upon to appear in this Court on 24th day of March 2025 at 11:30 A.M. and submit your written statement within thirty days from the service hereof. In case of default, the plaintiff will be entitled at any time after the expiration of such thirty days (30) to obtain a decree with costs and such order as it deems fit and proper. If you do not appear in this Court on the date fixed above, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence. The application for leave to defend shall be in the form of a written statement and shall contain a summary of the substantial questions of law as well as fact in respect of which, in your opinion, the evidence is required to be considered on sections 10 of the above said Ordinance.

Dated 28th Day of February 2025.

BY ORDER
(ZUHAIB AHMED JAMALI)
REGISTRAR
BANKING COURT V KARACHI

BEFORE:- DR. HATIM AZIZ SOLANGI JUDGE IN THE BANKING COURT NO.V, AT KARACHI
Block # 48-C, Pakistan Secretariat, Saddar, Karachi
SUIT NO. 39 OF 2025

RAK GULF LEASING COMPANY LIMITED ... PLAINTIFF
VERSUS
KAIFER ALI S/O ROAB KHAN DEC ALI ... DEFENDANTS

The Administrator/Defendants

Rs.1,010,000/- ALONG WITH AGREED MARK UP AND ATTACHMENT AND SALE OF HYPOTHECATED ASSETS Under Section 9 of the Financial Institutions (Recovery of Finances) Ordinance No. XLVIII of 2001. You are hereby called upon to appear in this Court on 24th day of March 2025 at 11:30 A.M. and submit your written statement within thirty days from the service hereof. In case of default, the plaintiff will be entitled at any time after the expiration of such thirty days (30) to obtain a decree with costs and such order as it deems fit and proper. If you do not appear in this Court on the date fixed above, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence. The application for leave to defend shall be in the form of a written statement and shall contain a summary of the substantial questions of law as well as fact in respect of which, in your opinion, the evidence is required to be considered on sections 10 of the above said Ordinance.

Dated 28th Day of February 2025.

BY ORDER
(ZUHAIB AHMED JAMALI)
REGISTRAR
BANKING COURT V KARACHI

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KARACHI

LOST & FOUND

I have lost my original file whose PDS No. 3142, Plot No. 5, Lane No. 7, Street No. 5/9 Phase I, namely Mujeed Mhomdi, S/o Karim Bakhsh, CNIC No. 5120S-3548521-9. Area 400 square yards, Category B, located at Sehgal Housing Project, Gwadar, after so many efforts we unable to find it. If any one found, these documents please contact Sehgal Housing Project Gwadar office within or call Zahid Sharif, +92300-9229678, otherwise after 21 days, duplicate file will be issued and previous documents should be considered as cancelled. (1000282418)

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NOTICE
TO PUBLIC

OUR client has contracted to purchased Leasehold Residential Plot No. 63/1, 13th Street, Phase V, measuring 500 square yards in thereabout with constitution of Double Storied Bungalow thereon, Pakistan Defence Officers Housing Authority DHA, Karachi from (1) Mr Muhammad Ahmer S/o Muhammad Hashim (Late) CNIC No. 42201-0684609-9 (2) Mr Muhammad Yasir S/o Muhammad Hashim (Late) CNIC No. 42201-7053676-5 (3) Mst Samsa Sam W/o Mr Zahid Hussain D/o Muhammad Hashim (Late) CNIC No. 42201-0618805-4 all legal heirs of Muhammad Hashim (Late) S/o Mr Muhammad Hussain CNIC No. 517146-226784 Any Person(s), Bank, Authority etc. having any claim in objection should notify us and Sub Registrar Clifton Karachi within 7 days of the publication of this notice otherwise transaction shall be completed in favour of our client. KHURRAM ENTERPRISES. KHURRAM ALI 0321-9260024. (1000283452)

I, Abdul Mateen S/o Abdul Qayyoum (Prior having CNIC 42501-4934503-3 have agreed to purchase Plot No. D-58 corner Main Bazar Bilawal Shah Nooraani Goth, near Supermo, Scheme 33, Karachi from Mansha Abdul Rasheed Bumio S/o Tajuddin Bumio, having CNIC 45203-4112260-1, with all consequences, rights, easements, utilities attached and free from all claims, encumbrances, charges, liens, mortgages, taxes etc of any nature. If Any Person, Authority or Bank have any objection, right or claim in the above said property, please notify the undersigned within 7 days of this publication along with documentary evidence failure to which such objections, claims or rights shall be deemed to be waived. Ali-dul Memon Contact 03013304331. (1000279331)

IT is informed that our client has entered into an agreement for the purchase of Survey No. 77, 77, 78, 79, 130, measuring 23 Acres 23 Ghunta 33 sq. yds. Deh Khakhkani and Taluka Mureji Mehmon District Malir, Karachi from mirat Abdara son of Abdul Aziz Abdara CNIC No. 42201-2077324-9, in the regard if Any Person, Government / Non-Government body has any objection, please contact within 7 days, Sub Registrar-I, Gadap Town, Karachi, no excuse will be accepted after the deadline and all legal proceedings at Sale Deed execute our client. Advertiser: Anjum Mahmood Advocate High Court, Office: 457 Taj Paper Center 4th Floor Shahrah-e-Liaquat, Karachi. Mobile No. 0300-8234915. (1153281392)

NOTIFIED to the general public that my client have contracted to purchase Open Plot No. 226 Kh-e Shujaat Phase VIII, DHA Karachi measuring 1000 yards from Mrs Kanita Dad W/o Major Mst Ced holding CNIC No. 42402-0888308-6, R/o Karachi, free from all dues, bills, claim, etc. anybody / Authority having any claim / objection should notify us and Administrator, DHA Karachi, and us with documentary evidence within 07 days of this publication, otherwise transaction shall be completed in favour of our respected client. Muhammad Umar Farooq (Advocate) / Umar Farooq Associates, 4, Dadhyal Centre, Plot No. B-30, Main University Road, Block-13-A, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi. Phone 0321-9362853. (1153281395)

OUR client has contracted to purchase Double Story Bungalow No. 148/II, 27th Street, Phase VIII-A, measuring 466.66 square yards, DHA Karachi from Mrs. Sahana Shakeel W/o Mubashir Hussain Shakeel (Mrs. Rahana Shakil W/o Nibbasits Hussain Shakil as Per Documents) CNIC No. 42301-2810952-2 Through General Attorney Mr. Mubashir Hussain Shakeel S/o Shabbir Hussain CNIC No. 42201-1202998-1 Resident of Karachi free from all dues, charges, liabilities etc. Any Person, Bank, Authority having any claim / objection should notify us / Sub Registrar-I, Clifton Town Karachi within 07 days of this publication other wise transaction shall be completed in favour of our client. PARADIGM INVESTMENT Umar (0334-3777977) (1000283435)

OUR client has contracted to purchase Plot No. 102, First Floor, 600 square feet (Approx), Building No. 22-C, Safar Commercial Lane 6, Phase VII, DHA Karachi from Mrs. Iraj Adnan W/o Adnan Mazhar Shaikh, CNIC No. 42301-9100710-2, R/o Karachi free from all dues etc. Anybody having any objection should notify us / Sub Registrar I, Clifton Town Karachi within 7 days of this publication after that no claim will be entertained. USAMA TAHIR (0333-4440560) FUJAYA PROPERTIES. (1102281674)

OUR client has contracted to purchase PLOT NO. 24C, Al Murtaza Comm. Lane-1 Phase VIII-A measuring 200 square yards situated in Pakistan Defence Officers Housing Authority Karachi, from MR. AHMED MUBASHIR SHAFF son of Mirhaqiuddin holding CNIC No. 42201-2076461-1 (2) MIS-HAMMAD YAQOOB WALD son of S/o. Khan Muhammad Khan Niazi holding CNIC No. 42201-1541023-5 both Resident of Karachi through SOLITAIRE CONSTRUCTION W-C, Ground Floor Al-Murtaza Comm. Lane-2, DHA Karachi, free from all dues, taxes, and all other liabilities, litigation, suites, disputes, mortgages of whatsoever nature. Any Person, Bank, Authority having any claim should notify us and Administrator PDOHA Karachi and undersigned within (07) days. Failing which any claim shall be deemed to have been waived and transfer shall be completed favouring our client M/s. Real Property PRIME TIME & SAHIB SULEMANI PROPERTIES Plot No. 11-C/1, Shahbaz Comm, Lane No. 4, off 26th Street, Phase-VI, DHA Karachi-75500 Pakistan, M. Nadeem Sulaiman Cell # +92 300-8086662 (1000281539)

OUR client has contracted to purchase Residential Plot No. 17/II, 26TH STREET, PHASE VIII-E, measuring 1000 square yards Approx. DHA, Karachi, from Mrs Noor Afshan W/o Qaiser Ebrahim(dn CNIC No. 42101-5210833-0 R/o Karachi, free from all claims whatsoever. Any Person having any claim should notify us and Administrator DHA Karachi within (7) days of this publication. SK KHANANI ESTATE WC Almurtaza Lane 1 Ofy Shaheen Phase II DHA Kdi. SALMAN KHANANI 0321-2703675. (1000282491)

NOTICE
TO PUBLIC

KARACHI

OUR client has contracted to purchase Residential Plot No. 391/III, 39TH STREET, PHASE VIII-D, measuring 666.67 square yards approx DHA, Karachi, from Mrs Anum Riaz Baseeraq W/o Riaz Iqbal Baseeraq CNIC No. 42201-9464668-0 R/o Karachi, free from all claims whatsoever. Any Person having any claim should notify us and Administrator DHA Karachi within (7) days of this publication. SK KHANANI ESTATE WC Almurtaza Lane 1 Ofy Shaheen Phase II DHA Kdi. SALMAN KHANANI 0321-2703675. (1000282500)

NOORIABAD

OUR clients have contracted to purchase Plot No. 187, (5.00 Acres) Plot No. 188, (5.00 Acres) and Plot No. 189 (5.00 Acres) situated at SITE Noorabad Phase-III from Qasis Industrial Estate (Pvt.) Limited through its authorized Director Ch. Humayun Naseem, Any Person, Bank or Authority having any claim / Objection regarding the above said property should notify on below contact details within seven days of the publication of this notice along with documentary evidence / Proof. After that, all claims and objections whatsoever shall be deemed to have been waived off and the transaction shall be completed. Contact details: Secretary SITE and Plot No. 4/60-Z-53, Phase-2, SITE Super highway, Karachi Cell # 0333-8387758. (1000282764)

COURT
NOTICE

KARACHI

In the Court of Khaqan Babar Khan Gopang, Civil Judge, Khanewal. Tasleem Haider s/o Public at large etc. Succession. Versus. Tania Mahrukh, Rania Hayat D/o Sadaqat Hayat caste Sipra R/o Chak 6/9R Khanewal. Current R/o Changalish City, Hotian Chena. Your Respondents are direct to appear in Court in person through counsel on 06-03-2025 at 9:00 am failing which ex-parte proceeding shall be initiated against you. (1027291421)

ISLAMABAD

MY client, Miss Wajeeha Habib wife of Farooq Ali, Identity Number 00401-1100005-2, resident of House 1145, Street 44, Phase III, Bahria Town, Islamabad willfully and without any coercion or undue influence renounce her Afghan Nationality. Lugman Ali Sipra, Advocate High Court, CNIC: 35202-7936713-7, License No. 7577, CC No. 7547/15(SB), Address: Office No. 01, First Floor, Plaza 69 Sector F, DHA-I, Islamabad. (1087277719)

DAWN the complete newspaper

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Rangers, police escort Hesco team in drive against defaulters

By Our Correspondent

DADU: Rangers and police personnel escorted Hyderabad Electric Supply Company officers and workers in a joint operation conducted in the utility's Kotri sub-division against power theft on Monday.

The Hesco team was led by SDO of Gulbahar.

The team identified and disconnected 15 illegal connections installed to use submersible and other appliances. The connections were installed to draw electricity being supplied through the 'B' Feeder along Jamshoro Canal.

Another Hesco team confiscated a transformer in the Allah Bachayo Shoro village over non-payment of outstanding bills of around Rs5m by consumers of the area.

Three more transformers were removed for the same reason to stop electric supply to defaulting consumers.

Four terrorists jailed for 14 years

By Our Correspondent

SUKKUR: The Anti-Terrorism Court-I of Sukkur has sentenced four terrorists to 14-year imprisonment in a case registered against them at the city's Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) police station on April 17, 2024.

According to the CTD, Manthar Ali, son of Qadir Bakhsh, Akram Shah, son of Gul Shah, Abdul Qadeer, son of Abdul Hakeem and Karim Bakhsh, son of Bagan Malik were arrested after arms, ammunition and explosive material were seized from them.

A CTD release said that three cases — crime No. 3/2024 under sections 4/5 of the Explosive Act, Section 34 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) and Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997; crime No. 4/2024 & crime No. 5/2024 under Section 23(1)(a) of the Sindh Arms Act, 2013 were registered against them.

It said that the seized case property comprised two 30-bore pistols along with magazines, 10 bullets, 20 non-electrical detonators, 400 grams of nut bolts, ball-bearings and nails, 300 grams of explosive material and 10 safety fuse wires.

It said that the trial against them was held in the ATC-I of Sukkur which, on February 28, 2025, awarded them 14-year rigorous imprisonment.

Lined channel develops breach in Digri

By Our Correspondent

MIRPURKHAS: The dyke of Kingoro Shaikh, a lined irrigation channel near Digri town, developed a wide breach causing flooding across the nearby villages and agricultural lands on Monday.

The breach occurred as soon as water was released into the channel after a long break of three months. The channel was kept closed for lining work and desilting.

A number of slabs were uprooted near Noral Shah, Deh 147, when the dyke could not withstand pressure of flows. The breach was plugged after six hours of hectic efforts.

Progress made in judicial inquiry into row between lawyers and police

By Our Staff Correspondent

HYDERABAD: Lawyers have decided to appear before judicial inquiry ordered by Sindh Home department on the request of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh last month in the wake of lawyers' agitation against Hyderabad senior superintendent of police (SSP) Dr Farrukh Ali, a close relative of Sindh home minister.

Hyderabad District Bar Association (HDBA) has received names of five lawyers, who want to appear before judicial officer — a sessions judge of Hyderabad — to voluntarily record their statements about the events of Feb 3 and 4 leading up to SSP-lawyers tiff.

The SSP has also submitted a list of witnesses who will record their statements before the inquiry officer. "We have submitted a list today of around 25 personnel who will be deposing before the judge," the SSP told *Dawn*.

The ongoing strike by lawyers aimed at getting the SSP transferred would continue on Tuesday but the HDBA was likely to allow litigants to file cases and seek different legal remedies in their cases.

The judicial inquiry was ordered on Feb 22 by Sindh Home Department on IGP's request after the SSP was allowed to proceed on leave on Feb 4 amid the lawyers' agitation.

The inquiry is to be completed within 30 days of which 10 have already passed. The inquiry officer is required "to ascertain facts leading to the incident along with fixing responsibility; suggest recommendations for formulation of framework/mechanism to prevent such situations in the future and to foster a professional and cooperative relationship between police and legal fraternity to avoid undue confrontation".

HDBA president Ashar Majeed Khokhar said that he and the HDBA general secretary Babar Rasool Memon met acting Chief Justice of Sindh High Court Mohammad Junaid Ghaffar regarding HDBA's issue with Hyderabad SSP, who rejoined office after availing a week's leave in the wake of lawyers' agitation. It was the second meeting within a week's time.

"The five lawyers who have volunteered to record their statement before the judicial officer include two members of managing committee and a female lawyer," said HDBA general secretary Babar Rasool Memon.

About Monday's meeting with acting CJ, he informed that CJ also advised them to join judicial proceedings. "Litigants are indeed suffering. In the bar meeting we are most likely to decide to allow institution of fresh cases," he said.

The lawyers had started the agitation after registration of FIR on Feb 3 against one of their colleagues from Tando Allahyar for having tinted glasses and fancy number plate in his car.

On Feb 4, the protesting lawyers barged into the SSP office, demanding suspension of SHO of Bhittai Nagar police station but the officer refused to bow to the lawyers.

"We will have HDBA's meeting today [Monday night] to decide that litigants at least should be allowed to enter court premises to institute fresh cases for legal remedies. Poor litigants have been in trouble since this strike has started," Ashar told *Dawn* on Monday evening following his meeting with acting CJ SHC.

"We intend to file a petition against the SSP as he is not fit for holding this position," insisted newly-elected HDBA president.

Ashar explained the SSP's conduct could in no way be termed 'professional'. "The way he resumed his duties showed as if he had conquered something. He entered the office wearing a turban, which is quite unprofessional and against the government rules for a public servant," he said.

After the SSP refused to suspend SHO Bhittai Nagar, the lawyers belonging to HDBA and High Court Bar Association (HCBA) blocked a section of Hyderabad bypass on Feb 6.

The blockade followed Hyderabad DIG Tariq Dharejo's refusal to visit the bar along with the SSP's 'transfer order' as was promised by him on Feb 4-5 mid-night to persuade the lawyers to end the protest inside SSP office Hyderabad.

The blockade of Hyderabad bypass led by Agar Tunio, K.B. Leghari, Faisal Mughal, Ashar Khokhar and Babar Memon ended on Feb 7 when SSP Dr Farrukh proceeded on leave only to resume his duties after a week on Feb 15, forcing lawyers to resume their protest on Feb 20, which was still continuing.

The lawyers have intensified the strike since Feb 20 during which they do not allow policemen and litigants to enter courts' premises. The main doors of district and civil courts remain closed with a camp set up in front of its main entrance.

HYDERABAD: Residents of Bulri Shah Karim town of Tando Mohammad Khan Taluka hold a demonstration against alleged abduction of a youth and manhandling of their several other community members by their rivals in the area, on Monday.—Dawn

Absentee teachers face action

By Our Correspondent

UMERKOT: Strict departmental action has been started on the orders of Sindh minister for education against primary and secondary teachers in the district, who have consistently been absent from their duties.

Official sources disclosed to Dawn on Monday that biometric chief monitoring officer had identified 1,332 teachers across Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, and Shaheed Benazirabad divisions, who had been declared absentees. Their salaries had been suspended and they had been issued show-cause notices, said the sources.

They said that the absentee teachers included those from both primary and secondary school sections. Among them, 712 teachers belonged to the minister's home district, Umerkot, said the sources.

In response, the divisional director of education initiated an investigation in Umerkot and in the first phase, 50 secondary and 150 primary teachers had been served show-cause notices, while District Education Officer Inayat Kunbhar had summoned the absentee teachers to his office, they said.

Divisional Deputy Director of Education Jamool Qureshi had also arrived in Umerkot to oversee the scrutiny process while a notification had been issued to block salary IDs of absentee teachers, said the sources.

As per the biometric department's report, there were 618 absentee teachers in Umerkot, 399 in Tharparkar, 82 in Mirpurkhas, 986 in Sanghar, 187 in Shaheed Benazirabad and 79 in Naushahro Feroze districts' primary section, and in secondary section, there were 94 absentees in Umerkot, 167 in Tharparkar, and 55 in Mirpurkhas.

The chief monitoring officer had sent lists of absentee teachers to the directors of education in Mirpurkhas and Shaheed Benazirabad divisions for further action.

SHO suspended after colleague's murder in Larkana

By Our Correspondent

LARKANA: The station house officer (SHO) of the Bakrani police station, Inspector Abdul Sattar Bhayo, was suspended and demoted on Monday over murder of his colleague, Rafiq Ahmed Shaikh, a day earlier.

Constable Shaikh, in civvies, was returning home located in a nearby village by his motorcycle after performing night duty at the station when he was shot dead by unknown assailants at Sandhelo Lano (turning).

According to his relatives, the deceased was carrying his salary.

SHO Bhayo, soon after the incident, had visited the crime scene along with SSP Ahmed Chaudhry to collect information about the incident. On the basis of circumstantial evidence, the SHO believed that the murder seemed to be motivated by some personal enmity, arguing that the assailants did not take away the motorcycle or any other belongings of the constable.

The initial report of the incident released by the Bakrani police, however, had claimed that the assailants were suspected robbers who shot constable Shaikh for resisting their attempt to snatch his motorcycle. The SHO said that an investigation from different angles would have to be conducted to ascertain the assailants' motive.

SSP Chadhary on Monday suspended and demoted SHO Bhayo, and also asked him to report to the police headquarters. He posted Inspector Ahmed Ali Odho as the Bakrani SHO with immediate effect.

It was reported on Sunday that the ASP City and other police officers visited the critically wounded constable at the Trauma Centre of the Chandka Medical College (CMCH) Hospital and ascertained details of the incident from his close relatives.

They were informed that the area police and some onlookers had rushed to the crime scene and shifted Rafiq Shaikh to the Trauma Centre in a precarious condition. He succumbed to his wounds during treatment.

His death prompted the Larkana DIG Nasir Aftab Pathan to contact SSP Chaudhry and order him to ensure immediately arrest the killers. The SSP, as a first step, suspended, demoted and replaced SHO Abdul Sattar Bhayo.

Research work on haiku in Sindhi launched

By Our Correspondent

SUKKUR: A book titled *Mein hin kangan ain maah* (Raindrops and dew), a research work on haiku — a Japanese genre of poetry with short, unrhymed and usually three lines — authored by poet and writer, Gohar Sindhi, was launched at the Sufi Badhal Faqir Siyoni Library in Shikarpur the other day.

Sindhi writer Essa Memon, who presided over the book launch ceremony, said that Gohar Sindhi's book stood apart from the other works he had penned so far.

He said that the present work was not just a research on Sindhi literature, but a document that would be used as a reference book on the haiku genre in Sindhi.

Hakim Gul said that Sindhi's book included all the material needed for any research or reference. By having done this work, Sindhi had preserved his name in the history of Sindhi literature, he said.

He said that excellent work had been done and continued to be done in Sindhi literature in both poetry and prose.

Itemaar Chandio said that this book was a comprehensive scholarly work, and for such a commendable work, the author deserved praise. "We are in dire need of such books at this time," he said.

The author, Gohar Sindhi, said that he wrote this book with great hard work and tried to include in it everything related to haiku that was needed in a research work. Only readers could tell how much effort had been put into the book, he said.

Asad Bukhari, Sami Sajjad Mirani, Ustad Rabi, Hassan Memon, Abdul Jabbar, Anju Mangi, Sharif Shad and many other poets and writers also expressed their views at the book launch ceremony.

Meanwhile, a poetry recital (mushaira) with the theme of "Sindhi Language, National Language" was also organised at the library in which renowned Sindhi poets, Imtiaz Mangi, Nasreen Bukhari, Aurangzeb Aajiz, Abid Sindhi, Nasir Baloch, Azhar Asad Mughal, Faiz Soomro, Abdul Wasi, Arbab Asif Chohan, Abdul Jabbar, Abdul Wahab Sheikh and Ghulam Ali Gul recited poetry and received applause from audience.

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SUDOKU ALPHA

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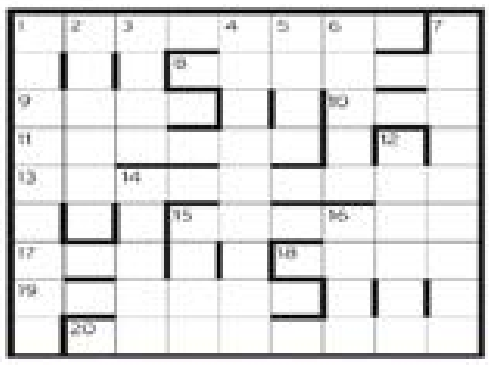
		5	7	4			6	
			6				8	
		1				5		
	3		8	5				
		6	2				4	
2							1	

To solve this puzzle each 3x9 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 Rhinwalder (C) PZZL.com

CROSSWORD



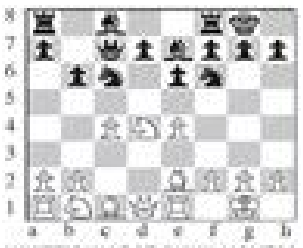
ACROSS

1 Hostile reaction (8)
8 South American cowboy (6)
9 Applies lightly (4)
10 Possess (3)
11 Verse of a poem (6)
13 Stamp-collecting (9)
15 Building type (6)
17 Conger or moray (3)
18 Latvian capital (4)
19 Spires (6)
20 Spires (8)

DOWN

1 Counterpane (9)
2 Author, _ Christie (6)
3 Caribbean nation (4)
4 One of the Canary Islands (9)
5 Surrounding glow (4)
6 Get a goal (5)
7 Gnome bays (anag.) (9)
12 Pestilence (6)
14 Cove or bay (5)
15 Sheet of glass (4)
16 Top up (4)

CHESS



WHITE'S WORST PAWN MOVES?

HINT: THEY LOSE A PIECE.

Bodefeldem
8. f 1. 1d7 ce 1. D7. ... Rxd4! (wins a piece) as 2. Qxd4. is met by ... Bb5! (wins the queen).

TARGET

I	D	R
T	Y	N
I	C	A

HOW many words of four letters or more can you make from the letters shown here?

In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each must contain the centre letter and there must be at least one nine-letter word.

No plurals or verb forms ending in "s".

TODAY'S TARGET

Good 12;

Very good 18;

Excellent 25 (or more).

Solution tomorrow.

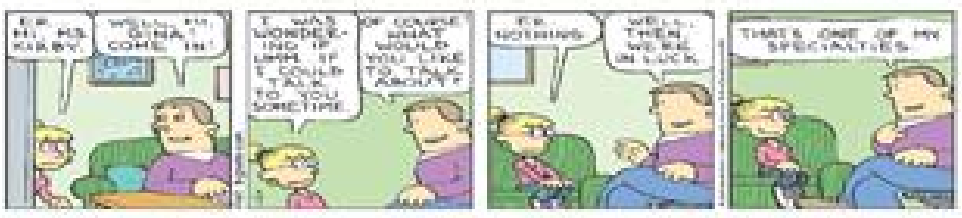
YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

REGRETFUL

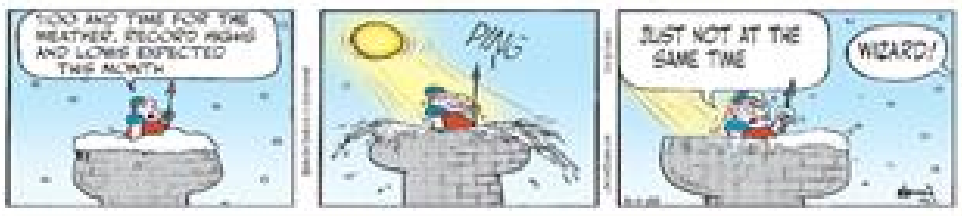
abate feal fell ferrule ferrule flea fleer fleet flue flute fuel furl glee glue glut gruel gull leer leet left luge lure lute reed refuel refuel regret REGRETFUL rule ruler

THE METRO FUNNIES

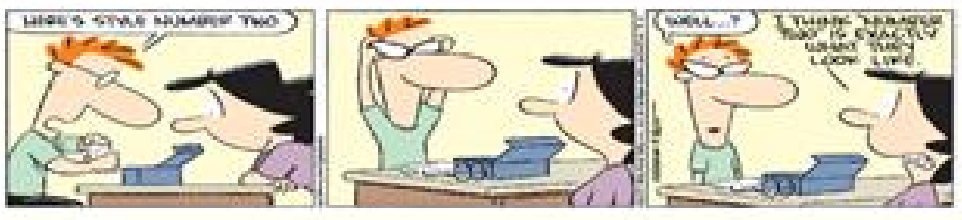
BIG NATE | BY LINCOLN PEIRCE



THE WIZARD OF ID | BY BRANT PARKER AND JOHNNY HART



BABY BLUES



WEATHER

Sunset & Sunrise

Sunset	06:30pm	06:09pm	06:56pm	06:04pm	06:14pm	06:55pm
Sunrise	06:45am	06:20am	06:51am	06:24am	06:56am	06:52am

Three Day Forecast

	Today			Tomorrow			Day After		
	Min	Max	Outlook	Rainfall%	Min	Max	Outlook	Min	Max	Outlook
Faisalabad	10	29	Sunny	75	11	28	Sunny	12	28	Sunny
Hyderabad	12	30	Sunny	80	16	31	Sunny	17	27	Sunny
Islamabad	8	18	Cloudy	89	10	22	Mostly Sunny	10	24	Mostly Sunny
Lahore	11	22	Cloudy	77	10	24	Sunny	12	26	Sunny
Multan	10	25	Sunny	55	11	27	Sunny	13	30	Sunny
Peshawar	6	21	Sunny	67	6	22	Mostly Sunny	11	25	Mostly Sunny
Quetta	1	12	Sunny	34	0	16	Sunny	6	19	Sunny

Temperature estimates are internationally sourced and may differ from local estimates.

HELP

EMERGENCIES

Police Help	15, 8921/9262-63, 8921/9264
OPLC	1102, 32662222
Fire Brigade	16, 99211027, 99211026
Bomb Disposal	9921/2979
1122 Complaints	1122
Telephone complaints	1218
Railway Inquiry	9921/3490-92
PCAA Flight Inquiry	99212164, 99212124
	99212000, 114

HOSPITALS

Abbasi Shaheed	99250400-09
Civil Hospital	99211740, 99213660
Jinnah Hospital	99201300-99201500
MCHS	99202271-6
Aga Khan Hospital	34810000
Khairabbi Dan Hospital	32101113-16
Indus Hospital	35112700
Tabba	35877041, 111444444
Ziauddin Hospital	35862201-9, 35862301-9
Kiran Cancer Hospital	99201001-04
Liaquat National	111-456-456, 34810811
Memon Medical	34821147 — 54
A.G. Clinic	35851004, 35852102-04
Baqai Hospital	35210001, 35810004
Holy Family Hospital	32736001, 32736011
Patel Hospital	111 36 73
South City Hospital	35217072
Kidney Centre Institute	35851000-10
Ramzan e Hayat	(021) 111-834-111
Usman Memorial	(021) 36310311-15

AMBULANCE

Edhi	115, 32910066, 32912077
Chhipa	1020
1020/5 Rescue	1122
St John	32730002, 32732400
Red Crescent	35360227, 35360228

BLOOD BANK

Fahad	32102240, 32106656
Rizwan	32136401-05
PMA (Civil)	99213361, 99213536

WORD GAME

By Kathleen Saxa

TODAY'S WORD

HAPPIEST

(HAPPIEST: HAP-ee-est) Most content.

Average mark: 33 words
Time limit: 50 minutes

Can you find 41 or more words in HAPPIEST?

The list will be published tomorrow.

SOLUTIONS

YESTERDAY'S WORD — BACCHANALIA

bacchanal	ahia
bail	chic
banal	chin
blah	china
blain	cicala
blanch	cinch
blin	clan
acacia	clinch
acai	hail
cabal	hall
cabana	laic
cabin	lain
canal	lanai
chai	inch
chain	

RULES OF THE GAME:

1. Words must be of four or more letters.
2. Words that acquire four letters by the addition of "s," such as "bats" or "dies," are not allowed.
3. Additional words made by adding a "d" or an "s" may not be used. For example, if "bake" is used, "baked" or "bakes" are not allowed, but "bake" and "baking" are admissible.
4. Proper nouns, slang words, or vulgar or sexually explicit words are not allowed.

YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

ACROSS

Ownership
Raised
Refugee
Hour
Cat
Degrees
Say
Fern
Trained
Scrape
Addressed.

DOWN

Orchestra
Wave
Energy
Reference
Hog
Ideas
Protracted
Refers
Barrel
Rope
Add.

METRO EVENTS

DARS-I-QURAN

A Quranic lecture is being organised by the Zaynab Academy, at D-52, Street 1, Block L, North Nazimabad at 2pm, on every Tuesday and Thursday. It is only for women.

Taraweeh with explanation of Quranic verses by Shujauddin Sheikh, under the aegis of Tanzeem-i-Islami, at The Signature & Imperial Banquet Halls, Stadium Road, after Isha prayer.

Taraweeh with explanation of Quranic verses by Muhammad Rizwan, at Quran Markaz, 10th C, 10th Commercial Street, Phase II, Ext, DHA, after Isha prayer.

SEERATUN NABI

The *36th Annual Mehfil-e-Seerat un-Nabi* (SWR) and *'Inter School Naat Competition 2025'* is being held at Marriott Hotel at 3pm.

WEBINAR

A webinar on 'Living the Spirit of Ramadan Beyond Fasting', by Dr Muhammad Imran Ashraf Usmani, is being organised by the Meezan Bank, live on Zoom and Facebook at 3pm.

EXHIBITIONS

A solo show by Jovita Alvares opens at Canvas Gallery at 11am. The show, titled *Goa Last Night I Dreamed I Touched You... Today It Disappears*, will remain open till March 13 daily from 11am to 6pm, excluding Sundays.

The Submission, an exhibition of works by Shibbee Muneer, is underway at Art Scene Gallery, Clifton. It will continue till March 7.

HOROSCOPE

By Georgia Nicols

ARIES | March 21-April 19

*** Keep your eyes open for opportunities that could impact financial transactions. This could mean a sudden purchase or a quick agreement to something. To do this, you'll have to be alert and on your toes. (With Mercury in your sign right now, you'll have no problem doing this.) Tonight: Protect possessions.

TAURUS | April 20-May 20

**** Today you feel impulsive and impetuous, which is why you might suddenly go off in a new direction or do something that others don't expect. This could relate to advice you get from someone older or more experienced. You might follow this advice or rebel against it. Tonight: Move fast.

GEMINI | May 21-June 20

*** This is a restless day. Conversations with others, especially friends, will go well. You continue to make a great impression on bosses and people in authority. Nevertheless, a little voice in the back of your head seems to be nagging you about something. (Could this be your twin?) Tonight: Solitude.

CANCER | June 21-July 22

**** A friend might surprise you today by saying or doing something you least expect. Or perhaps you're caught off guard by someone in a group or an organization. You can't ignore rules and regulations or the traditions of the institutions you value. Tonight: Someone unusual.

LEO | July 23-Aug. 22

*** You're high-viz today, which means others notice you more than usual. Keep this in mind. Avoid a hissing argument in an elevator. However, someone older or more experienced might give you excellent advice about financial matters, shared property, loans or mortgages. (It's always great to have a good tip.) Tonight: Something unexpected.

VIRGO | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

**** Sudden opportunities might fall in your lap today. Alternatively, you might have to travel when you didn't expect to do so. Or by extension, travel plans might be delayed, changed or canceled. Meanwhile, conversations with a spouse or partner will be practical and serious. Tonight: Be vigilant.

LIBRA | Sept. 23-Oct. 22

*** Make friends with your bank account today, because something unexpected could impact your assets, inheritances, insurance issues or anything to do with the wealth and resources of your partner. It could be work-related or health-related. Keep your eyes open. Tonight: Check your finances.

SCORPIO | Oct. 23-Nov. 21

**** Don't be surprised if a partner or close friend throws you a curveball today. They might demand more freedom in the relationship. Or they might say or do something you least expect. Very possibly, this relates to the care and education of kids or something to do with vacations or sports. Tonight: Be patient.

SAGITTARIUS | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

*** Your work routine will be interrupted today because of power outages, staff shortages, equipment breakdowns, late deliveries — something out of the blue. Try to give yourself extra time so that you have enough wiggle room to deal with the unexpected. Tonight: Guard your pets.

CAPRICORN | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

**** Parents should be extra vigilant today, because this is an accident-prone day for your kids. Meanwhile, social occasions might be canceled or changed. Alternatively, you might receive a fun invitation. This is a good day to learn something or practice a skill to get better at it. Tonight: Be alert.

AQUARIUS | Jan. 20-Feb. 18

*** Small appliances might break down or a minor breakage could occur. Something will interrupt your home routine. Possibly someone unexpected arrives at the door. Meanwhile, give serious thought to a financial transaction today, including a purchase. Is this what you really want? Tonight: Something unexpected.

PISCES | Feb. 19-Mar. 20

**** Pay attention to everything you say and do, because this is an accident-prone day for your sign. Nevertheless, despite this erratic energy, you can still focus on practical matters that require attention to detail. (Go figure.) This means you can get a lot done. It's a good day to teach others as well. Tonight: Be mindful.

CONTRACT BRIDGE

Bidding Quiz

By Steve Becker

A rare finesse

West dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ A 8 2
♥ J 10 9 2
♦ 7 3 2
♣ K Q 9

WEST
♠ Q 6 4 3
♥ 7 6
♦ A K Q J 10
♣ 8 2

EAST
♠ 10 7 5
♥ A 4
♦ 9 5 4
♣ 10 7 6 4 3

SOUTH
♠ K J 9
♥ K Q 8 5 3
♦ 9 6
♣ A J 5

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	Pass	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥		

Opening lead – king of diamonds.

The "backward" finesse is a play that is rarely used because it is much less likely to succeed than an ordinary finesse. However, when a backward finesse offers the only realistic chance to make the contract, it must be risked.

Consider this deal where South gets to four hearts as shown and West leads the K-Q-A of diamonds. Declarer ruffs the third diamond and loses the king of hearts to East's ace. South wins East's trump return and, having already lost three tricks, must avoid a spade loser.

With this spade combination, declarer would normally lead to the ace and then back to the jack, hoping East had the queen. This would win about half the time.

In this deal, though, declarer knows from the bidding that the normal spade finesse is doomed to fail. East has already shown up with the ace of hearts and presumably would not have passed his partner's opening bid if he also held the queen of spades. Furthermore, West would not have had enough points for an opening bid without the spade queen.

Fortunately, South has the necessary spot cards in spades to make a backward finesse feasible. So he initiates the suit by leading the jack from his hand. If West ducks, the jack is allowed to ride, and the contract is home.

If West covers the jack with the queen, dummy wins with the ace and a spade is returned toward the K-9. After East follows low, the nine is played, and, because East has the ten, again declarer is home.

When the location of a missing queen is not known, a backward finesse in that suit will succeed only 25% of the time, since it depends on two cards — the queen and ten — being favorably placed. For this reason, the play is seldom used. But when the usual approach seems certain to fail, the backward finesse might offer the only hope.

Tomorrow: Delicate defensive play.

YESTERDAY'S SUDOKU SOLUTIONS

Quick — A4990

6	8	5	7	4	3	2	9	1
1	2	4	5	9	8	6	7	3
3	7	9	1	2	6	4	5	8
9	4	8	2	7	5	1	3	6
5	1	7	4	6	9	8	2	3
2	6	3	8	1	7	9	4	5
8	3	6	9	5	4	7	1	2
7	5	2	6	3	1	5	8	4
4	9	1	3	8	2	5	6	7

Tricky — B4990

7	4	9	5	1	8	3	6	2
6	5	8	3	9	2	1	4	7
3	1	2	6	4	7	8	5	9
1	7	5	9	6	3	2	8	4
9	2	4	7	8	5	6	1	3
8	6	3	4	2	1	9	7	5
4	9	7	8	5	6	3	2	1
5	3	6	2	7	9	4	8	8
2	8	1	1	3	4	5	9	6

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DAWN

METRO North

ISLAMABAD Tuesday, March 4, 2025

ISLAMABAD
Sunset 06:08pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:29am

NEXT 24 HRS
Minimum 08°C
Maximum 18°C
Outlook Cloudy

ISLAMABAD
RAMAZAN TIMING

FIQH-E-HANAFIA	FIQH-E-JAFFRIA
Iftar (today)	Iftar (today)
6:08pm	6:18pm
Sehr (Tomorrow)	Sehr (Tomorrow)
5:08am	4:58am

Day-long rain in twin cities increases water level in Rawal Dam

MOTORCYCLISTS wait to cross Khayaban-i-Suhrawardi during rain in Islamabad on Monday. In the other picture, people are seen walking on a bridge during snowfall in Azad Kashmir's Jhelum Valley. — Photos by Mohammad Asim & Online

Water-storage has improved, supply to Wasa will continue without any hurdle till monsoon, says official

RAWALPINDI: Light to heavy rain on Monday created a slushy mess on roads and streets in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, but increased the water level in the reservoirs.

In Murree, 3.5 inches of snowfall was recorded which brought down the temperature in the hill station while the administration was working to keep the roads open. The Met Office predicted cloudy weather and isolated rain on Tuesday (today).

Residents of the federal capital and the garrison city woke up to a chilly morning with temperature dropped to seven degrees Celsius as the rain started in the early hours. The Met Office predicted moderate to heavy rain and snowfall in Murree, Galliyat, Naran, Kaghan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Shangla, Astore, Hunza, Skardu, Neelum Valley, Bagh, Poonch and Haveli.

It stated that there was the possibility of landslides and avalanches in hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. It asked tourists and travellers in these areas to remain cautious.

It said a westerly wave was affecting the upper and central parts of the country and may persist in upper parts till Tuesday morning (today).

The Met Office recorded31mm rain at the Islamabad airport, 20mm at Bokra, 22mm at Zero Point, 28mm at Golra and 23mmat Saidpur in Islamabad; 21mmrainat Shamsabad, 25mm at Katchery and 35mm at Chaklala in Rawalpindi.

The rain inundated the underpass of Committee Chowk and low-lying areas of the garrison city. The Water and Sanitation Agency cleaned the areas with heavy machinery.

It was a bad day for motorists as they had to steer through puddles on roads especially in cantonment areas and face worst traffic jams on Murree Road, The Mall, Bank Road, Rashid Minhas Road, Ammar Chowk, Chaklala Scheme-II and Rawal Road.

The fruit and vegetable markets at I-11, I-9, I-10 and G-9 presented a sorry state of affairs of the civic body of the capital city. Water remained accumulated on roads and created problems for pedestrians and motorists.

On the other hand, the water level in Rawal Lake was recorded at 1747 feet while the spillways are open when the water level increases to1752feet. Officials said the water-storage had improved and supply will continue to Wasa without any hurdle till the next monsoon.

Rawal Dam is supplying 28 million gallon daily (MGD) water to Rawalpindi city and cantonment areas through the Rawal filtration plant.

Wasa spokesman Umer Farooq said the agency canceled the holidays of its staff and put them on alert to avoid any untoward situation in the city. He said Wasa teams drained out rainwater with the help of heavy machinery from Committee Chowk underpass, Liaquat Bagh, Asghar Mall Chowk and Murree Road.

The district administration and the meteorological department are in touch and are ready to deal with any kind of emergency. He asked people not to leave their homes unnecessarily and stay away from electricity lines and poles. However, he said water level in Loh Nullah was normal at 8.5 feet recorded at Kattarian bridge and 6.5 feet at Gawalmandi.

It may be mentioned that the pre-alert situation for a flood in the nullah starts from 11.5 feet and the dangerous level from 22 feet with a spillover starting at 30 feet.

In Murree, 3.5 inches of snowfall was recorded on The Mall, Kashmir Point, Kuldana, Sunny Bank, Kali Mitti and other areas.

Deputy Commissioner Agha Zaheer Shirazi said the district administration was working actively to keep the roads open and snow was being removed using machinery.

However, he said there was no report about blockade of any road in the district.

"Monitoring is being conducted through close circuit TV cameras." He advised visitors to check the weather situation before travelling to the area. — Aamir Yasin

Another instalment of Rs9bn released to complete Ring Road by December-end

Required funds are available and now no delay in project would be acceptable, says commissioner

By Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: The government of Punjab has released Rs9 billion more for Rawalpindi Ring Road (RR) to expedite work on the project and meet the deadline of December-end for its completion.

However, the contractor, Frontier Works Organization, will not get Rs4 billion against the work already done due to the delay in the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec).

A senior official of the district administration told Dawn that Rs12 billion had already been spent on the project and payment made to the contractor. However, the FWO was yet to get Rs4 billion for the work it had already completed.

He said after Ecnec's approval of the revised PC-I, the Project Management Unit (PMU) would be able to release the funds to the contractor. The official said after paying Rs4 billion to the contractor, the remaining Rs5 billion would be enough to complete the road from Bamby to Thallian by June. The remaining funds would be released in the next fiscal year for the project worth Rs38 billion.

Deputy Project Director Ashfaq Sulheri told Dawn that Rs130 million had been paid to Pakistan Railways for a railway bridge to be constructed over the Ring Road. He said the PMU was working to complete the project by the December deadline set by the government. He said more than 45 per cent work on the project had been completed and the speed would further be improved in coming days. He said the road would be ready for black topping within three to four months.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Amir Khattak reviewed the Ring Road project at a meeting on Monday and said the project was a top priority of the government, adding, "We will try our best to complete it before the deadline."

He said funds required for the project had been released after which no delay in the project would be acceptable. He directed the deputy project director to update him about the progress on a daily basis. Also, he will inspect the site every three days and visit the entire route every week.

In a briefing, the commissioner was told that the financial progress on the Ring Road project was 45 per cent. With the release of the required funds, the physical and financial progress will now be expedited.

In addition, the revised PC-I had been cleared by the Central Development Working party and was now to be presented at the Ecnec meeting.

The total length of the Ring Road worth Rs38 billion is 38.3km. It will have five interchanges at Bamby, Chak Baili Khan, Adiala Road, Chakri Road and Thalian.

An industrial zone will be established around Ring Road. The road will be operated at a design speed of 120km/h with six lane controlled accesses.

Traffic police advisory for tourists visiting Murree

By Our Staff Reporter

RAWALPINDI: As Murree continues to receive heavy snowfall, City Traffic Police has issued a traffic advisory for tourists urging them to avoid traveling at night under any circumstances.

A spokesman for the City Traffic Police Murree issued the advisory on Monday night, in which people were asked to avoid traveling at night during snowfall. It further advised people to travel in a fully equipped four-wheel drive vehicle with a full fuel tank.

The advisory said that a chain should be tied around tyres in case the vehicle slipped during snowfall.

The spokesperson further said that in case travelers used heater of the vehicle due to the cold weather, windows should be left slightly open.

He said while using a heater in a vehicle and in case the silencer gets blocked with snow, carbon monoxide gas is produced which is harmful to health.

Citizens are therefore requested not to spend the night in their vehicles if they get stuck due to slippery conditions, the spokesperson said, warning people against parking their vehicles on the road during snowfall.

He urged visitors to follow instructions of traffic wardens standing at various points, saying that they played an important role in making people's life safe and their journey easy.

The spokesperson said in case of traffic issues in Murree, people were advised to contact the traffic control room.

Prices go through the roof despite claims by capital admin

Most shopkeepers overcharge customers, downplay official rates despite fines, warnings

By Kalbe Ali

PEOPLE purchase vegetables from a stall at Ramazan Sasta Bazaar outside Allama Iqbal Park in Rawalpindi on Monday. — White Star

ISLAMABAD: A crackdown launched by the Islamabad administration against overcharging has failed to produce desired results at least on the first days of Ramazan, as shopkeepers across the capital continue to overcharge customers without any concern for the official price list issued by the administration.

On the other hand, the administration has said the crackdown will continue without discrimination and shared a list of actions taken by the officials to enforce price lists. In a press note, it said three shops, two superstores, and 51 shopkeepers were arrested for charging excessive rates.

Despite these actions, prices continue to rise on the second day and the official price list – which is supposed to be affixed at a prominent spot in shops and stalls – remained missing almost everywhere, barring some exceptions in the official bazaars. Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz responded to a query about the lax enforcement of price lists, saying that "best possible efforts are being taken" to implement this directive.

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) organises four weekly bazaars in the city and the largest of them is in Sector H-9. But in these bazaars as well, overpricing was prevalent. The stallholders jack up their rates, despite the presence of the official rate list pasted at stalls.

The overcharging particularly was common in the fresh produce section. A kilogramme (kg) rate of strawberries was sold for Rs450 instead of Rs115 while pomegranates were being sold for up to Rs600 instead of Rs440. Guava was listed at Rs250 per kilo but sold at Rs350.

Green chillies, bell peppers, and other produce were also overpriced. Capsicum was listed at Rs67 per kg but the sellers did not budge at anything less than Rs80. The price of green chillies was Rs84-104/kg, but it was offered at Rs50-60 per 250 grammes.

The official rate lists fail to deter shopkeepers from overcharging, and instead they tell customers to look for produce elsewhere if overpricing was their problem.

"When I pointed out the disparity between official rates and the selling price, the stallholder taunted that 'it was my affordability issue as everybody was buying it'," said Ghulam Abbas, a journalist based in Islamabad. His complaint, however, was addressed after he went to the bazaar officials who ensured he'd get produce as per the list. "But that is also an issue; how many people feel comfortable expressing such issues and go to an office," he said.

Another excuse the shopkeepers have is the disparity between 'A-grade' and 'B-grade' produce. They sell low-quality produce as per the price list, while the better-quality products are sold at the rate of their liking. Responding to a query, the officials at the bazaar expressed an inability to control stallholders on the grounds that "it was their attitude" despite repeated warnings and fines.

The performance of the district administration in this regard also attracted flak from traders. "They issue price lists and tell the government that prices have gone down as the market rate was in line with the official price list, while shopkeepers freeze the buyers at their will," said Ajmal Baloch, president of Traders Welfare Association, Islamabad.

Police official booked for freeing suspects

A police official has been booked for setting free two suspects involved in several cases after a court in the federal capital discharged them in only one of the cases, while sending them on judicial remand in at least four cases.

However, instead of taking these suspects back to Adiala jail from district courts in Islamabad, the police team removed their handcuffs and allowed them to walk free.

— Detailed Story on Page 15

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PRAYER

Fajr	05:46
Zuhar	12:23
Asr	03:55
Magheb	06:33
Isha	06:59

Starting time in Islamabad

REFLECTIONS

"REMEMBER THAT PIETY AND NOBLENESS OF ALL YOUR ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO SINCERITY AND PUNCTUALITY OF YOUR PRAYERS."

— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)

NAB distributes cheques among housing scam victims

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Monday distributed cheques to the affected persons of four housing scams in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

According to the NAB headquarters, a ceremony for the distribution of recovered amounts to the affected plot seekers was held at bureau's headquarters which was chaired by Deputy Chairman NAB Sohail Nasir.

Substantial cheques were distributed among victims of four housing projects in Rawalpindi and Islamabad- Ghauri Town, Azam City, Gulshan Rehman, and Jeddah Town.

Deputy Chairman NAB Sohail Nasir, Prosecutor General Accountability Syed Ehtisham Qadir Shah, Director General NAB Rawalpindi Mirza Mohammad Irfan Baig, and other officers distributed the cheques among the victims.

On the occasion, Deputy Chairman NAB Sohail Nasir said that comprehensive measures were being taken to prevent corruption.

He said citizens should only invest in legally approved housing projects after thorough scrutiny and knowledge to protect themselves from fraud and deception.

The NAB's deputy chief said NAB's public awareness campaign regarding safe investments in real estate was underway, however, it was the duty of citizens to take all possible precautions to avoid fraud.

Mr Sohail said NAB's crackdown on plunderers of public funds has been intensified, and it was encouraging that in a short period of one year, NAB has recovered Rs1.5 billion from the managements of these four housing projects.

Later, he distributed shields among NAB officers who demonstrated excellent performance and paid tribute to the services of NAB investigation officers who played a crucial role in recovering the funds of the victims in these four housing projects through their day and night efforts.

Director General NAB Rawalpindi Mirza Mohammad Irfan Baig, while outlining the performance of NAB Rawalpindi, stated that NAB Rawalpindi has so far recovered Rs38 billion in banning fraud cases. Of which, Rs32.8 billion have been returned to the public or deposited into the national treasury.

DG NAB Rawalpindi further informed that since January 2023, Rs23.8 billion have been returned to 8,000 victims.

PM urged to re-impose govt's control on medicine prices

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has been urged to impose government's control on medicine prices again as drug prices have been continuously increasing.

Moreover, he has been requested to form a joint investigation team (JIT) to probe all the illegalities committed by the officials of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Drap).

In a letter to the prime minister, Punjab Bar Council member Sardar Adeel Aslam Bhinder has pointed out that just two days before the general elections on Feb 6 the caretaker setup had removed the mandatory government control on medicine prices.

It has been claimed that since then medicine prices have been increasing rapidly due to which poor patients and their families were suffering.

"Drap officials are doing foreign tours sponsored by private pharmaceutical companies," he alleged.

The letter alleged that the a former Chief Executive Officer of Drap had declared himself dead to avoid a National Accountability Bureau (NAB) case and later was dismissed on the orders of the Islamabad High Court as Higher Education Commission declared his degree fake.

While quoting the India's medicine export data, Sardar Adeel Aslam Bhinder has claimed that India's pharmaceutical export climbed by 9.67pc to $27.9 billion in 2023-24; whereas Pakistan had exported $199 million in pharmaceutical products.

On the other hand, import of pharmaceutical products has been increasing day by day in Pakistan.

Letter claimed that there was hardly any growth of Registered Medicines Manufacturing Units in Pakistan and there was not a single FDA or EU approved Pharmaceutical Unit in Pakistan, whereby India is the only country with largest number of US-FDA compliant pharma plants (more than 262 including APIs) outside of the US.

"India has nearly 1400 WHO-GMP approved pharma plants, 253 European Directorate of Quality Medicines approved plants with modern state of the art technology.

Prime minister has been urged to form a joint investigation team to probe all the illegalities against the officials of Drap.

Three 'robbers' nabbed after shoot-out with police

By Our Correspondent

TAXILA: Three suspected robbers were arrested after a shoot-out with police on Hazara road in Hassanabdal early on Monday.

According to sources, a police team on patrol spotted four suspicious persons. When they were intercepted, the suspects opened fire at the police which was retaliated during which Sabir Ali and Sher Dil were arrested. One of the suspected robbers later identified as Farman Khan was caught with a bullet injury while the fourth suspect identified as Dildar Khan managed to escape. During the shoot-out, no policeman was injured.

A police spokesman said the gang of robbers had snatched Rs2.50 million cash from a cattle dealer identified as Zaffar Khan in Havelian town of KP. The police have said the looted cash and weapon utilised in the crime were recovered from the robbers. The injured were shifted to tehsil headquarters hospital Hassanabdal.

Carjacker killed

A carjacker was killed during a botched vehicle snatching bid in the New City Phase-II in the limits of Hassanabdal police station on Monday.

According to a police spokesman, the suspect while posing as a passenger booked a Mehran from Rawalpindi to New City area. Upon reaching the destination, he took out a pistol and tried to snatch the vehicle. The car driver attempted to overpower him and accelerated the speed resultantly the suspect came under the wheels of the vehicle and died on the spot. The outlaw was not identified till filing of this report.

Two die in accidents

Two persons were killed while two others injured critically in separate accidents in various parts of Attock on Monday.

In the first incident, a young man was killed and two others injured after two motorcycles collided with each other on Rawalpindi-Kohat road in the limits of Jand police.

Police sources said that Ahsan Khan along with his friend was going from Jand to Dhoke Takkya when his motorcycle collided head-on with another motorcycle. Resultantly, he died on the spot while two others persons were injured.

Separately, a six-year-old girl was run over by a passenger van in village Jalo near Burhan in the limits of Hassanabdal police.

The girl was playing near the railway track when a Peshawar-bound passenger van coming from Rawalpindi ran over her.

Meanwhile, a 45-year-old woman was abducted by four persons in the limits of Wah Cantonment police.

Man kills stepmother

MUZAFFARABAD: A man shot and killed his stepmother following a heated argument and fled the scene, police said on Monday.

According to police, the 25-year-old man, a resident of Kashyala village in the Samahni area of Bhimber district, arrived at the residence of his stepmother, 42-year-old Shahida Bibi, on Sunday afternoon.

After inquiring about his biological sibling, he opened fire on her, pumping several bullets into her stomach.

Shahida Bibi's brother, who was present at the time, rushed her to the District Headquarters Hospital in Bhimber, but she succumbed to her injuries, police said.

Police added that they arrived at the crime scene around midnight, took custody of the body, and handed it over to the family after a post-mortem examination.

A case had been registered under Section 302 of the Azad Penal Code (APC), and multiple raids were being conducted to apprehend the suspect, police said, expressing confidence that the accused would soon be brought to justice. — Staff Correspondent

Islamabad administration, ICCI to raise awareness of labour laws

ISLAMABAD: In an effort to ensure the protection of workers' rights, the Islamabad administration's Labour Welfare Department and the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) have joined hands to collaborate in raising awareness of labour laws.

This landmark understanding was reached during the visit of Director Labour ICT Ms Nisha Iftikhar to ICCI where she held a productive meeting with President ICCI Nasir Mansoor Qureshi, along with Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Vice President Nasir Mehmood Chaudhry, and executive members of the chamber.

This will also help in promoting compliance of labour laws and business friendly environment.

Addressing the gathering, Ms Nisha Iftikhar emphasised her department's commitment to consolidating and simplifying labour laws to eliminate overlaps, making compliance easier for businesses.

She advocated for a collaborative approach where laws are formulated in consultation with employers and employees' representatives to collectively address critical issues, including the eradication of child labour.

ICCI President Nasir Mansoor Qureshi appreciated the proactive approach of the Labor Welfare Department and stressed the importance of a strong partnership between the business community and labour administration to drive economic progress, industrial growth, and workforce well-being.

He also highlighted the need for harmonised and simplified labour laws, industry-layered vocational training programmes, and efficient alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to create a business-friendly environment and accelerating the country's economic development.

Both sides termed the meeting highly productive, positive, and result-oriented, expressing confidence that the ongoing collaboration will play a pivotal role in aligning labour laws with business growth, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic uplift of the region. — Staff Reporter

Ume Hassan's physical remand extended

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) of Islamabad on Monday further extended the physical remand of Ume Hassan and other accused for two more days in a case related to alleged interference in government affairs and intimidating government officials.

When ATC Judge Abual Hasnat Mohammad Zulqarnain resumed hearing in the case, the prosecution sought extension in the physical remand of all the suspects.

During the hearing, the accused, including Ume Hassan, were present in court.

The police requested an extension, arguing that further investigation was necessary as some suspects were yet to be recovered and more suspects needed to be arrested.

The defence counsel strongly opposed the request, contending that the accused had already undergone 11 days of remand.

They argued that the extension was unwarranted. However, after hearing arguments from both sides, the court approved a two-day extension in physical remand.

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COURT NOTICE

PESHAWAR

IN the Court of Aqib Aman, CJ-XVIII, Peshawar. Case title: Dr Mian Muneer v/s Syed Maqbool Younas, next date of hearing is 05/03/2025. In the above title suit the defendant No 2 & 3 i.e. Syed Jamal Younas S/o Syed Fida Younas and Nasrifar Younas Shah D/o Syed Fida Younas are being informed through Daily Dawn that you should appear before the said Court on 05/03/2025 personally or through an attorney otherwise the case will be proceeded ex-parte. Seal of Court. (3904289787)

IN the Court of Asma Zafar Civil Judge Peshawar. Next date 06/03/25. case title Irshad Ahmed Sabir vs Aftab Ahmed Sabir etc. Notice to 7 Irshad Ahmed Sabir S/o Feroz UD Din Sabir, R/o Feroz taj R Rafeeq lane Peshawar cantt (defendant) Above defendant is directed to appear this Court on 06/03/25 self or attorney or through counsel. Wheter as party proceeding against you. Seal of Court. (3904289787)

RAWALPINDI

IN the Court of Raja Amjad Iqbal Judge Banking Court Rawalpindi. M/s Bank Alfalah Ltd versus M/s Zeeshan Mobile Mart etc. To, M/s Zeeshan Mobile Mart through its sole proprietor Mr. Tanib ul Hassan Son of Muhammad Javed Qureshi having its business office at shop No. 36, Ground Floor, Umar Shopping Center, 6th Road, Rawalpindi. Raja Hussan Wife of Tanib ul Hassan. Whereas M/s Bank Alfalah has instituted a suite for Recovery of Rs. 11,246,340,511/- due against Under Section 9(3) of financial institution Recovery of Finances, Ordinance 2001.You are hereby summoned to obtain leave to defend the suite under ordinance within 30 days after the publication of this notice. In default whereof the plaintiff will be entitled to obtain the decree of the said sum till realization of amount. Next date of hearing is fixed 07-03-2025. (3770281787)

IN the Court of Raja Amjad Iqbal Judge Banking Court Rawalpindi. The Bank of Khyber (Pvt) Ltd versus M/s Sadiq Feeds (Pvt) Ltd etc. To, M/s Sadiq Feed (Pvt) Ltd. M/s Sadiq Poultry (Pvt) Ltd a company existing and functioning under the laws of Pakistan, having its registered office at 49-C, Chandni Chowk, Satellite Town, Rawalpindi through Mrs. Sadia Sadiqand Mr. Salman Sadiq its Chief Executive Officers. Mr. Asif Zuber Sadiq, Mr. Salman Sadiq sons, Mrs. Rashida Sadiq Wife of Dr. Muhammad Sadiq (Late) resident of House # 8, Street # 37, F-8/1, Islamabad, Mrs. Sadia Sadiq wife of Dr. Muhammad Sadiq (Late) resident of 327, Street # 16, Chaklala Scheme-III, Rawalpindi. Whereas M/s Bank Alfalah has instituted a suite for Recovery of Rs. 9002,9021,09/- due against Under Section 9(3) of financial institution Recovery of Finances Ordinance 2001. You are hereby summoned to obtain leave to defend the suite under ordinance within 30 days after the publication of this notice, in default whereof the plaintiff will be entitled to obtain the decree of the said sum till realization of amount. Next date of hearing is fixed 07-03-2025. (3770281787)

ATTOCK

IN the Court of Raja Ullah Khan Addl: Session Judge Attock. Asif Ali Khan versus Shabid Ali Khan etc. Appeal. To, Muzaffar Ali Khan, Amar Ali Khan son of Shabid Ali Khan, Mst. Nighat Khatoon daughter of Ameer Muhammad Khan caste Khattar, resident of Mithal Tehsil Jhand, District Attock. You are inform to attend the Court personal through counsel or attorney on 21-03-2025 at 9 am to avoid ex-parte proceedings. (3761277139)

NOTICE TO PUBLIC

ISLAMABAD

MY client, Miss Waseera Habib wife of Farooq Ali, Identity Number 35401-1102005-2, resident of House 1146, Street 64, Phase III, Bahria Town, Islamabad willfully and without any coercion or undue influence renounce her Afghani Nationality. (Lugman Ali Sipra, Advocate High Court, CNIC: 34202-7948711-3, License No. 7567/17 CC No. 7567/17/ISB). Address: Office No. 21, First Floor, Plaza 68 Sector F, DHA-I, Islamabad. (3761277139)

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN BOARD OF GOVERNORS
MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION BANNU
Corrigendum
Reference to the advertisement Published on 27-02-2025 for the position of secretary BOG at MTI Bannu.
The Place of posting may be read as follows:
Currently in Islamabad, however the position is remotely based, depending upon the Chairman BOG's location, and will require frequent travel between Bannu and the location of the Chairman."
Other terms and conditions shall remain same.
The last date shall be considered as 07-03-2025 (Friday)
CHAIRMAN BOARD OF GOVERNORS
MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION BANNU
Kohat Road Near Bannu Township Bannu Pakistan
Ph: 0928-632002, Email : kmcbannu@gmail.com

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SCHOOL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION
GILGIT - BALTISTAN
No.DE-GB(1096)/24-Dev Gilgit :3rd March, 2024
CORRIGENDUM
The advertisement published in print media vide IDGB 117/25 dated 18th February, 2025 and GB PPRA website vide No. TSE-202502219682 dated 19th February, 2025 is hereby postponed due to some technical reasons and next tender date opening date is fixed on 12th March, 2025 with the same terms and conditions published earlier.
(Muhammad Murtaza)
Director Education Planning
Tel: 05811-960084
IDGB-144/25

OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL
AZAD JAMMU AND KASHMIR
MUZAFFARABAD
TENDER NOTICE NO. 01:(2024-25)
Office of the Accountant General Azad Jammu and Kashmir Muzaffarabad invites sealed bids on open competitive basis, from the authorized distributors / suppliers / dealers, registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments and who are on Active Taxpayers list, for supply / provision of Stationery (Office / Computer) / IT Equipment (Hardware) / Furniture & Fixture Items at Main Accountant General Office Sathra Hills at Muzaffarabad (A.K).

Name of Procuring Agency	Office of The Accountant General, AJ&K, Muzaffarabad			
Tender Name and No.	Tender No. 03 "Stationery (Office / Computer) / Furniture & Fixture / IT Equipment (Hardware) "			
Method of Procurement	Single Stage-Single Envelope Procedure			
Contact Officers	Muhammad Saleem Khan, Accounts Officer (HR / Computer), ☎ 05822-920683 Syed Muhammad Rizwan Shah, Assistant Accounts Officer (Admin-II), ☎ 05822-920901			
Submission of Bid(s)	Accounts Officer (Admin-II), Admin Block Building, Main Office of the Accountant General Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Sathra Hills, Muzaffarabad.			
Closing Date & Time for Receipt of Bid(s)	March 20, 2025 at 10:30am			
Opening Date & Time of Bid(s)	March 20, 2025 at 11:00am			
Earnest Money	For Computer Paper	Rs. 55,000	For Printer Ribbon	Rs. 55,000
	For Office Stationery	Rs. 55,000	For IT Equipment	Rs.40,000
	For Furniture & Fixture	Rs.40,000		
	In Favor of Accounts Officer (Admin-II) / DDO AG-Office Muzaffarabad AJK			
Time Period for Performance of Contract	30 Days from the date of award of contract as per supply order but not later than 30th June, 2025.			

LOT #	LOT Name	LOT Detail
LOT-1	Computer Paper	Computer Paper Part-A, Part-B.
LOT-2	Printer Ribbons	Ribbon Line Matrix Printer (Printronix P7220), Ribbon Tally Genicom, Data Cartridge Tape, External Hard Drive
LOT-3	Office Stationery	Allied items related to office stationery as mentioned in the bidding Documents
LOT-4	Furniture & Fixture	Executive High Back Office Chair, Officer Chair Medium Back (Best Quality), Computer Chair Medium Back (Best Quality), Steel Almirah (Best Quality), Computer Table, Cabinet Steel (Best Quality), Office Side Racks
LOT-5	IT Equipment	Laptop Core i7, Desktop System Core i3, LaserJet Printer

2. Details Specifications and quantity of items, mentioned above, including TOR's are mentioned in the bidding documents, which can be downloaded from the official websites of AG AJ&K (www.agajk.gov.pk) and AJ&K PPRA (www.ajkppra.gov.pk).
3. Office of The Accountant General, Azad Jammu and Kashmir reserves all rights to revise quantity, accept or reject any or all tender(s) in the light of Rule-33 of AJ&K Public Procurement Rules (PPRA), 2017. All applicable taxes either National or Local will be deducted at source on the prescribed rate for onward payment to the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.
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Police official booked for freeing suspects

Suspects discharged in robbery case were on judicial remand in several other cases

By Muruwer Azeem

ISLAMABAD: A police official has been booked for setting free two suspects involved in several cases after a court in the federal capital discharged them in only one of the cases, while sending them on judicial remand in at least four cases.

However, instead of taking these suspects back to Adiala jail from district courts in Islamabad, the police team removed their handcuffs and allowed them to walk free.

This did not go down well with the police high-ups, who ordered the registration of an FIR against the policeman at the Ramna police station under several sections of the Pakistan Penal Code, such as Section 222 and Section 225-A. Section 155-C of the Police Order 2002 was also invoked in the FIR.

The two suspects were arrested in connection with a robbery case registered with the Bhara Kahu police in January. After the arrest, they were sent to Adiala for an identification parade; however, the proceedings in this regard had not taken place.

Later, an assistant sub-inspector took their custody from the jail to produce them in the court of an area magistrate in connection with a robbery case.

The magistrate "discharged" both of them from the case.

After that, the ASI removed their handcuffs and set them free instead of shifting them to prison for judicial remand in connection with four cases of auto-theft, and arms and stolen vehicle recoveries registered with the same police.

The police had made their formal arrest in connection with these cases and the suspects had been sent on judicial remand in connection with the said cases.

It may be noted that a directive from the police bigwigs was issued earlier this year, taking notice of frequent jailbreaks and asking the police to take precautionary measures to prevent these incidents.

On Feb 12, a suspect arrested by police in connection with a murder in the area of Nilore police station escaped after breaking the locks.

The suspect was in police custody on physical remand and detained at the Rangala police station instead of Nilore station, in whose limits he allegedly committed the murder. After his escape, six police officials, including the SHO, were booked.

On Feb 16, a handcuffed suspect arrested in connection with drug peddling escaped from custody while being transported to jail.

The Khanna police were transporting him to the Adiala jail on judicial remand.

On the way to Adiala, they stopped in front of the Koral police station at a photocopy shop, during which the accused slipped his hand out of the handcuffs and escaped.

On Feb 19, an alleged drug dealer escaped from the custody shortly after his arrest. Over the escape, a case was registered at the Sumbal police station under sections 324, 353, 186, 427, 148, and 149 of the Pakistan Penal Code.

The police claimed that the suspect arrested from Merabadi near G-11 was freed by over a dozen armed suspects.

Almost a dozen people, including women, armed with knives, axes, batons, and a pistol, attacked the police team and whisked the suspect away from the custody.

HEC notifies revised curricula

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan has notified four revised curricula in the disciplines of Political Science, Islamic Studies, Remote Sensing & GIS and Architecture.

The curricula have been revised by National Curriculum Review Committees (NCRCs).

"The updated curricula aim to enhance academic standards, align with industry needs, and incorporate evolving market trends into relevant fields of study," says a press release issued here by HEC on Monday.

It said that NCRCs consisted of eminent professors, senior faculty and distinguished scholars from academia, representatives from accreditation councils, R&D organisations and industry experts from relevant disciplines.

NCRC meetings were chaired by Prof. Dr. Muqarrab Akbar (Political Science), Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi (Islamic Studies), Prof. Dr. Attaur Rahman (Remote Sensing & GIS), and Mohammad Arif Chaugati (Architecture). HEC Deputy Director Hidayatullah Kasi facilitated the NCRC proceedings as Secretary.

The revised curricula focused on the academic standards such as nomenclature of the degree programme, eligibility criteria, programme learning outcomes, schemes of studies, course learning outcomes, degree award requirements and options for electives to accommodate the in-demand specializations in line with international standards, indigenous needs and market demand.

Each curriculum offers guidance about level 5, 6 and 7 programmes of National Qualifications Framework.

The press release said that HEC has advised universities to implement the revised standards in mentioned disciplines at the earliest, ensuring consistency and standardization in relevant education across Pakistan. The revised curricula are available on HEC website, it said.

Pakistan seeks simpler process for accessing climate funds

Romina meets IFC delegation, highlights importance of inclusive approaches to address climate change

By Our Staff Reporter

COORDINATOR to the Prime Minister for Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam presents a shield to IFC Global Director for Climate Jamie Ferguson in Islamabad on Monday. — APP

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday called for streamlining access to climate finance for long-term adaptation and mitigation plans to make communities resilient against climate change.

The PM's aide made these comments in a meeting with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) delegation which promised to collaborate with Pakistan in addressing climate change challenges. A four-member team led by IFC Global Director for Climate Jamie Ferguson met Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday.

The meeting focused on strengthening the partnership between the IFC and the climate change ministry with an emphasis on enhancing the capacity of stakeholders across various sectors to address the impacts of climate change. The delegation discussed strategies to improve Pakistan's ability to respond to climate change, emphasising the importance of continued global support for developing nations.

Both sides highlighted the need for stronger partnerships to empower key stakeholders, including environmentalists, academics, and technical experts, to effectively combat climate change.

In her remarks, Ms Alam underscored the urgent need for increased access to climate funding to help developing countries mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

She pointed out that despite contributing minimally to global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan is among the most vulnerable to the devastating impacts of climate change, including floods, droughts, and heatwaves. She stressed the importance of simplifying processes for developing countries to access climate funds, enabling large-scale projects aimed at reducing the impacts of climate change on communities and ecosystems.

Climate Change Secretary Aisha Humera Moriani discussed the "growing potential" of electric vehicles (EVs) in Pakistan's efforts to cut carbon emissions and improve air quality. She proposed strengthening collaboration with the EV sector, particularly in light of rising demand for two-wheelers in the country.

She highlighted the popularity of two-wheelers in Pakistan and suggested that promoting electric two-wheelers could significantly reduce carbon emissions from transportation, improve air quality in urban areas, and decrease reliance on fossil fuels.

The delegation acknowledged the importance of this initiative and expressed interest in further exploring cooperation with the EV sector as part of a comprehensive strategy to address climate change. The discussion also covered the broader need to promote sustainable transportation solutions to reduce Pakistan's carbon footprint.

In his remarks, Mr Ferguson recognised Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change and emphasised the necessity of global cooperation in supporting the country's climate efforts. He also reaffirmed the IFC's commitment to providing technical expertise and strategic guidance to help Pakistan implement projects that promote climate resilience and sustainable development.

Both parties agreed that stronger collaboration between Pakistan and international financial institutions and the exchange of resources and ideas would be vital for advancing the country's climate agenda.

Ms Alam reiterated her commitment to working closely with the IFC to secure the necessary resources for climate projects. She emphasised the importance of involving local stakeholders and communities to ensure that climate solutions were tailored to Pakistan's unique needs.

STUDENTS paint a wall of Zero Point Interchange in Islamabad on Monday. — White Star

Ex-Wapda employee found dead

By Mohammad Asghar

RAWALPINDI: A former employee of Wapda was found dead on Sunday night in Rawat police area, but initial reports suggest he has been poisoned.

Mohammad Naeem, stepson of the deceased Safdar Ali, lodged a complaint with the Rawat police that he was in Peshawar when he received a call from his family that his father had left his house at 10 am on Saturday but did not return till the sun set. He said that after waiting for some time, he returned to Rawalpindi and went straight to the police station to seek police help in tracing his father as his mobile phone was also switched off.

He further said that on Sunday morning, he received a phone call from the police station which told him that an unidentified body of a man was found lying in Rawat area. On receiving the phone call, he and police went to the scene and found a body covered with a sheet of cloth lying there.

He identified it as that of his stepfather whose mouth was stuffed with cotton, and a shoe and his motorcycle were missing.

However, his mobile phone and purse were seized by the police.

When contacted, he told Dawn that according to initial findings of doctors at DHQ hospital, the deceased was poisoned as there were no torture mark or bullet injuries on his body except for the blood oozing out of his mouth.

He said that his father had no enmity with anybody, however, the police have launched an investigation on different lines.

Meanwhile, a man who was in his 60s was gunned down by his rival over a land dispute in Dar Jatli area, police said on Monday.

Kaleemullah, a resident of Gujar Khan, lodged an FIR with the Jatli police saying that his father Gulfraz was standing with his relative on his land where Irfan came and challenged his father saying that he will teach him a lesson and he opened fire on him and escaped.

He said that his father succumbed to his injuries while being shifted to hospital.

Romanian embassy, PNCA launch opera singing course

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: In an important cultural collaboration, the Romanian embassy and the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Monday announced the launch of opera singing courses in the capital.

A statement issued by the Romanian embassy said that the programme, beginning on April 5, will be conducted at the PNCA and led by renowned Romanian soprano and opera singer Georgiana Costea Gluga.

The courses will be held twice a week, every Wednesday and Friday from 2:30pm to 4:30pm at the PNCA's premises in F-5/1. Open to individuals aged 14 and above, the programme will introduce participants to the intricacies of opera, blending classical vocal techniques with theatrical expression. Younger aspirants under 14 will be guided through foundational techniques to build their skills.

Opera, an art form that fuses powerful singing with grand storytelling, provides vocalists with a unique platform for artistic exploration.

The embassy said that under the expert tutelage of Costea-Gluga, participants will refine their vocal prowess and stage presence, gaining deeper insights into this celebrated musical tradition.

The statement said that this initiative aligned with PNCA's commitment to fostering artistic expression across various disciplines, including performing and visual arts.

Since its establishment in 1973, PNCA had played a pivotal role in nurturing cultural and artistic endeavors in Pakistan.

The Romanian embassy's initiative sought to introduce Pakistani audiences to Romania's rich musical heritage through specialised canto classes, encouraging cultural exchange and strengthening artistic ties between the two nations.

The programme was open to all aspiring vocalists, regardless of prior experience. Whether newcomers to opera or seasoned enthusiasts, participants will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of classical singing under expert guidance.

Robbers have a field day in Islamabad

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Robbers and thieves looted cash and valuables, including five motorcycles in 10 separate strikes in capital, police said on Monday.

A gang of three robbers looted a motorcycle and mobile phones from three different people in Dhok Ahlani.

The robbers first intercepted Aftab Khan when he was going to market to buy dairy products and snatched a motorcycle from him. The gunmen then intercepted Quaid Rahimzada and looted a mobile phone from him at gunpoint.

They also snatched a mobile phone from another man and escaped.

Likewise, a gunman looted cash and gold worth Rs600,000 from a man at Saan Garden.

Similarly, a gang of three robbers looted a motorcycle and a mobile phone from a man at Iqbal Town. They came on a motorcycle and intercepted Irfan Masih when he turned his two-wheeler towards Iqbal Town from Expressway and held him at gunpoint.

Later, the gunmen escaped with a motorcycle and a mobile phone worth Rs170,000.

Moreover, a gang of two robbers looted a motorcycle and mobile phone from a man at Expressway. The robbers intercepted Rahmat Khan and held him up at gunpoint when he reached near a pedestrian bridge on Expressway.

Later, the gunmen snatched a motorcycle and two mobile phones worth Rs150,000 from him.

Furthermore, a group of two robbers looted three mobile phones from Umair Ahmed and his two friends on Srinagar Highway.

Later the gunmen looted three mobiles worth Rs170,00 from them and escaped.

Besides, another gang of four robbers looted motorcycle and mobile worth Rs215,000 from Syed Haider Ali at Khota Road. Another gang of three robbers looted Suzuki 150 worth Rs200,000 from Hamza Jamshid at Expressway.

Meanwhile, Thieves stole cash and valuables worth over Rs1million from a house at Chatha Bakhtawar. The incident took place when the residents of the house were away.

Committee urges increasing women's representation in federal govt

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The Gender Mainstreaming Committee on Monday suggested increasing women's representation in federal and provincial government jobs and highlighted a persistent gender gap in governance.

A meeting of the committee was convened at Parliament House to address pressing concerns regarding the representation of women within the federal government. Attended by key stakeholders and representatives from various sectors, the meeting focused on the alarming statistic that women currently constitute only 6.8 percent of the total federal workforce, far below the mandated 10 percent quota and far behind the 33 percent objective.

The meeting was chaired by MNA Dr Nafisa Shah and attended by MNAs Ms Shahida Begum, Aqeel Malik, Syed Hussain Tariq, Khwaja Izhar ul Hassan, and Senator Robina Qaim Khani.

Participants expressed serious concern over the non-implementation of the women's quota, which is designed to promote gender equality and empower women in decision-making roles within the government. In light of these findings, the Committee unanimously recommended that the Establishment Division develop a clear policy and action plan to ensure the implementation of the 10pc quota at both national and provincial levels.

"Women's representation in government is not just a matter of equity; it is essential for effective governance and the development of policies that address the needs of all citizens," said Dr Nafisa Shah, Chairperson of the Gender Mainstreaming Committee. "We must take decisive action to ensure that women have a seat at the table and that their voices are heard in the decision-making processes," she added.

In addition to the concerns regarding workforce representation, the committee highlighted the lack of mechanisms within the Federal Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) to track the impact of projects and proposals on women. The absence of such tracking measures undermines the government's commitment to gender-responsive budgeting and the integration of gender considerations into development planning.

The committee called for the establishment of a robust framework to monitor and evaluate the impact of PSDP initiatives on women, ensuring that their needs and perspectives are adequately addressed in development projects.

"Failing to consider the impact of development projects on women not only perpetuates inequality but also hinders overall progress. We must ensure that all government initiatives are designed with a gender lens, promoting sustainable development that benefits everyone," members stated.

Conclusively, the committee called for an effective mechanism at both the center and in provincial levels to address the fact that out of 25 million out-of-school children, most of whom are girls, which remains among the highest in the world. The Committee recommended that the education emergency focus on out-of-school children and gender disparity as key challenges to be resolved through a whole-of-Pakistan approach.

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DAWN

METRO Central

LAHORE Tuesday, March 4, 2025

LAHORE

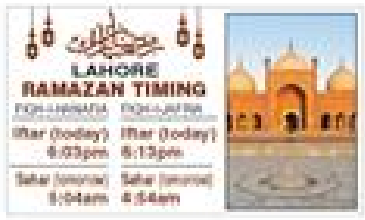
Sunset	06:03 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow)	06:24 am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum	11.0°C
Maximum	23.0°C
Outlook	Cloudy

AQI

Maximum (Yesterday)	210



A LARGE number of people queue up to enter the Punjab Institute of Mental Health for free iftar. — Online

City administration launches crackdown to check overcharging

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The city district administration on Monday launched a crackdown on shopkeepers involved in overcharging and flouting consumers and those hoarding and causing price hike in the provincial metropolis.

After being reprimanded by the city district administration, dozens of price control magistrates started inspecting the city's model bazaars, open markets and departmental stores in a bid to ensure sale of standard essential items and take action against those involved in overcharging. The magistrates conducted extensive inspections throughout the city on Monday, imposing substantial fines and getting cases registered against those found violating price control regulations.

The district administration's crackdown resulted in detecting 27 violations at various locations across the city. Officials got registered four cases against accused vendors, issued 23 warnings and imposed fines exceeding Rs100,000 on shopkeepers and vendors involved in charging inflated prices for essential commodities during the holy month.

"We will take shopkeepers to task for creating artificial inflation in Ramazan," warned Lahore DC Syed Musa Raza while paying surprise visits to various spots. He said the administrative officers must remain vigilant in the field throughout Ramazan by continuously monitoring prices of essential items in Ramazan Bazaars and open markets to ensure affordable access for all citizens.

The DC also conducted a detailed inspection of various locations in Nishtar town following recent rainfall, to review progress of the ongoing 'Clean Mission' initiative.

The DC, accompanied by Chief Officer of Metropolitan Corporation Shahid Abbas Kathia, Assistant Commissioner of Nishtar Town Muhammad Saleem Asni and other officials, visited Ferozepur Road Gajjumata, Kahna Kachha Road, and areas surrounding Sui Gas Society to assess the drainage situation.

During the inspection, DC Raza received a briefing from Wasa officials regarding developmental work on sewerage lines.

The Wasa DMD informed the DC that work on sewerage lines cleaning was progressing swiftly. The DC on the occasion instructed officials to tour all low-lying areas across the city and ensure proper drainage to prevent standing water. "Improve the sewerage system so that citizens avert facing difficulties during the rainy season," directed the DC, emphasizing that any complaints of water accumulation should be addressed immediately. He instructed LWMC officials to identify garbage accumulation points and ensure regular checking of empty plots. He ordered Nishtar AC to focus on cleanliness systems and maintain vigilance. He sought operations to remove encroachments and relocate cattle without interruption, stressing that LWMC, Wasa and the district administration must work together as a team to perform their duties efficiently.

Attack by militants on Punjab border areas foiled

By Tariq Saeed Bimani

DERA GHAZI KHAN: Punjab police, along with the Counter-Terrorism Department and Rangers, thwarted two attacks by militants in the border areas of Dera Ghazi Khan on Monday.

Militants were forced to retreat and flee into the mountains after intense exchange of fire with law enforcement agencies.

The operation was launched after intelligence reports about the presence of militants in the border area of Mutha.

The police said the militants, armed with heavy weapons, attacked police teams but were met with a strong and timely response.

In a separate incident, another militant group launched a surprise attack on the Lakhani border check post in the vicinity of Wahowa police station.

Approximately 15 to 20 militants attacked the checkpoint from all sides, using rocket launchers, hand grenades and other heavy weapons. However, the police, equipped with thermal imaging cameras, identified the attackers and responded with machine guns and mortar fire. The attackers were forced to retreat, and reports suggest they suffered heavy casualties.

Inspector General of Police Dr Usman Anwar said this was the 18th attack by militants that the Punjab police had foiled.

Earlier this year, on Jan 31, a similar attack on the Jhangi police check post in the vicinity of Wahowa police station was also thwarted.

29 booked for killing six; one of accomplices found shot dead

GUJRAT: Police claimed on Monday that an accomplice of the assailants who had gunned down at least six people in an ambush near Dinga, was also found shot dead in firing by his own accomplices.

The case of murdering the six individuals has also been lodged against at least 29 people, including 21 nominated and seven unidentified suspects.

Khurian circle DSP Shahid Mehmood Qazi said Zahoor alias Joori of Randheer village who had been wanted to police in a number of murder and other cases, was found shot dead from the area by the alleged firing of his own accomplices who managed to flee the scene soon after killing the six people in Mina Chak Dharegran of Dinga police precincts.

Meanwhile, the bodies of victims of the firing by rival Akhtar group were handed over to the heirs after autopsy at Khurian Tehsil Headquarter hospital and they were laid to rest after offering funeral prayers in Dinga Khurd village on Monday.

Dinga police registered the case against Chaudhry Akhtar, Usman, Zohaib, Zahoor alias Joori, 10 nominated and 700 unidentified suspects under sections 302, 440, 404, 148, 149 and 109 of Pakistan Penal Code on the report of Muhammad Rasib, the brother of deceased Rukhsaar, and started investigation.

The Khurian DSP said Gujrat DPO Dr Mustansar Atta Bajwa had constituted at least three teams under Gujrat SP investigation Riaz Ahmed Naz to trace and arrest the suspects involved in the incident. — Correspondent

Amended charges framed against Qureshi, others

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Monday framed amended charges against PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi and others in three cases related to May 9 riots.

ATC-I Judge Manzar Ali Gill conducted the hearing at Kot Lakhpat Jail, where the amended charges were formally presented in all three cases, including the one pertaining to burning police vehicles near Jinnah House.

During the proceedings, the attendance of the detained PTI leaders, including Mr Qureshi, former governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema and Dr Yasmin Rashid, was marked. Those released on bail, including former MNA Aliya Hamza Malik, social media activist Sanam Javed and Khadija Shah, also appeared before the court.

All the accused persons pleaded not guilty and decided to contest the trial.

At this the judge directed the prosecution to present its witnesses on the next hearing on March 6.

The prosecution had requested amendments to the charge sheet, which the court had accepted.

The prosecution stated that the charges against the accused persons had been framed in a vague and complex manner as multiple offences had been clubbed together under one head.

It said any accused, at a later stage of the trial, can take an undue advantage to secure his/her acquittal in the cases.

The prosecution said the trial in the cases was at an initial stage and the proposed amendments to the charge will not cause any delay in the conclusion of the trial.

It pointed out that only statements of the witnesses had been recorded and their cross-examination was yet to be conducted by the defence.

Therefore, the prosecution argued that the charges framed by the trial court may be amended in a way that each offence placed under a separate head of charge in the interest of justice and fair play. — Staff Reporter

Woman held for 'killing' second wife of husband

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Police arrested a woman on Monday for allegedly killing her husband's second wife and dumping the body in a quarter adjacent to her house in Liaquatabad area of the city.

According to a police official, some locals witnessed a woman dumping a sack in a quarter adjacent to her house. Finding the woman's activity suspicious, they reported the matter to the police, he said.

A police team arriving at the scene, recovered the sack, finding the body of a woman packed in it.

He said the murdered woman, identified as Tayyaba, turned out to be the second wife of a local resident, Imran.

He said when the police interrogated Imran's first wife Sadia, she confessed to have killed Tayyaba for contracting marriage with Imran.

In her confessional statement, Tayyaba said she first hit Sadia's head with a heavy object, leaving her unconscious and then slit her wrists with a knife. Sadia died of excessive bleeding, she added.

The police later lodged a murder case against the suspect and shifted the body to the city morgue for a postmortem examination to find out the cause of her death.

To a question, the police official said they were also questioning Imran to determine his role in the murder of Sadia.

In another incident took place in Harbanspura area, a 65-year-old woman, Fauzia, was found dead in her house under mysterious circumstances.

The police said the woman was a widow and residing alone in her house.

Apparently, there were no torture marks on the body.

However, according to a police official, the body was shifted to the city morgue for a postmortem examination to find out the cause of her death.

Lahore – a metropolitan without footpaths

The city's infrastructure planning is heavily car-centric, with almost no consideration for pedestrians

By Imaan Gabol

LAHORE: The bustling streets of Lahore, known for their vibrant culture and historical charm, have become a nightmare for pedestrians as the city grapples with a lack of footpaths and rampant encroachments.

The district administration had developed model roads, including Main Boulevard, Gulberg, M.M. Alam Road, Noor Jehan Road, Kasuri Road, LOS to Samanabad Road, Mall Road (from PMG Chowk to Mozang Adda), Jail Road (from Qartaba Chowk to Siddiqui Trade Centre), Maulana Shaukat Ali Road and Peco Road, Allah Hoo Chowk to Shaukat Khanum Chowk, Canal Road (from Thokar Niaz Beg to Shahkam Chowk), Multan Road (from Chauburji Chowk to Thokar Niaz Beg), Ferozepur Road (up to Chungi Amar Sidhu) and Allama Iqbal Road. But most of these model roads don't have footpaths.

The town planners have designed the footpaths on the Canal Road on the banks of the canal and also installed billboards on it. The pedestrians have to first cross the road, which is next to impossible, to reach the footpath to walk on it. The story of Mall Road is no different as it has footpaths that mostly remain obstructed due to security barriers and parking of motorcycles on it. Other major roads across the city either lack pedestrian pathways or they are obstructed by illegal parking, advertisement billboards and utility installations, leaving walkers vulnerable to accidents and injuries.

Despite being one of the largest and most populous cities of the country, Lahore's infrastructure continues to neglect the needs of pedestrians. The residents have reported that walking on busy roads has become a perilous task, with no dedicated space for foot traffic. The absence of footpaths forces pedestrians to share roads with fast-moving vehicles, leading to frequent accidents and near-misses. They say that the footpaths are often unusable due to encroachments even on roads where footpaths exist. Traders routinely occupy these spaces for parking vehicles, setting up stalls or displaying advertisement billboards. Additionally, utility installations such as electric poles, PTCL wire boxes, and other infrastructure further restrict pedestrian movement. These obstacles force people to walk on the roads, increasing their exposure to traffic hazards. "I risk my life every day just walking to work," says Ahmed Ali, a resident of Gulberg.

White Star

"The footpaths, wherever they exist, are either blocked by parked cars or cluttered with billboards and utility boxes. It's like the city has forgotten that people walk too," he laments at the situation.

Despite the growing public outcry, no concrete measures have been taken by relevant authorities, including the Lahore Development Authority (LDA), district administration, metropolitan corporation and local government.

Residents accuse these departments of negligence and a lack of coordination in addressing the issue. Urban planning experts argue that the problem is a result of poor governance and a lack of enforcement.

"Lahore's infrastructure planning is heavily car-centric, with little to no consideration for pedestrians," says Dr Hina Sheikh, an urban development specialist.

"The encroachments are a symptom of weak enforcement of laws and a lack of accountability. Public departments need to prioritise pedestrian safety and reclaim these spaces for the people," she suggests.

Speaking to Dawn, Lahore Conservation Society member Dr Ajaz Anwar says the world always promote that people should

Continued on Page 15

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PRAYER

Fajr	5.04
Zuhr	1.02
Asr	4.24
Maghrib	6.03
Isha	7.23

Starting time in Lahore

REFLECTIONS

"REMEMBER THAT PIETY AND NOBLENESS OF ALL YOUR ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO SINCERITY AND PUNCTUALITY OF YOUR PRAYERS."

— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.) (NAHJ 427)

Man arrested with pistol at LHC gate

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Security personnel recovered a pistol and 15 bullets from a suspicious person during a screening process at the entrance gate of the Lahore High Court on Monday.

The suspect was handed over to Old Anarkali police.

Chief Justice Aalia Neelum praised the performance of the court's security team and staff, said a press release.

It stated that the security measures at the Lahore High Court have been tightened following the orders of the chief justice.

The security personnel stationed at all entry and exit points have been instructed to thoroughly check every visitor.

Tax rebate issue

PU teachers boycott classes, block Canal Road

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: On the call of the Punjab University Academic Staff Association (PUASA), the varsity teachers on Monday boycotted classes and staged a protest demo on the Canal Road against elimination of tax rebate on their salaries, new pension rules and other policies they termed potentially damaging for their career.

A large number of teachers gathered on the road and blocked it for traffic for several hours.

They chanted slogans against the government for what they called its anti-education policies.

The protesters were led by PUASA President Prof Dr Amjad Abbas Magsi, Secretary Dr Muhammad Islam and other office-bearers of its executive council.

The protest followed a general body meeting which expressed concern over the federal and provincial education policies.

In the general body meeting, PU teachers criticised the government's withdrawal of tax rebate for the teachers and researchers, terming it a severe blow to the financial stability of academics nationwide.

The teachers said the universities have reportedly begun recovering arrears from faculty members, exacerbating their economic strain.

They accused the Punjab government of eroding institutional autonomy through restrictive measures while neglecting demands for enhanced recurring grants to alleviate fiscal crises in the public universities.

The meeting also criticised the Punjab government's decision relating to LPR and pension, causing financial loss to the government employees.

The teachers said despite repeated appeals, authorities have yet to restore the tax relief, prompting the association to escalate its response.

Dr Magsi said all the resources would be utilised for fulfillment of teachers' demands, and reiterated his commitment to peaceful advocacy. He, however, warned of intensified measures if the demands were not accepted.

Dr Magsi said that academic interests of the teaching community will be safeguarded at all costs.

PUASA also condemned the behaviour of some police officials, who mishandled teachers, who were holding peaceful protests. It again nominated the general body meeting on Tuesday (today) to finalise future course of action.

TAILORS stitch clothes at their workplace in Islampura. — APP

Over 14,000 rare birds, animals rescued during last year

By Shoaib Ahmad

LAHORE: The World Wildlife Day observed on Monday is the occasion to celebrate the strides made in the conservation of wildlife in Punjab amidst the rapidly evolving global landscape. As awareness of the importance of wildlife preservation gains momentum, the Punjab Wildlife Department is prepared to confront these challenges head-on. This was stated by Punjab Wildlife and Parks Department Director General Mudassir Riaz Malik while talking to *Dawn* on Monday.

He said the past year had been particularly historic for the department with the launch of the largest wildlife protection operation which rescued and released over 14,000 animals and birds of rare species. He claimed that the operation was not only aimed at protecting wildlife but also to secure its future, with fines exceeding Rs120m imposed on the violators.

According to Mr Malik, women had now joined the ranks of the Wildlife Protection Force for the first time in Punjab's history as 136 women were serving alongside their male counterparts and they constituted 22pc of the total force, bringing diverse perspectives and renewed vigour to the mission of wildlife conservation.

"The Punjab Wildlife Department's efforts extended beyond preventing wildlife crimes as legal reforms had been introduced. The wildlife rangers are now empowered to register FIRs against the violators. Special courts are being established to impose severe penalties for wildlife offenses, which are now classified as non-bailable. Fines range from Rs50,000 to Rs5m, with a minimum of seven years imprisonment for serious crimes," said the wildlife DG.

According to him, technology emerged as a vital ally in these conservation endeavours and the department was harnessing the power of thermal drones equipped with artificial intelligence (AI) to monitor wildlife and detect illegal poaching activities. This innovative approach has significantly enhanced the department's capacity to protect vulnerable species and their habitats.

Mudassir Riaz Malik said public engagement remained a cornerstone of the Punjab Wildlife Department's strategy. Initiatives such as the "Wild on Boats Show" at Lahore Safari Zoo exemplify the government's commitment to raising awareness about wildlife conservation while providing enriching recreational opportunities for citizens. The safari zoos with predators, exotic birds and aquatic life serve as essential educational platforms for the community.

The officer said that the government was dedicated to establishing three rescue centres aimed at treating and rehabilitating rescued animals. These centres would provide critical medical care to animals saved from poachers or suffering from ailments before sending them to their natural habitats. He termed wildlife protection a collective responsibility that demanded concerted efforts.

He urged the people to collectively pledge on the World Wildlife Day to foster a sustainable future where wildlife could flourish.

Narowal Medical College's first white coat ceremony

NAROWAL: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal attended the first white coat Ceremony of the Narowal Medical College as the chief guest, where 100 first-year MBBS students were formally inducted into the medical profession.

The ceremony, marking a significant milestone in the academic journey of these students, was attended by faculty members, parents, and distinguished guests, says a PID release.

In his address, Ahsan Iqbal congratulated students and their families. He highlighted the transformative impact of education in Narowal, citing the establishment of key institutions such as an Engineering University, an IT Campus, and the University of Narowal, where over 7,000 students, including 5,000 females, are currently enrolled.

He said the University of Narowal's Department of Sanitary Sciences has become a successful academic programme.

The Narowal Medical College was formally launched in a ground-breaking ceremony on Feb 18 in a public gathering in Narowal.

A stop-gap arrangement was made to ensure the timely commencement of MBBS classes, with an MoU signed with the University of Narowal in September 2023 to utilise its old campus building as a temporary facility.

The Specialised Healthcare & Medical Education Department sanctioned Rs162 million in December 2023 for renovation, procurement of equipment, furniture and fixtures.

The white coat ceremony was also attended by vice-chancellors of the King Edward Medical University (KEMU) and the Fatima Jinnah Medical University (FJMU), and provice chancellor of the University of Health Sciences (UHS).

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COURT NOTICE:

MANOR BAHAUDDIN

IN the Court of Hafiz Muhammad Zubair, Senior Civil Judge Family Division Mandi Bahauddin. Suit for Dissolution of Marriage, Recovery of Maintenance Allowance, and Dowry Articles. Title of the Suit: (1) Abdul Ullah S/o Bahadur Khan, (2) Bahadur Khan S/o Nazir Ahmad Caste Tarar Residents of Chak No. 19 Thatial, Tehsil Malakwal District Mandi Bahauddin, presently abroad. The above titled case is pending adjudication in the Court of undersigned. Many times process has been issued against the above said respondents but all in vain. So the respondents are hereby informed through this proclamation and directed to appear before this Court on the next date of hearing 04-03-2025 at 09:00 am. in person or through their counsel, otherwise ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against the defendants otherwise no excuses will be entertained. Senior Civil Judge Family Division Mandi Bahauddin. (258503204710)

SARGODHA

IN the Court of Muhammad Ishfaq Khan, Civil Judge 1st Class Sargodha. Suit Of Cancellation etc. Muhammad Bilal Aslam Vs Province of Punjab etc. Notice against: Province of Punjab through District Collector Sargodha, Hafiz Fakeel Chak No. 22 South Tehsil & District Sargodha, Iftikhar Hussain Shah S/o Muhammad Ibrahim Shah R/o Chak No. 22 South Tehsil & District Sargodha, Kalsoom Bibi (deceased) through legal heirs Qurat-ul-Ain, Hina, Khawar Daughters, Nadia Bibi widow of Ijaz Muhammad Khan, Rabi Bibi and one of Ijaz Muhammad Khan, Khadija Bibi minor d/o Ijaz Muhammad Khan, Hafiz Tehaltav Bhagtawala. Defendants. Whereas in the above mentioned case if Defendant will not appear in Court at 09:00 am on 06-03-2025 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. No arguments of any nature shall be entertained thereafter. Civil Judge 1st Class Sargodha. (257032538907)

JHELUM

IN the Court of Shagufta Sahir, Civil Judge 1st Class Jhelum, suit for mandatory and permanent injunction title Shaheen Akhter Vs. Deputy Commissioner District Jhelum etc. Against (1) Muhammad Owais Son of Ashiq Iqbal Residence Qaisar Abad Rattee Road Tehsil and District Jhelum (Currently Residence Abroad) As there is not possible to call the defendants through Summons in the instant suit so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear in the Court on 04-03-2025 at 09:00 am, otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated. (258529791915)

JAMPUR

IN the Court of Judge Mrs. Zarfashan Bugti, Civil Judge Family Judge Guardian Judge Magistrate sec. (6) Tehsil Jampur (Pakistan). Family case no" title Mst. Mussarat Bibi Versus Farooque Ahmed. Suit for dissolution of marriage. Notice to: Farooque Ahmed S/o Haji Ashiq Hussain (real) shehzadi R/o Chah Bodlay Wala Mouza Tibe Dhandy Kalan tehsil Jampur Present Address. Al Qaseem P/o box 25uzaid-bay 1103 Rabeh Saudi Arabia. Whereas service of defendants / respondents is not going to be effected through ordinary means. So, service of defendants / respondents is effected through proclamation in the Newspaper. You, defendants / respondents are directed to appear in the Court in person or through counsel on 05-03-2025 at 09:00 am, failing which, ex parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Civil Judge / Tehsil Jampur (Pakistan). (2517020 2955)

IN the Court of Judge Mr. Mazhar Shafiq Addl. District & session Judge Jampur (Pakistan). ADS SJ case No. 458/18.12.2024 title Mst. Bhagna Bibi etc Versus Umar Wadda. Appeal disclaimer decree/ Notice to: Mst. Umar wadda S/o ghul wadda (late) dyed R/o Mir Judg, tehsil Jampur Present Address. Saudi Arab Jeddah Kowra Khumeese Mushaet Saudi Arab +966509443983. Whereas service of defendants / respondents is not going to be effected through ordinary means. So, service of defendants / respondents is effected through proclamation in the newspaper. You, defendants / respondents are directed to appear in the Court in person or through counsel on 05-03-2025 at 09:00 am failing which, ex parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Addl District & Session Judge Jampur (Pakistan). (257032538908)

AHMEDPUR SIAL

IN the Court of Mr. Ashfaq Ahmad Sahid, Civil Judge Tehsil Ahmad Pur Sial. Suit for Declaration, Muhammad Arif Vs Hayat Bibi etc. Notice to: Muhammad Farrukh S/o Muhammad Arif Caste Khokhar R/o Chak Bharki Mouza Hazrat Sultan Sahoo Tehsil Arif Sial District Jhang Present Address AFCO Company Industrial Area Sharjah UAE. Whereas service of defendants / respondents is not going to be effected through ordinary means. So, service of defendants / respondents is effected through proclamation in the newspaper. You, defendants / respondents are directed to appear in the Court in person or through counsel on 05-03-2025 at 9:00 am, failing which, ex parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my hand and the seal of this Court. (258432463756)

DG KHAN

IN the Court of Muhammad Nawazish Khan Chaudhary, Senior Civil Judge (Civil Division) Dera Ghazi Khan. Application for Restoration. Title: Karim Ud Din s/o va Mehboob ghah etc vs Jaffar, Usama Sons, Mst Mahaz, Mst Afsan, Mst Rawaj, Mst Wajiha, Sunam Daughters Ghulam Farid Caste Haya n R/o Chah Sahib wala Mouza Dhak Jhangal Tehsil and Dist DGK Now R/o Mukarra Tower King Abdullah Road Saudi Arab. Whereas service of defendants is not going to be effected through ordinary means. So, service of defendants is effected through proclamation in the newspaper. You defendants are directed to appear in the Court in person on 07-03-2025 at 09:00 am, failing which, ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. (257032538966)

HAFIZABAD

IN the Court of Ishrat Mujahid, Civil Judge 1st Class Hafizabad. Suit for Declaration, Muhammad Ashraf etc Vs Province of Punjab etc. Notice to Vice Chancellor University of Agriculture Faisalabad Sub Campus Hafizabad, Umar Khan, Muhammad Tariq Khan, Muhammad Shamim Khan Sons of Muhammad Nazeem Khan Cast Pathan R/o House No. 52, Street No. 22 Sant Nagar Lahore. Whereas the services of the above mentioned respondents are not possible through ordinary means. Therefore, they are directed to attend this Court personally or through recognized agent or through their counsel on 04-03-2025 at 09:00 am hours. Otherwise ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against them. Given under my hand and Seal of the Court. (258302264700)

PHALIA

IN the Court of Ehsan Ullah Chaudhry Civil Judge Phalia. Suit for maintenance allowance and dowry articles. Title of Suit: Sajida Fazal W/o Hafiz Fazal Shabbir S/o Ghulam Shabbir Cast Khokhar R/o Railway Road Muhallah Nadeer Abad Tehsil Mukhtar District Mandi Bhauddin. The above titled case is pending adjudication in the Court of undersigned. Many times process has been issued against the above-said defendants but all in vain. So the defendants are hereby informed through this proclamation and directed to appear before this Court on the next date of hearing 04-03-2025 in person or through their counsel, otherwise ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against the defendant otherwise no excuses will be entertained. (258302264708)

SAMUNDRI

IN the Court of Rana Muhammad Azam, Civil Judge Samundri. Suit for Declaration. Title of case: Naseem Akhter etc Versus Ghulam Ahmad etc. Notice to: Noor Ahmad son of Muhammad Sadiq caste Jutt residence of 206 GB Tehsil Samundri District Faisalabad, Imran Nawaz son of Haq Nawaz residence of New Campus Colony Punjab University City Lahore, Fozia Nawaz D/o Haq Nawaz residence of Ghakhar Mandi Gujranwala, Hira Nawaz (Husband of Ishfaq Bibi D/o Muhammad Sadiq). Whereas service of defendants / respondents is not going to be effected through ordinary means. So service of defendants / respondents be effected through proclamation in the newspaper. You defendants / respondents are directed to appear in the Court in person or through counsel on 04-03-2025 at 09:00 am, failing which, ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. With my signature and seal of the Court. Civil Judge / Pano Aqil Guardian Judge Samundri. (258302264434)

SIALKOT

IN the Court of Mr. Shehzada Shah Behram, Judge Family Court Sialkot. Suit for Dissolution of Marriage. Hamad Raza s/o Va Ali Raza. Notice To: Ali Raza son of Muhammad Iqbal resident of Mohallah New Kareem Sentrial Tehsil Sentrial District Sialkot presently residing in Saudi Arabia. Whereas service of respondents is not going to be effected through ordinary means. So, service of defendants / respondents be effected through proclamation in the newspaper. You, defendants / respondents are directed to appear in the Court in person or through counsel on 04-03-2025 at 09:00 am, failing which, ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my signature and seal of the Court. (258302264708)

FAISALABAD

IN the Court of Mr. Asad Ullah Khan Khattak, Civil Judge 1st Class Faisalabad. Application/ restoration suit for partition of property. Title of case: Muhammad Nasir Shaltaaz s/o Yaqoob, Tariq Mahmood s/o Fazal Akbar residence of presently 17 ST, Arsham Drive Gleagle G41 UK, (2) Muhammad Afzal son of Fazal Din through (2A) Fazal Ullah Khan son of Chaudhary Muhammad Afzal Khan (Late) , (2B Fekhanda Afzal, (C) Alisa Afzal daughters Chaudhary Muhammad Afzal Khan (Late) all residence of 44 Manor Park Housing Colony Sheikhupura. (3) Muhammad Fazal Shahid son of Fazal Din through (3A) Mansoor Fatima daughter Muhammad Fazal Shahid Rajput by name residence of 40/8-B, Peoples Colony Number 2, Batar Chowk Faisalabad. (7) Secretary Housing Physical Planning Faisalabad. Whereas service of defendant / respondent is not going to be effected through ordinary means. So service of defendant / respondent be effected through proclamation in the newspaper. You defendants / respondents are directed to appear in the Court in person or through counsel on 06-03-2025 at 09:00 am, failing which, ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. With my signature and seal of the Court. Civil Judge 1st Class, Faisalabad. (258233244433)

RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LAHORE

VALENCIA

VALENCIA, Society Lahore 2 Kanal Bungalow Good Location Wall Mentained Four Beds, Dressing, Double Kitchen, Basement, solid construction / Fittings, Open space Lush Green Lawn, servant Quarter (Alif Shakti) 03334334763. (252232202362)

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

LAHORE

DEFENCE

DEFENCE Road Lahore Plot 3 Kanal / Main Main Road opposite Islamica Society Gate / back DHA Rahbar Bajri Location for commercial plaza, offices, flates (Arif Shakti) 03334334763 (258232202362)

NOTICE TO PUBLIC

ISLAMABAD

MY client, Miss Wajeeya Habib wife of Farooq Ali, Identity Number 35401-1100005-2, resident of House 1146, Street 44, Phase III, Bahria Town, Islamabad willfully and without any coercion or undue influence renounce her Afghan Nationality. Lugman Ali Sipra, Advocate High Court, CNIC: 34202-7937715, License No. 7947T, CC No. 25477(1585), Address: Office No. 01, First Floor, Plaza 69 Sector F, DHA-II, Islamabad. (SNnU7371Hs)

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MEPCO TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from prequalified/enlisted (Approved Contractors) with XWAPDA/PMC/DISCOs/NTDC/MEPCO for execution of work according to XWAPDA/PMC/DISCOs/NTDC/MEPCO guidelines, SDI, SOP, Specifications & Design / Drawing, having valid PEC licence with special code EE-06 & EE-07 & EE-08 renewed for year of 2024-25 under the jurisdiction of XEN (OP) MEPCO Division DG Khan as per following details.

Tender No.	Area	DESCRIPTION	Amount in Rs. (including all taxes)
01-(OSM) 2024-25	a. Operation Division D.G. Khan other than Fort Munro b. Fort Munro Sub Office	Safe handling, Erection and shifting of HT/LT PCC / Spun Poles of 31', 36', 40', 45' & 58' etc. from Pole Plant / Regional Store to site of work for new connections etc. under the jurisdiction of (OP) Division MEPCO DERA GHAZI KHAN.	62 Million

Eligibility of the Contractor: Tender documents will be issued to only following firms –
1. Which are prequalified / enlisted with XWAPDA/PMC/DISCOs/NTDC/MEPCO (Approved Contractors) from office of The Chief Engineer (Dist.) Engineering XWAPDA Lahore / office of The Chief Executive Officer MEPCO Multan.
2. Who have approved / registered by Pakistan Engineering Council from contractor which must be renewed for the year 2024-25 with Category C-6 having specialization code (EE 04 and EE 05 or EE 06). The contractor is bound to produce the documents in original & all copies must be duly attested including CNIC of the Contractor / Managing Partner / Director of the firm.
3. Time period of valid is shall remain one year (i.e., from the date of agreement), which can be curtailed / extended as per MEPCO requirement or till completion of bid amount, whichever is better in the interest of MEPCO.
4. Which provides Certificate of performance / non-black listing / debarring. The firms who have been issued Show cause/ urgent by the Employers i.e. XWAPDA/PPMRA/ DISCOs/ NTDC, MEPCO whose result in rejection of his bid.

Tender can be purchased: From the office of the Executive Engineer (Operation) MEPCO Division Operation Dera Ghazi Khan Near Central Jail MEPCO Complex.

Earnest money: CDR containing earnest money 2% of the bid amount must be accompanied with each Tender separately. CDR must be framed by the tenderer concerned.

Performance Guaranty: The successful bidder/tenderer shall furnish to the employer a 10% Performance Bond/Security in the shape of Bank Guarantee/Bond, Bank Draft, Pay Order or CDR from a scheduled Bank of Pakistan in favor of Office of XEN (Operation) MEPCO Division DG Khan valid for 365 days extendable upto the extent of completion of work, if the total value of contract subject to completion of work with the acceptance of Letter of Intent within 14 days from the date of issuance of Letter of Acceptance failing which contract shall be awarded to next lower responsive bidder.

Tender fee: Rs.2000/- each (Non-refundable) single stage procedure.

Date & time of issuance of Tender documents: Tender documents will be available on or before 04-03-2025 (during office hours) from the office of XEN (OP) MEPCO Division DG Khan. Original valid PEC Registration Certificate and original CDR shall be provided before issuance of Tender subject to providing the requisite documents as mentioned above. No Tender will be sold on date of opening.

Receiving of Tenders: Tender documents will be received on 06-04-2025 up to 12:00 PM.

Opening Date: Tenders will be opened on same day i.e. 06-04-2025 up to 12:30 PM.

Place of tender opening: Office of the Executive Engineer (OP) MEPCO Division Near Central Jail MEPCO Complex DG Khan.

Note:
1. All the taxes implemented by the Government shall be deducted from the contractor's bills.
2. Electronic Bid shall not be permitted.
3. All the proceedings of the tender will be observed according to PPRA Rules.
4. The rate quoted by less than 20% from analyzed/ calculated rates / previous approved tenders rates, the contractor have to submit 20% of total bid as performance security in the shape of CDR within 15days before approval of rates, in case of non submission of 5% security within 15 days, the competent Authority has right reserved for cancellation of tender and 5% earnest money also would be forfeited.
5. The 05% security will be returned to contractor on successfully completion of works, otherwise earnest money i.e 05% will be forfeited.
6. "Tender documents opening committee reserves all rights to accept or reject any / all tenders without assigning any reason".

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (OP)
MEPCO DIVISION D.G KHAN

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40 schools in residential buildings sealed

By Our Correspondent

GUJRANWALA: A joint team of the district administration and Metropolitan Corporation (MC) on Monday sealed more than 40 private schools being run in residential buildings.

The team was led by City Assistant Commissioner (AC) Iqra Mobeen Gondal, while MC Chief Officer Haider Chattha accompanied her.

The AC said that the team sealed schools located in Satellite Town, on DC Road and Sialkot Bypass over their illegal operations in residential buildings.

She said these schools owed millions to the government in commercialisation and conversion fees. Notices for clearance of the dues had already been served on the managements of these schools, she added.

The AC said that the sealed schools lacked dedicated parking areas, and were using roads and public spaces in the vicinity for parking, which disrupted traffic flow and caused inconvenience to the commuters.

She said notices are being issued to all private schools in the city, asking them to arrange proper parking lots, otherwise, they will not be allowed to operate. The administration has also mandated these institutions to submit their building plans for verification.

The AC said that in the second phase, notices will be served on private hospitals operating in residential buildings without designated parking areas. She said that in the third phase action will be taken against illegally constructed marriage halls, lacking proper parking areas.

Meanwhile, the local Private Schools Association has raised concerns over the disruption of students education because of the closures.

The association's spokesperson urged the authorities to resolve the issue amicably and allow the schools to operate in the larger interest of the students.

Azma challenges KP govt's claim of 625 projects

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari has said that the claim of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government that it has launched 625 projects in a year is nothing but a joke.

"A year has only 365 days, so how did the KP government manage to initiate 625 projects within a year?" she questioned in a statement on Monday.

She said a province struggling to fund its universities to the extent of selling university lands should not make a false claim. "Gandapur's so-called 625 projects will be as fictitious as the 'billion trees' initiative," Azma Bokhari said and added that the KP was excelling not in development but lawlessness, terrorism, and corruption.

"We have not seen a single minister or the chief minister of KP inaugurating any new project throughout the entire year. The CM didn't even show up at his office in a year," she said and pointed out that in KP, government employees frequently protested for their salaries, while local representatives struggled for funds.

Bokhari also criticised Gandapur, claiming that his priorities did not include the poor people of KP but rather the prisoner in Adiala. "Corruption in all its peak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and even the officials of the accountability committee are involved in it. The very committee that was supposed to ensure accountability is itself questionable."

Azma Bokhari further said that federal funds allocated for KP were being misused for political rallies, sit-ins, and internal distribution among party members. She demanded that the federal government conduct an audit of the funds provided to the KP. On the other hand, Punjab claims to have launched 90 projects during the last one year under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

The Maryam administration recently released an eyebrow-raising 60-page newspaper supplement which was published in most national dailies highlighting the "achievements" of the Punjab government in its first year. It sparked widespread debate, particularly on social media, with PTI and other critics questioning the expenditure of massive public funds. — Staff Reporter

Yasmin flays minister for 'lies' at UN moot

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: Berating Federal Law, Justice and Human Rights Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar for giving wrong information at the 58th session of UN Human Rights Council, PTI Punjab incarcerated President Dr Yasmin Rashid has demanded that the amended PECA Act should be invoked against him for 'fake news'.

In a letter written from jail on Monday, Dr Rashid criticised Mr Tarar for saying that Pakistan was committed to upholding human rights and claiming that the 26th Amendment had been passed to protect human rights. She asked whether suppression and oppression being practised against the opposition since 2022 was a part of your human rights campaign.

The PTI Punjab president explained nine points, highlighting atrocities being committed against people of Pakistan. She wrote the concept of 'Chaddar and Char Diwari' was no longer valid as police had barged into homes without warrants and harassed women and children. She said women were dragged by hair in the streets, battered and imprisoned for protests.

Despite all atrocities, she said, the PTI won the general election with the largest number of seats but the government was formed by the PML-N and PPP in connivance with the election commission. She said the election tribunals did not respond to the petitions by the Form-47 affectees.

Ms Rashid alleged that the sitting government ordered the killing of the PTI workers in Islamabad on Nov 26 last year and the law minister had the audacity to claim that there were no human rights violations. She said the political workers had been tried and punished by the army courts and more than 5,000 workers had been languishing in jails since the government came while Imran Khan was imprisoned along with his spouse on frivolous charges.

Dr Rashid pointed out that she, along with her colleagues, had been incarcerated for the last 22 months despite the fact that they were not convicted and not given bails. She added that journalists had been harassed for speaking truth and put off air.

FAISALABAD: Workers sort good quality corns in the vegetable and fruit market. — APP

Guru Nanak, Kamalia varsities sign MoU on research, teaching collaboration

By Our Correspondent

TOBA TEK SINGH: The University of Kamalia and Baba Guru Nanak University (BGNU), Nankana Sahib, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Monday to establish collaboration in teaching and research.

The formal signing ceremony took place in the presence of Dr Muhammad Afzal, vice chancellor of BGNU and Dr Yasir Nawab, vice chancellor of the University of Kamalia. This MoU lays the foundation for joint research projects, faculty and student exchange programmes, and cooperative educational initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of higher education and research innovation.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Muhammad Afzal highlighted the importance of academic partnerships in fostering knowledge-sharing and advancing research. Dr Yasir Nawab said the collaboration would leverage the strengths of both universities to address key academic and industry challenges.

A press release stated that the partnership is expected to facilitate interdisciplinary research, capacity-building programmes, and academic excellence, significantly contributing to the advancement of education and innovation in the region.

MURDER CASE RESOLVED: The blind murder case of a man found mysteriously killed in Satellite Town, Jhang, in October 2023 has been solved as with the victim's son turned out to be the killer.

A Jhang police spokesperson told reporters on Monday that Muhammad Mumtaz, 55, had been attacked and killed with a sharp shopper. Upon interrogation, his son Razes Abbas confessed to the crime. He said that he did so because his father had decided to sell farmland and property to contract a second marriage.

METRO BUS: Departmental work is underway on planning a Metro Bus Service (MBS) under the bus rapid transit (BRT) system to provide dignified, affordable, and efficient urban transport facilities in Faisalabad.

A press release on Monday stated that a team from the Punjab Transport Department, led by Managing Director Punjab Mass Transit Authority (MTA) Kanwar Anwar Ali Khan, visited Faisalabad and held a meeting with Director General Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) Muhammad Asif Chaudhry. The team included MTA General Manager Operations Uzair Shah, Manager Operations Rizwan Aziz, and senior engineers from Nespak.

FDA officials briefed the team on the proposed routes, ongoing studies, and consultations with stakeholders. FDA Director General Muhammad Asif Chaudhry said the authority had provided full support to experts from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) during the project study. He emphasised the need for modern urban transport to accommodate Faisalabad's growing population and urban expansion.

Punjab MTA Managing Director Kanwar Anwar Ali Khan said that during the visit, proposed routes were reviewed from a technical perspective, and Nespak engineers have been tasked with preparing a review report. The Secretary Transport Punjab will also meet with the district administration to inspect the routes and address planning issues.

He said the Punjab government would finalise a comprehensive strategy for the project, including route selection, based on expert recommendations and ground realities.

TOBA TEK SINGH: Fed up with noise pollution caused by fruit and vegetable vendors and beggars using loudspeakers, residents of Chak 493 GB, Faisalabad, have unanimously decided not to allow any such cart or rickshaw enter the village. They impose Rs5,000 fine on violators. — Dawn

Orthopaedic units relocation to Nishtar-II sparks off protest

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Punjab government's recent decision to relocate the orthopaedic surgery and neurosurgery units from Nishtar Hospital to the newly functionalised Tertiary Care Hospital Nishtar-II has ignited a wave of protests and concerns among doctors, the public and politicians in Multan.

The Punjab Specialised Healthcare and Medical Education Department announced the functionalisation of Tertiary Care Hospital Nishtar-II on July 25, 2024, and directed the relocation of the orthopaedic surgery unit-II (Ward No.21) and half of the neurosurgery department from Nishtar Hospital to Nishtar-II.

The vice chancellor of Nishtar Medical University, Multan, was tasked with ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted transition.

The doctors challenged the decision in the Lahore High Court Multan Bench and a stay order was issued previously. However, the government succeeded in recalling the order of the court.

In compliance with the vice chancellor's order dated Feb 24, 2025, the heads of various departments were requested to provide the names and designations of officers and officials for the relocation. The medical superintendent of Nishtar Hospital issued an office order on Feb 26, 2025, listing the staff members directed to report for duty at Nishtar-II.

However, the decision has faced significant backlash from the medical community and the public.

The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) staged a protest at Nishtar Hospital, joined by young doctors, paramedics and nurses.

The protesters argued that Nishtar-II should have its own staff and budget and that closing departments at Nishtar Hospital would make it difficult to transport accident victims to the new facility, which is far from the city.

Patients and their relatives, who have been waiting for operations for days, also participated in the protest, expressing frustration at being told to travel 25 kilometres away.

Politicians from the Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) have also voiced their concerns.

PPP provincial parliamentary leader Syed Ali Haider Gilani urged the government to reconsider the decision.

He highlighted the challenges that the local population would face due to the transfer of these crucial departments and emphasised the need for complete staffing and facilities at both hospitals.

Gilani called for the Nishtar phase-II to be constructed as originally planned, with no reduction in the promised 1000 beds.

He also appealed for a visit from Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to assess the situation firsthand.

The relocation has sparked a broader debate about healthcare infrastructure and resource allocation in south Punjab. As the controversy continues, the government faces mounting pressure to address the concerns of the medical community and the public while ensuring uninterrupted service delivery at both hospitals.

Lahore – a metropolitan without footpaths

Continued from Page 13

walk or ride bicycles to do their routine work and develop infrastructure for them; however, the governments in Pakistan are involved in removing footpaths in the name of development. He says the Mall Road is also facing the same fate as one cannot walk on it from the Canal Road to Governor House and both sides have public houses, which have encroached upon footpaths by erecting security barriers. While pointing out another hurdle, he says, zebra crossings have been completely erased from most of the roads and no one can cross the road without putting their life at risk.

Dr Anwar says the shortage of public transport has forced the people to have their own vehicles to commute in the city.

The citizens and activists demand immediate action to address the issue and urge the government to conduct a city-wide survey to identify roads without footpaths, remove encroachments, and ensure that utility installations do not obstruct pedestrian pathways. Moreover, they call for stricter enforcement of laws to prevent traders and businesses from misusing public spaces.

"This is not just an inconvenience, it's a matter of public safety," says Ayesha Malik, a member of a local advocacy group. "Every day, people are injured or killed on the road because they have no safe space to walk. The government must act now before more lives are lost," she suggests.

Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza says as Lahore continued to grow, there was a need for developing pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. He confirmed that due to increasing population, the footpaths were removed by the previous administration to give way to the increasing vehicular traffic in the city. He says with the population of the city, commercial and construction activities have immensely increased during the last two decades and there should be a stop to it.

Giving an example of London, Mr Raza says construction and commercial activities should be completely banned in Lahore and its main should be turned towards conservation. He says the departments concerned are continuously asked to stop giving permission for industrial and construction activities in the city. "It's on the government radar to develop footpaths on each new road of the city and the LDA would not allow roads without footpaths."

'Craft village' project near Lal Sohanra on the cards

By Majeed Gill

BAHAWALPUR: The divisional administration has moved a proposal to the provincial industries department to develop Abbas Nagar village as a 'craft village'.

According to a document shared with *Dawn*, Commissioner Muneer Jafseen has recommended to the secretary for industries to prepare its feasibility report for transforming Abbas Nagar into a craft village by the Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC).

After the approval of the feasibility report, it would be forwarded to the Department of Local Government and Community Development (LG&CD) to declare the village as a model village with its inclusion in the next ADP for funds.

It may be mentioned that Abbas Nagar is located about 28km east of the city on the Bahawalpur-Hasilpur road near the world-renowned Lal Sohanra National Park. It comprises two union councils and has 860 houses with an approximately population of 10,000.

Ms Jafseen said Abbas Nagar was renowned for its vibrant Chunri – a traditional tie and dye textile art of making shawl or dupatta deeply embedded in the village's cultural identity.

She told *Dawn* that about 80pc community of the village was engaged in the crafts, including basketry, Khussa making, pottery and embroidery while neighbouring settlements specialised in unique traditions like Chunri weaving in Phullan Di Wasti, Mukesh embroidery in Majeed Di Wasti, and Rilli (quilt-making) in Jan Muhammad Di Wasti.

She added that among the village's 800 artisan families, the legacy of Abdulla Mai, a master Chunri-maker, stood out. The craft village will help to fetch handsome income for the local craftswomen, who would also be able to earn their livelihood for their families, said the commissioner.

According to the officials, Abbas Nagar is home to a centuries-old tradition of making Chunri (shawl), but now this art is at risk of dying due to declining interest, lack of institutional recognition and the disappearance of traditional techniques.

Ms Jafseen stressed that this Sanjhak artisan hub, especially for women, would offer a safe workspace, tools and market access, shifting the craft production from homes to a collaborative environment and fostering skill development and economic growth. In addition, she argued, the project would safeguard rich artisanal heritage, uplift the local economy and ensure that the legacy of craftsmanship continued to thrive for future generations.

She said Abbas Nagar's proximity to Lal Sohanra National Park presented a unique opportunity to integrate eco-tourism with cultural tourism and this initiative would attract both local and international visitors creating employment opportunities and expanding market access.

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DAWN

METRO North

PESHAWAR Tuesday, March 4, 2025

PESHAWAR

Sunset	06:14pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow)	06:36am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum	08°C
Maximum	21°C
Outlook	Sunny

PESHAWAR RAMAZAN TIMING

Iftar (today)	Iftar (today)
6:14pm	6:24pm
Sahr (Tomorrow)	Sahr (Tomorrow)
5:14am	5:04am

PESHAWAR'S Fawara Chowk bazaar buzzing activity with shoppers busy in buying food items for Iftar. — White Star

Treasury MPAs resent 'curbs' on meetings with Imran

Call for assembly session outside Adiala Jail

By Umar Farooq

PESHAWAR: Treasury members in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly on Monday resented "restrictions" on meetings with incarcerated PTI leader Imran Khan despite court orders and called for a sitting of the house outside Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail where the former prime minister has been detained.

During an assembly session borowith Deputy Speaker Suriya Bibi in the chair, the lawmakers said that sitting should continue until party leadership, personal physician and wife Bushra Bibi were allowed to see Imran in jail.

Higher education minister Meena Khan Afridi complained that the former prime minister was denied meetings despite the court's orders.

He said the PTI approached all available forums for relief, but to no avail.

"Imran Khan is the hope for this country. How long will this injustice towards him continue? I demand a provincial assembly session outside Adiala Jail until his free trial is held and the PTI leadership and personal physician are allowed to meet with him," he said.

PTI MPA Shafiullah Jan said that the political leadership decided the country's policies and criticised the establishment for saying that anybody, who had issued with the policy, should leave the country.

He insisted that the Adiala Prison's administration didn't follow the jail manual.

"We know who is doing all this. The jail manual is being violated on the orders of a colonel," he alleged.

The lawmaker said during detention, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and PPP leader Asif Ali Zardari used to meet 100 people at a time.

He said that after Mr Imran became the prime minister, the country would have an independent foreign policy and the military would be asked to protect borders only.

Mr Jan said the PTI leadership as well as the KP Assembly should be taken on board before the launch of any military operation in the province.

He flayed "stolen public mandate, imprisonment of political leaders, and imposition of undeclared martial law" in the country.

Earlier, opposition members questioned transparency in the distribution of financial assistance to deserving people during the last Ramazan.

Adnan Khan of the JUI-F said the provincial government had decided to task political representatives to distribute the Ramazan Package cash handouts to people and even Rs1 billion was given away to 100,000 people, but no one engaged him for it in Bannu though he was an elected member from the district. He requested the chair to refer the matter to the relevant house committee for discussion and recommendations.

PPP member Ahmad Karim Kundi said if such matters were not referred to the house's committees, the National Accountability Bureau and anti-corruption establishment would investigate it.

Arbab Usman of the ANP said he put the same question to the government five months ago but got no response.

"I asked several persons in my area but they didn't receive the financial assistance," he said, calling for a "performance audit."

JUI-F lawmaker Riaz Shaheen said according to the department's reply to the question, 2,000 people received the financial assistance in Kurram tribal district, but he wondered when Zakat committees hadn't been formed, who distributed the financial assistance.

He said that he had submitted a list of deserving people from the area who had never received cash handouts.

Law minister Aftab Alam Afridi said almost 40 per cent of the names of the deserving people were dropped from the financial assistance list as they didn't fulfil the criteria prescribed for the Benazir Income Support Programme and Ehsas Programme. He said that more names were added.

The minister asked the chair for a vote as the treasury didn't favour the referring of the question to the relevant house committee.

Housing minister Dr Amjad said the financial assistance was provided through BISP, so the government had no role in the matter. He opposed the referring of the question to the house committee.

JUI-F member Rehana Ismail said the upcoming Ramazan Package would also face the same issues.

She said the cash handout's distribution should be done in a transparent manner.

Treasury member Abdul Salam Afridi said the government had reserved a 10 per cent job quota for employees of the Civil Secretariat and Provincial Management Services, while employees of other departments were ignored and no quota was reserved for them.

He said the KP Public Service Commission advertised posts.

"One advertisement mentioned 55 seats for the entire province but another advertisement had 36 posts but only the Civil Secretariat's employees were entitled to apply for them. The second advertisement should be withheld and the matter should be sent to the house's committee for consideration," he said.

The law minister said that the issue could be discussed and the rules revisited. The chair later referred the matter to the assembly's committee through voting.

The house also passed a resolution, moved by MPA Ghaidar Rehman, for electric supply to the Dir district.

The resolution read that the Koto hydropower project in Dir district, which was inaugurated in 2015 and completed in 2019, produced 41 megawatts, with Nepra receiving one unit for Rs8.28 and earning Rs1.7 billion.

The resolution said that electricity should be provided to Dir district at the rate of Rs8.24 per unit and supply the rest to the national grid otherwise the Nepra rate should be enhanced from Rs8.28 to Rs10 per unit and the district's income should be enhanced from 10 per cent to 20 per cent.

The assembly also passed the KP Control of Narcotics Substances Amendment Bill, 2025, which was tabled by excise and taxation minister Khaleeqot Rehman.

The chair later put off the sitting until 2pm on April 7.

Link roads blocked as several parts of KP receive heavy rain, snowfall

No damage to public life, property reported

Dawn Report

PESHAWAR: Heavy rains and snowfall were reported in several parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Monday.

However, no damage to public life and property was reported.

The provincial capital received heavy rains, which started around midnight and continued until the afternoon, with the Pakistan Meteorological Department recording 19mm of rainfall.

The Peshawar Electric Supply Company said that most of its feeders were affected due to the heavy rains. However, the power utility said the power supply was restored on most of the affected feeders after the rain stopped.

It said its workers were striving to ensure uninterrupted power supply during Iftar.

Abbottabad, Thandiani, Nathiagali, Dunga Gali, Ayubia and other hilly areas of the Abbottabad district received the heaviest snowfall of the current winter season. Temperatures in Galiyat and Abbottabad dropped below freezing point.

One to two feet of snow fell in Thandiani and upper areas of Galiyat, leaving almost all link roads in Galiyat blocked. The main Abbottabad-Murree Road was closed due to heavy snowfall at different points. However, they're later cleared by the Galiyat Development Authority.

"The road from Bara Gali to Nathiagali has been cleared to traffic," said Ahsan Hameed of the GDA.

He said two feet snowfall was reported in Thandiani and one feet in Galiyat region, including Dunga Gali, Changla Gali, Ayubia and Bara Gali.

The official said snow-removing machines were used on the road to Ayubia and the one from Barian to Murree, while two machines were working down from Barian to Nathiagali and Bara Gali.

He said snow was also being removed from the main Abbottabad-Murree Road, with all main and link roads already cleared by the GDA and Rescue1122.

Traffic police and staff of 1122 set up information centres to help and guide tourists.

Abbottabad traffic police have closed the road at Barra and Barain points, informing tourists and residents about the weather situation and safety measures.

On the instructions of SSP (traffic) Tariq Mehmood Khan, additional personnel have been deployed at various places in Galiyat to help tourists and local people.

Galiyat police rescued a woman teacher from Middle School Khaira Gali, Jawdala, along with her husband and children during heavy snowfall and

Continued on Page 14

A BISEP holding an umbrella during rain in Peshawar on Monday. — APP

PHC seeks replies in missing persons cases

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court has sought detailed replies from the federal and provincial governments regarding the increasing number of missing persons' cases.

Acting Chief Justice Abeeq Shah, while hearing multiple petitions related to disappearances, expressed serious concerns about the issue and emphasised the need for transparency and accountability.

During the hearing, the additional advocate general, the deputy attorney general, and police's focal person appeared before the court. Notices were issued in 10 petitions, directing the authorities to provide comprehensive responses.

Justice Shah questioned the police's focal person, asking, "Why are so many people going missing?" The police official responded that many individuals disappeared 'voluntarily' due to personal enmity, debt, or to avoid arrest.

The court, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of detail in police reports. The acting chief remarked, "The police should know why someone is missing. Simply stating that the person is not in custody is not enough. Reports must include more details."

The additional advocate general supported the court's stance, suggesting that SHOs should submit detailed reports for every missing person, covering aspects such as their character, business, and other relevant information.

The court was also informed that some individuals disappeared after committing bank fraud, while others were deceived into going missing.

Justice Abeeq Shah stressed the importance of thorough investigations and proper documentation to address the issue effectively. — APP

Tehreek-i-Insaf dissolves party units in KP

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter on Monday dissolved all the existing positions of regional presidents and general secretaries as part of the reorganisation of the party's structure in the province.

The party's restructuring is as per the instructions of the incarcerated founder Imran Khan and to ensure that individuals holding responsibilities in the KP government do not simultaneously hold positions in the party, according to a notification issued by provincial general secretary Ali Asghar Khan.

"In the first phase of this reorganisation, all the existing positions of regional presidents and general secretaries stand dissolved with immediate effect," reads the notification. Fresh appointments for these positions will be announced in due course of time, it said.

This step is taken to enhance the party's organisational effectiveness and ensure focused leadership in both party and government affairs. — Bureau Report

Govt to launch education card by 2027

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to launch an education card in all divisional headquarters of the province by 2027.

Due to the ongoing printing of textbooks for the upcoming academic year, the initiative could not be implemented immediately and is now planned to begin in the 2027 academic year.

According to a press release, the education card would be introduced at the primary and secondary education levels, benefiting students directly.

Minister for elementary and secondary education Faisal Tanaka said that the government spent billions of rupees annually on education, including the printing and distribution of textbooks, which faced multiple challenges.

"To ensure a direct and transparent allocation of resources to students, the initiative would initially be launched in eight major districts, including Peshawar, Mardan, Swabi, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat, Swat and Abbottabad," he said.

Mr Tanaka explained that the ongoing textbook printing process for the upcoming academic year had caused delays in the education card rollout.

He assured that the programme would start from the 2027 academic year, with no additional financial burden on the government while ensuring efficient and transparent resource distribution to students. — APP

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PRAYER

Fajr	05:19
Zuhar	12:29
Asr	04:33
Maghreb	06:14
Isha	07:36

Starting time in Peshawar

REFLECTIONS

"REMEMBER THAT PIETY AND NOBLENESS OF ALL YOUR ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO SINCERITY AND PUNCTUALITY OF YOUR PRAYERS."

— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)

Parachinar sit-in against road closures continues

By Our Correspondent

KURRAM: Residents protested the prolonged closure of roads in the district headquarters Parachinar here on Sunday for the second consecutive day.

They complained that the blockade of roads to and from Kurram for the last five months had left a population of over 0.5 million without access to essential food items and medical care.

The protesters, who staged a sit-in outside the Parachinar Press Club, stayed put despite fasting amid chilly weather. They included people of all ages, including elderly.

Elders Malik Zartaj, Muneer Bangash and others said that closure of roads for the last five months has deprived not only the city of Parachinar but also over a hundred adjoining villages of food and medical services, causing severe hardships for over 0.5 million residents of Upper and Lower Kurram.

They said the sit-in would continue until the roads are opened.

The elders regretted the closure of roads in Ramazan and said the blockade of rations to residents was particularly distressing, as it had forced them to break their fast with plain water.

They demanded that the roads be opened and protected immediately.

In Lower Kurram, too, residents held a protest sit-in, demanding relief for victims of the recent Ragzai attack and action against culprits.

The district administration said that efforts were being made to open the roads to the relief of the people, ensuring delivery of food items and other essential goods.

President of the Kurram District Bar Association Amir Abbas said in a statement that peaceful protest was people's right, no police shouldn't stop residents from exercising that right.

Youth urged to equip themselves with modern skills

By Our Correspondent

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami provincial chief Inayatullah Khan has urged youth to equip themselves with latest skills in science and technology to stay competitive in the evolving job market.

Addressing a ceremony at Timergara campus of Abdul Wali Khan University, he said that the world was undergoing a rapid transformation, with job roles shifting dramatically. He said that workshops, shopping malls and filling stations might be run digitally in the near future.

Inayatullah said that youth represented the nation's future and must not be misled by empty promises.

The event marked the successful completion of digital marketing and graphic design courses by 250 students under Al-Khidmat Rano Qafzi initiative. District president of Al-Khidmat Foundation Hafizullah Khakwar, JI district general secretary Shoaib Ahmad and JI provincial information secretary Hafiz Yaqubur Rehman also addressed the event.

They underscored the growing significance of information technology and skill development in modern world. They said that the youth of Lower Dir possessed immense potential but required proper guidance and training. Instead of solely seeking traditional employment, they should focus on acquiring IT skills to generate job opportunities and establish sustainable livelihoods, they added.

Inayatullah Khan, who is also patron-in-chief of Al-Khidmat Rano Qafzi programme, expressed concern over deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He condemned the recent suicide attack on Maulana Hamidul Haq, the administrator of Jamia Haqqania in Akora Khattak.

He said that provincial government failed to maintain law and order. He urged both the federal and provincial governments to collaborate in restoring peace and stability across the region.

PACKAGE: Talha Foundation, a charity organisation, distributed food packages among 40 families in Talash. The packages included essential groceries such as flour, rice, sugar and lentils.

The coordinator of the foundation, Qari Farman Hussain, said that the initiative was meant to help needy families partake in the blessings of Ramazan. He said that with the support of overseas Pakistanis, the foundation had been assisting 100 deserving families in Talash for three years.

Meanwhile, Rs200,000 was distributed among 25 special persons in Lower Dir with the assistance of overseas Pakistanis.

Link roads blocked as several parts of KP receive heavy rain, snowfall

Continued from Page 13

shifted them to a safe place.

Due to snowfall and severe cold weather, the teacher was trapped in the school along with the little girls who called the police for help. The police moved the schoolteacher along with her family to safety in a mobile van and then allowed them to return to their home.

The Karakoram Highway on Monday remained blocked to all sorts of traffic after a heavy landslide in Kohistan, as a fresh spell of snowfall and rainfall began in the upper parts of the Hazara division.

"The massive mass of land, which detached from a cracked portion of the mountain along the Karakoram Highway, blocked traffic between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan," deputy commissioner of Upper Kohistan Tariq Ali Khan said.

Upper parts of the Hazara division have recorded the first spell of heavy snowfall and rainfall since the start of Ramazan a few days ago, leading to the blockade of the Karakoram Highway and other major roads.

The deputy commissioner said that the continuous rain had hampered efforts to remove the mass of land from the KKH's blocked section.

"We had deployed heavy machinery to clear the landslide near the Bypass area, but the operation was halted amid heavy rainfall as work could be dangerous for labourers and machine operators," he said.

Mr Khan added that the blocked section would be reopened to traffic once the weather cleared.

Motorists and passengers travelling between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan were stranded on both sides of the highway in long queues of vehicles.

The heavy downpour, which began early in the morning, continued throughout the day in Mansehra, Torghar, Upper and Lower Kohistan and Kolai-Palas.

Temperatures dropped as the snowfall lashed Kaghan Valley, the tourist resort of Shogran, and other high-altitude areas throughout the day.

Police personnel deployed in Shogran and the lower parts of Kaghan valley restricted motorists from proceeding further over fears of mishaps due to the heavy snowfall.

"We are only allowing four-wheelers and locals to travel to snowbound areas of Kaghan and Shogran after ensuring compliance with all protocols set by the police for hilly areas during such rough weather," SHO of Paras in Kaghan Valley Tanweer Hussain Shah told reporters.

A new spell of snowfall started on Sunday's night and continued until Monday's evening as the district's most parts witnessed heavy snowfall, which blocked major and link roads.

Heavy snowfall was reported in almost all areas except Bisham tehsil where rain continued to lash for a second consecutive day, causing landslides in its upper areas. The Karakoram Highway was also blocked near the Batkot area of Bisham. However, it was later opened to traffic.

Deputy commissioner of Shangla Mohammad Fawad visited Machar area and examined snow removal from the Bisham-Swat Road. He said the continued snowfall hampered that work. He, however, said the administration would continue striving to keep the road open to all types of vehicular traffic.

A recent spell of rain and snowfall brought much-needed relief from the dry spell to Battagram and surrounding areas. The rain, which was accompanied by cold winds, hit Battagram, Ajmora and Chappargram, with substantial snowfall in Allai, Gantar and Rooghanai.

The snowfall enveloped the hilltops surrounding Battagram and Allai tehsils, bringing joy to the local population.

According to the district administration, all link roads in the area remained accessible to traffic and no damage to public life or property was reported.

The local residents, who previously complained about the shortage of rainfall and snowfall during the current winter season, hoped that the rain and snowfall would increase water level in the district, mitigating the drought-like situation.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department recorded 93mm rain in Malam Jabba, 45mm in Kalkal, 36mm in Kalam, 31mm in Balakot, 30mm in Pattan, 28mm in Chakdara, 24mm in Upper Dir and 16 in Lower Dir, 10mm in Takhtbhai, 15mm in Barons, 11mm in Chitral, 7mm in Mirkhani, 6mm in Drosh and 2mm in Dera Ismail Khan.

Experts advise regular checkups for early detection of cervical cancer

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Health experts at a seminar here on Monday advised women to undergo regular checkups for cervical cancer screening to prevent complications and stay healthy.

"Cervical cancer is a preventable disease, yet it remains a significant health concern worldwide. Early detection and treatment can significantly improve survival rates," Dr Saadia Shamsher told the seminar. The event was organised by the Peshawar chapter of Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Pakistan (SOGP) at Hayatabad Medical Complex.

Dr Saadia highlighted the significance of cervical cancer screening and awareness. She said that health professionals had crucial role in early detection and prevention of the ailment. "Down staging technique is an effective method for screening purposes," she added.

Prof Nasreen Uthman, head of gynaecology department at HMC, said on the occasion that vaccine could prevent infection with high-risk HPV types. She said that maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly and not smoking were also important to stay safe from the ailment.

Other speakers said that the global strategy of World Health Organisation meant to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem and recommended national screening programme for its member countries. Many countries implemented national screening programme to increase early detection and treatment of the disease, they said.

They said that regular screening, vaccination and healthy lifestyle practices could reduce the burden of cervical cancer worldwide. Cervical cancer is a type of cancer that occurs in the cervix, the lower part of the uterus in the female reproductive system. Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection is the main cause of cervical cancer. Smoking increases the risk of cervical cancer and women with weak immune systems are more susceptible to HPV infection.

Women with a family history of cervical cancer are at increased risk. The treatment of the disease includes removal of cervix or uterus, radiation therapy and medications to kill cancer cells. Dr Shagufta Nisar, an associate professor of clinical pathology, also spoke in

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COURT NOTICE

PESHAWAR

In the Court of Arqib Ameen, CJ (XVII), Peshawar. Case title: Dr Mian Munawar s/o Syed Maqbool Hashim, next date of hearing is 06/03/2025. In the above title suit the defendant No 2 & 3 i.e., Syed Jamal Younas S/o Syed Fida Younas and Nasreen Yamuna Shah D/o Syed Fida Younas are being informed through Daily Dawn Pol you should appear before the said Court on 06/03/2025 personally or through an attorney otherwise the case will be proceeded ex-parte. Seal of Court. (336428/16150)

In the Court of Asma Zahir Civil Judge Peshawar. Next date 04/03/25 case title Irshad Ahmed Sabir vs Khalil Ahmed Sabir etc. Notice to 7 Irshad Ahmed Sabir S/o Faqir UD Din Sabir R/o Feroz taj 9 Railway lane Peshawar cantt (defendant) Above defendant is directed to appear this Court on 04/03/25 self or worry or through council. Infailur ex party proceeding against you. Seal of Court. (350428/16137)

RAWALPINDI

In the Court of Raja Amjad Iqbal Judge Banking Court Rawalpindi. M/s Bank Alfalah Ltd versus M/s Zeenias Mobile Mart etc. To, M/s Zeenias Mobile Mart through its sole proprietor Mr. Tanbi ul Hassan Son of Muhammad Javed Qureshi having its Business office at shop No. 06, Ground Floor, Umar Shopping Center, 6th Road, Rawalpindi. Razia Hussain Wife of Tanbi ul Hassan. Whereas M/s Bank Alfalah has instituted a suite for Recovery of Rs. 11,248,548,811/- due against Under Section 9(3) of financial institution Recovery of Finances Ordinance 2001.You are hereby summoned to obtain leave to defend the suite under ordinance within 30 days after the publication of this notice. In default whereof the plaintiff will be entitled to obtain the decree of the said sum till realization of amount. Next date of hearing is fixed 07-03-2025. (375)(2nd Pub)

In the Court of Dr. Muhammad Mushtaq Hunjra Civil Judge 1st Class Rawalpindi. Suit for Specific Performance of Agreement. Sohail Mehmood versus Shafqat Hussain. S/o Muhammad Ashraf Resident of Post Office Khas Post Mallu Tehsil and District Rawalpindi. Presently residing at Dubai. You are inform to attend the Court personal through counsel or attorney on 06-03-2025 at 9 am to avoid ex-parte proceedings. (375127777(0))

In the Court of Raja Amjad Iqbal Judge Banking Court Rawalpindi. The Bank of Khyber (Pvt) Ltd versus M/s Sadiq Feeds (Pvt) Ltd etc. To, M/s Sadiq Feed (Pvt) Ltd, M/s Sadiq Poultry (Pvt) Ltd a company existing and functioning under the laws of Pakistan, having its registered office at 46-C Chandni Chowk, Satellite Town, Rawalpindi through Mrs. Sadia Sadiq and Mr. Salman Sadiq its Chief Executive Officers. Mr. Asif Zubair Sadiq, Mr. Salman Sadiq sons, Mrs. Rashida Sadiq Wife of Dr. Muhammad Sadiq (Late) resident of House # 6, Street # 37, F-8/1, Islamabad. Mrs. Sadia Sadiq wife of Dr. Muhammad Sadiq (Late) resident of 027, Street # 14, Chaklala Scheme-III, Rawalpindi. Whereas M/s Bank Alfalah has instituted a suite for Recovery of Rs. 806,266,671.16/- due against Under Section 9(3) of financial institution Recovery of Finances Ordinance 2001. You are hereby summoned to obtain leave to defend the suite under ordinance within 30 days after the publication of this notice. In default whereof the plaintiff will be entitled to obtain the decree of the said sum till realization of amount. Next date of hearing is fixed 07-03-2025. (377(09)1413(7)

ATTOCK

IN the Court of Raza Ullah Khan Additional Session Judge Attock. Asif Ali Khan versus Imdad Ali Khan etc. Appeal. To, Muqadar Ali Khan, Amar Ali Khan son of Imdad Ali Khan, Mst. Nelma Khatoon daughter of Anwar Muhammad Khan caste Khattar, resident of Mitrat Tehsil Jhand, District Attock. You are inform to attend the Court personal through counsel or attorney on 21-03-2025 at 9 am to avoid ex-parte proceedings. (376127777(05)

NOTICE TO PUBLIC

ISLAMABAD

MY client, Miss Wajeeha Habib wife of Farooq Ali, Identity Number 03467-1100055-2, resident of House 1148, Street 64, Phase III, Bahria Town, Islamabad willfully and without any coercion or undue influence renounce her Afghan Nationality. Lugman Ali Sipra, Advocate High Court, CNIC: 38202-7695755-7 License No. 7577, CC No. 7547(1058). Address: Office No. 21, First Floor, Plaza 64 Sector F, DHA-I, Islamabad. (376127777(6)

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN BOARD OF GOVERNORS
MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION BANNU
Corrigendum
Reference to the advertisement Published on 27-02-2025 for the position of secretary BOG at MTI Bannu.
The Place of posting may be read as follows:
Currently in Islamabad, however the position is remotely based, depending upon the Chairman BOG's location, and will require frequent travel between Bannu and the location of the Chairman."
Other terms and conditions shall remain same.
The last date shall be considered as 07-03-2025 (Friday)
CHAIRMAN BOARD OF GOVERNORS
MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION BANNU
Kohat Road Near Bannu Township Bannu Pakistan
Ph: 0928-632005, Email : bodmtibannu@gmail.com

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SCHOOL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION
GILGIT - BALTISTAN
No.DE-GB(1096)/24-Dev Gilgit :3rd March, 2024
CORRIGENDUM
The advertisement published in print media vide IDGB 117/25 dated 18th February, 2025 and GB PPRA website vide No. TSE-202502219682 dated 19th February, 2025 is hereby postponed due to some technical reasons and next tender date opening date is fixed on 12th March, 2025 with the same terms and conditions published earlier.
(Muhammad Murtaza)
Director Education Planning
Tel: 05811-960084
IDGB-144/25

OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT GENERAL
AZAD JAMMU AND KASHMIR
MUZAFFARABAD
TENDER NOTICE NO. 01:(2024-25)
Office of the Accountant General Azad Jammu and Kashmir Muzaffarabad invites sealed bids on open competitive basis, from the authorized distributors / suppliers / dealers, registered with Income Tax and Sales Tax Departments and who are on Active Taxpayers list, for supply / provision of Stationery (Office / Computer) / IT Equipment (Hardware) / Furniture & Fixture Items at Main Accountant General Office Sathra Hills at Muzaffarabad (A.K).

Name of Procuring Agency	Office of The Accountant General, AJ&K, Muzaffarabad			
Tender Name and No.	Tender No. 03 "Stationery (Office / Computer) / Furniture & Fixture / IT Equipment (Hardware) "			
Method of Procurement	Single Stage-Single Envelope Procedure			
Contact Officers	Muhammad Saleem Khan, Accounts Officer (HR / Computer), ☎ 05822-920883 Syed Muhammad Rizwan Shah, Assistant Accounts Officer (Admin-II), ☎ 05822-920901			
Submission of Bid(s)	Accounts Officer (Admin-II), Admin Block Building, Main Office of the Accountant General Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Sathra Hills, Muzaffarabad.			
Closing Date & Time for Receipt of Bid(s)	March 20, 2025 at 10:30am			
Opening Date & Time of Bid(s)	March 20, 2025 at 11:00am			
Earnest Money	For Computer Paper	Rs. 55,000	For Printer Ribbon	Rs. 55,000
	For Office Stationery	Rs. 55,000	For IT Equipment	Rs.40,000
	For Furniture & Fixture	Rs.40,000		
	In Favor of Accounts Officer (Admin-II) / DDO AG-Office Muzaffarabad AJK			
Time Period for Performance of Contract	30 Days from the date of award of contract as per supply order but not later than 30th June, 2025.			

LOT #	LOT Name	LOT Detail
LOT-1	Computer Paper	Computer Paper Part-A, Part-B.
LOT-2	Printer Ribbons	Ribbon Line Matrix Printer (Printronix P7220), Ribbon Tally Genicom, Data Cartridge Tape, External Hard Drive
LOT-3	Office Stationery	Allied items related to office stationery as mentioned in the bidding Documents
LOT-4	Furniture & Fixture	Executive High Back Office Chair, Officer Chair Medium Back (Best Quality), Computer Chair Medium Back (Best Quality), Steel Almirah (Best Quality), Computer Table, Cabinet Steel (Best Quality), Office Side Racks
LOT-5	IT Equipment	Laptop Core i7, Desktop System Core i3, LaserJet Printer

2. Details Specifications and quantity of items, mentioned above, including TOR's are mentioned in the bidding documents, which can be downloaded from the official websites of AG AJ&K (www.agajk.gov.pk) and AJ&K PPRA (www.ajkppra.gov.pk).
3. Office of The Accountant General, Azad Jammu and Kashmir reserves all rights to revise quantity, accept or reject any or all tender(s) in the light of Rule-33 of AJ&K Public Procurement Rules (PPRA), 2017. All applicable taxes either National or Local will be deducted at source on the prescribed rate for onward payment to the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.
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21 startups take part in campus competition

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU) on Monday hosted HULT Prize 2025 Campus Competition wherein 21 emerging startups showcased their creativity and entrepreneurial skills.

The competition served as a dynamic platform for young business minds, enabling them to present sustainable business models aimed at tackling global challenges. One of the standout participants was NOUL Syrce, founded by KMU student Noel Anoop, whose innovative ideas and forward-thinking approach greatly impressed the audience, said a statement.

The event featured an exchange of dynamic and creative ideas, proving that young entrepreneurs could play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the medical sector and other industries. The competition was presided over by KMU Vice-chancellor Prof Zainul Haq while the additional secretary of higher education department, Javed Iqbal, and the deputy secretary, Rahmat Wazir, attended the event as guests of honour.

In his concluding remarks, Prof Zainul Haq expressed his gratitude to the panel of judges for their valuable insights and expertise. The judging panel included Engineer Mohammad Haroon Nawaz, Dr Syed Tanqeer Hussain Shah, Dr Sohaib Ali and Dr Ibrahim Afridi.

Prof Zia reaffirmed KMU's commitment to supporting young entrepreneurs in transforming their ideas into impactful and viable projects. He particularly highlighted the role of KMU Business Incubation Centre (KUBIC), which serves as a model for other institutions to emulate. He stated that the prize competition reflected KMU's dedication to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable development.

During the event, Wasimul Haq, the programme manager of KUBIC, and Faizi Subhan, the national coordinator of HULT Prize Pakistan, were lauded for their remarkable efforts in organising the competition.

Prior to the competition, all participating startups attended a three-day entrepreneurship workshop and boot camp. This training provided participants with essential guidance and skill-building opportunities, enabling them to refine their business models and enhance their entrepreneurial expertise.

Workshop highlights role of police during natural disasters

By Our Correspondent

CHITRAL: The participants of a workshop here on Monday said that police officials should be imparted extensive training to save lives of people during natural disasters.

They highlighted the role of police during natural disasters in safeguarding lives and properties of the affected community by checking looting and theft and maintaining the writ of government.

Held under the aegis of Chitral Region of Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, Pakistan, the workshop was attended by police officials and officers in a large number. It was meant to underline the roles and responsibilities of police in an area hit by natural disasters.

The participants said that Chitral was prone to natural disasters that recently played havoc in different villages, rendering thousands of families homeless. "This scenario increases the involvement of police force," they added.

They said that police force rushed to the trouble spots without loss of time as one of the first responders and started keeping a vigilant eye on people to save properties from being looted or damaged by miscreants.

The desired response and action of police officials during the calamity in a village were evolved out during discussions. They said that police official should be imparted extensive training on life-saving skills.

The regional programme manager of AKAH, P Mohammad Wali Khan, said that his organisation was working to coordinate between different line departments of government to respond to natural disasters cohesively and exclusive session with police was a chain of those efforts.

Martyred police official laid to rest in Bajaur

By Our Correspondent

BAJAUR: A police official, who was martyred in an attack by unknown armed men on Sunday evening, was laid to rest in his native area here on Monday.

Ismail Khan, 38, who was also head of the police's Quick Response Force in Bajaur, was targeted near Badinamoor area when he was going to home from Inayat Kalley along with a son.

The slain official was laid to rest in his native Badinamoor area following his final funeral prayers, which were held at the Bajaur Police Lines' ground on Sunday night.

Senior officials of the district administration and police were also in attendance.

TWO girls walk through a snowy patch in Galiyat area of Abbottabad on Monday. — PPI

CM accepts resignation of Health Foundation chairperson

Contracts will be signed with new private organisations to run seven outsourced hospitals

By Ashfaq Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur here on Monday accepted the resignation of Dr Shahana Haider as chairperson of Health Foundation (HF) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The resignation of chairperson of HF has rekindled hopes for signing contracts with private organisations to take over seven outsourced hospitals under public-private partnership initiative of health department.

Dr Shahana assumed the role of HF chairperson in September last year but developed differences with Dr Adnan Taj, the managing director of the foundation, over the legality of selection of new contractors for seven hospitals. She had rejected the contract and hinted at initiating the selection process afresh.

The public-private partnership (PPP) initiative suffered as the contracts of the partners running these hospitals already expired one and a half years ago and the old partners were requested to continue as stopgap arrangements till the selection of new organisations.

HF, a public sector entity established under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Foundation Act, 2016, has been outsourcing these hospitals, which are not performing because doctors, nurses and paramedics don't want to be posted there.

So far, HF has outsourced 19 hospitals to private organisations, mostly in tribal districts to improve services, according to sources. Of these, the contracts of seven hospitals with HF expired in June 2023 that were extended temporarily by the provincial cabinet.

As their contracts continued to get extended from time to time, HF remained busy in selecting new organisations through tendering for running these hospitals. HF was asked by provincial cabinet to select new partners so that the contracts of the seven hospitals could be inked.

HF completed the tendering process in January last year but could not move forward to sign agreements with the selected organisations because its Board of Governors (BoG), which is approving authority for awarding contracts to new partners, was nonexistent.

The health department notified BoG of HF in September last year (but rekindled hopes that the selected partners would be given charge of the hospitals where the older partners were facing financial issues and were not willing to run the health facilities anymore. In five of the seven hospitals, partners have slashed healthcare services and patients receive only emergency services.

All the 19 hospitals demand of the government to pay them Rs1.2 billion, including Rs1 billion of the seven hospitals, whose contracts have ended.

The new BoG of HF, in its meeting early in February, rejected the selection of partners to operate the seven hospitals, which was a serious blow to the public-private partnership initiative of health department, sources said.

BoG of HF decided to reflout tenders for selection of new partners that would take many months and the partners whose contracts had expired couldn't run the hospitals as stop-gap arrangements because they weren't getting money.

Dr Adnan Taj has also written a letter to adviser to chief minister on health that the decision to reject the selection of new partners for seven hospitals by BoG was illegal because the quorum was incomplete.

The meeting was conducted without fulfilling the quorum requirement under Section 5, Sub-section 4 of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Foundation Act, 2016, which stated that "six members shall constitute the quorum for a meeting of the board". He said that the meeting was conducted without the quorum and only five members of BoG were present on the occasion.

Dr Shahana Haider resigned as chairperson of HF and now search and nomination council would select new BoG members.

Sources said that nine members, including two government and seven private ones, were required to complete BoG while six would be complete forum to take decisions.

They said that very soon the BoG would be completed and new partners would be given charge of the seven hospitals.

A MMM buys a cap at a shop in Peepal Mandi, Peshawar. — White Star

Buses, wagons illegally plying roads along BRT route to be impounded

PESHAWAR: Peshawar division commissioner Riaz Khan Mahsud on Monday directed the authorities concerned to stop buses and wagons from illegally plying the roads along the Peshawar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor within 72 hours.

He also directed the regional transport authority, traffic police and the district administration to submit a report in this regard.

Mr Mahsud issued the directives while chairing a meeting held here, according to a statement.

He told the meeting that authorities had already paid compensation to owners of 504 buses plying the roads along the mass transit corridor even before the bus service was made functional. However, he said that now transporters were illegally operating buses along the BRT corridor. He said that buses were being brought from Punjab and other areas. He said that the authorities usually impounded the buses and released them after a few days after the owners testified that they would take their vehicles to some other districts.

Mr Mahsud said that a few days later, the same buses again started using the same routes.

He directed the officials to scrap the impounded buses instead of handing them again to their owners.

Mr Mahsud also visited the disputed zones of the Rogi Model Town along with the elders of the Kukikhel tribe. — Bureau Report

Over 35 shopkeepers, mostly butchers, held for profiteering

Roadside vendors in Lakki city manhandle official

Dawn Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Thirty-seven shopkeepers, mostly butchers, were arrested and several shops were sealed during crackdowns on profiteers in different districts on the second day of Ramazan on Monday as roadside vendors in Lakki city manhandled an additional assistant commissioner for allegedly imposing fines on them.

Witnesses said that additional assistant commissioner Mohammad Arif was checking prices of food items and clearing the main Bannu-Mianwali Road of encroachments for smooth flow of traffic when some vendors got furious over the instructions by the administration official to remove their carts from roadsides and attacked him with fists and kicks.

Mr Arif visited shops on both sides of the artery to address people's complaints about price hike and encroachments.

He asked the vendors to vacate the roadsides for smooth flow of traffic.

The manhandling of the official by shopkeepers prompted the policemen to fire gunshots in the air to control the situation and disperse shopkeepers.

The shopkeepers also gathered on the busy road and kept it closed for some time. Later, they opened the road after their representatives held talks with police officials.

The shopkeepers alleged that the additional AC repeatedly visited their outlets and imposed fines on small vendors.

Meanwhile, Bannu division commissioner Mohammad Ali Shah has also asked the deputy commissioners to ensure availability of sugar, price regulations and shoutimes during the fasting month.

"The administrative prudence and respect of vendors should be the guiding principle during the campaign without any compromise on profiteering and hoarding," he maintained, making clear that all relevant officers should be on ground without any fail and price monitoring report should be shared on a daily basis.

In Bajaur, the district administration arrested eight butchers and owners of two confectionery shops for violating the official price list.

The arrests were made during raids in different bazaars in Khar and Salhabad areas, said a statement issued from the deputy commissioner's office.

It said the action against the butchers was taken on public complaints.

The arrested butchers were later sent to the assistant commissioner's office for further legal action. The statement said the confectionery shops were also sealed.

In Shangla, the district administration initiated a crackdown on shopkeepers and butchers for flouting consumers and selling substandard, unhygienic food items.

Deputy commissioner Mohammad Fawad Khan on Monday told Dawn that he had directed all the assistant commissioners to keep the prices of essential items under check.

He said 18 traders, including butchers, and restaurant managers, were booked and FIRs lodged against them in Alpuri, Bisham, Puran, Chakesar, Martung.

He said over three dozen shops were sealed.

DC Shangla said complaint desks had been established in major bazaars where people could lodge their complaints against the shopkeepers for hoarding and profiteering.

Alpuri assistant commissioner Mohammad Hamid Sadiqui said price lists were updated daily and provided to the shopkeepers.

In Abbottabad, the district administration arrested nine butchers for selling meat at high prices.

On the instructions of deputy commissioner Captain retired Samiullah Khan, special price control teams have been formed, which are inspecting markets on a daily basis to ensure implementation of price list and take prompt action on public complaints.

Legal action was also taken against several shopkeepers for selling chicken and other essential items at exorbitant prices. Moreover, under supervision of additional assistant commissioner (revenue) Arshad Mahmood, prices of vegetables, fruits and poultry products were fixed in consultation with price control magistrate, union staff, representatives of the food department and business community.

In Mansehra, the price of locally grown (indigenous) chicken surged to a record high of Rs1,000 per kilogramme on Monday while the rates of fruits and other essential commodities also skyrocketed with the advent of Ramazan.

"Though desi chicken is not commonly consumed here, its price has jumped to Rs1,000 per kg. Poultry products have also experienced a price hike with the beginning of the holy month," said Mohammad Azam, a chicken seller on Abbottabad Road.

Meanwhile, broiler chicken is being sold at Rs460 per kg, and the Egyptian hen (commonly known as Misri Murghi here) is being sold at Rs800 per kg. The price of eggs has also increased suddenly in local markets.

"Before Ramazan, eggs were sold at Rs220 per dozen, but they are now priced at Rs288 per dozen," a resident, Sadaqat Ali said.

He said although the district administration has set different rates for eggs based on weight, traders continued to sell them at uniform prices without considering weight variations.

"The administration has fixed the price of eggs weighing 40 to 50 grams at Rs268 per dozen, but traders are still selling them at higher rates," he said.

Though the district administration has not fixed the price of garlic in its price list, it is still currently being sold at Rs800 per kg. "While the administration regularly issues price lists for fruits and vegetables shopkeepers and traders continue to overcharge buyers," Mr Ali added.

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