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Emirs of Kuwait, Qatar accept PM's invitation to visit Pakistan

Ambassadors of both countries present letters to PM in separate meetings

ISLAMABAD (APP): Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani have accepted Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's invitation to visit Pakistan, marking a major breakthrough in the country's diplomatic efforts.

In separate meetings of ambassadors of Kuwait and Qatar with the prime minister on Sunday, they presented the letters of their respective leaders, confirming their acceptance of invitation to visit Pakistan.

In a meeting, Ambassador of Kuwait Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Al-Mutairi handed over the letter of the Emir of Kuwait to the prime minister which conveyed a message to accept the invitation of the prime minister to visit Pa-

kistan on the mutually agreed dates.

While receiving the letter, the prime minister recalled his recent meeting with the Kuwaiti Emir held on the sidelines of World Economic Forum on April 2028, 2024.

Meanwhile Qatar's envoy to Pakistan Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater also called on the prime minister and presented to him the letter from the Emir of Qatar conveying the message to accept the invitation to visit Pakistan on the mutually convenient dates.

The prime minister conveying his heartfelt gratitude to the Qatari Emir, emphasized that Pakistan deeply valued its historic brotherly relations with Qatar and reiterated Pakistan's firm determination to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Former MPA Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Shagufta Malik presenting a bouquet to Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti while congratulating him on becoming CM.

COAS highlights loss of Iranian leaders truly tragic and irreparable

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, had a telephonic call with the Chief of General Staff (CGS) of Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Bagheri and extended deep condolences over the sad and unfortunate incident of the helicopter crash on May 19 which led to demise of President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian and other important officials.

The COAS expressed that Late President Ebrahim Raisi and Late Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian were exceptional leaders and true friends of Paki-

stan, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The COAS highlighted that the loss of both the leaders and others was truly tragic and irreparable. The Army Chief on behalf of all ranks of Pakistan Army extended prayers for the departed souls and well wishes for the bereaved families.

The COAS said that Pakistan has historic, cultural and brotherly ties with Iran and the Armed Forces of Pakistan and Iran have always stood together. General Bagheri thanked the COAS for sharing grief and vowed to continue the cooperation between the two militaries.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Peoples Party calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Legend actor Talat Hussain passes away

KARACHI (APP): The acting legend and renowned drama, stage and film actor Talat Hussain Warsi was



laid to rest in a graveyard of DHA phase 8, here on Sunday.

The legendary actor passed away at the age of 83 after a prolonged illness in the morning of May 26 and survived by a widow, two daughters and a son.

The funeral prayer of the actor was held at Aisha Masjid, Khayaban e Ittehad, phase 8 attended by actors belonging to Pakistan showbiz industry, relatives, fans and a large number of people.

Earlier, the Actress Tazeen Hussain, who is the daughter of, late actor Talat Hussain had confirmed the death of her father on Sunday.

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kuwait Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Al-Mutairi and Qatar's envoy to Pakistan Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater presenting the letters of their respective leaders to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif confirming their acceptance of invitation to visit Pakistan

PPP delegation calls on PM Shehbaz Sharif

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Sunday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed matters of mutual concern.

The delegation included former Prime Minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Syed Naveed Qamar, Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, and Sherry Rehman.

During the meeting, the participants exchanged views on the overall political situation of the country. They also discussed the upcoming budget 2024-25.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Advisor to PM on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah, and Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarrar also attended the meeting.

Ex-MPA KP meets CM; expresses best wishes

INDEPENDENT REPORT QUETTA: The former Member Provincial Assembly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ms. Shagufta Malik called on the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti in Islamabad on Sunday.

During the course of meeting, the former MPA congratulated Mir Sarfraz Bugti on becoming Chief Minister.

He expressed best wishes for the Chief Minister and hoped that the provincial government would play its role for bringing improvement in the good governance and establishing peace in the province.

Pakistan demands Afghanistan to hand over TTP terrorists involved in Besham attack

Interior minister Mohsin Naqvi asks Afghan interim govt to act against terror network on its soil; Says Pakistan wanted good ties with Afghanistan and it was possible when Afghanistan would support Pakistan and not allow its soil to be used against Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said that Pakistan attaches high importance to its ties with China whether they are economic, political, diplomatic or security related.

Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, he said that both countries support each other at different forums and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative was a big example in this regard. He said, "We are confirming it with evidence that during an attack on Chinese engineers in Besham, Afghanistan's territory had been used and it was a mat-

ter of great concern for Pakistan."

He said that such threats coming from across the borders make regional security more complex. The interior minister said that it was a planned attack and was operated from Afghanistan. He said Pakistan had raised this issue with Afghanistan's Interim government and stressed them to control terrorists operating from there.

Mohsin Naqvi said that Pakistan had beefed up its security at borders, adding that the government was well aware of the elements behind such incidents, which wanted to harm rela-

tions between Pakistan and China.

Support was being provided to TTP-like terrorists in border areas, he said and added that "we have a number of evidence in this regard".

He said that after occurrence of terrorist attack on Chinese in Besham, the law-enforcement agencies in the country jointly carried out comprehensive investigation of the incident. Some accused of the incident had been arrested, he said. He said that Chinese security was very important and new standard operating

Continued on page 2



LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi addressing a Press conference at FIA regional office.

PM Shahbaz highly appreciates Norway's landmark decision to recognize Palestine

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday during a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister of Norway Jonas Gahr Store conveyed his deep appreciation for Norway's landmark decision to recognize the State of Palestine.

"He said that this principled decision by Norway would send a strong message of hope and solidarity to the brave Palestinian people who have been enduring Israel's brutality and suffering over seventy-five years of occupation and oppression," PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister also welcomed the ICJ's recent ruling regarding

Rafah and Gaza and called for its full and effective implementation. The prime minister emphasized the importance of the two-state solution as the key to lasting peace in the Middle East.

He hoped that Norway's decision would encourage other countries to follow suit, paving the way for full UN membership of State of Palestine.

In this regard, he further said that the international community needed to focus its attention towards the plight of the oppressed people of Kashmir, who had been subjected to brutal occupation and denial of fundamental rights for the past seven and a half decades.

Process of wheat procurement by Food Department likely to start in Balochistan today

INDEPENDENT REPORT QUETTA: The much-delayed process of wheat procurement from the growers is likely to start in Balochistan from today (Monday).

The sources of Food Department told that the wheat procurement is going to start in the province with distribution of bardana (wheat bags) among the growers from Monday.

It may be mentioned here that the procurement of wheat was scheduled to start from May 6 as decided in a high level meeting chaired by the Chief Minister, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti in start of the current month.

It had been announced to purchase 500,000 bags of wheat from the growers this year. For the purpose, Rs. 5 billion were also approved with the directives to release Rs. 2.5 billion immediately.

The required amount for purchase of bardana was also approved in the meeting chaired by the Chief Minister then.

The Food Department sources said that the teams of Department are already in Naseerabad and Jaffarabad for purchase of wheat.

The Food Department is expected to complete the process of procurement during the month of June.

We are ready if PTI intends to hold talks: Yousaf Raza Gillani

Affirms support for government's welfare initiatives

ISLAMABAD (INP): Acting President Yousaf Raza Gillani on Sunday said that we are ready if the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) wants to talk with us.

"We didn't say at any time, we are not on the side of the government," PPP stalwart Gillani said in a media talk. "We are extending full support to the government and engaged in talks with it for joining the government," he said. "We will take responsibility if joined the government," he further said. "We will support them in all good works," he added.

Gillani said that no parliament bill or law will be passed without us.

APP adds Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) would continue to support

the government's welfare initiatives and also provide suggestions to make the upcoming budget favourable towards people, especially farmers, youths, and labourers.

He expressed these views while talking to media after laying the foundation stone of a reverse osmosis (RO) plant here on Sunday. He highlighted that as a member of the United Nations, Pakistan was committed to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6, which aimed to ensure "availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" by 2030. He expressed his appreciation for those working to provide clean drinking water, noting that their efforts were also in service to the state.



LAHORE: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani addressing to media after inauguration of the Zahaer ud Din RO plant at Military Accounts Cooperative Housing Society.

Two Pak Army soldiers embraced martyrdom, five terrorists killed in Peshawar operation

PM lauds security forces for successful operation against terrorists; Nation not to forget sacrifices of martyrs of Pakistan Army: Bilawal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two soldiers of Pakistan Army on Sunday embraced martyrdom while gallantly fighting against terrorists during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in general area Hassan Khel, Peshawar District during which five terrorists were killed while three got injured.

"Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further

front, Captain Hussain Jahangir, age 25 years, resident of Rahim Yar Khan District, along with another brave son of the soil, Havildar Shafiq Ullah, age: 36 years, resident of District Karak, having fought gallantly, made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat (martyrdom).

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, during conduct of the operation, the Army troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location. However, during intense exchange of fire, leading his troops from the

Continued on page 2

Sacrifices of soldiers for peace unforgettable: Mir Sarfraz Bugti grieved over martyrdom of Army personnel in Hassan Khel operation

INDEPENDENT REPORT QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed sorrow over martyrdom of an Army officer, Captain Hussain Jahangir and Havildar, Shafiqullah in an intelligence based operation conducted in Hassan Khel area of Peshawar district.

In a condolence statement issued here on Sunday, the Chief Minister said that the sacrifices of our brave jawans and officers for establishing peace in the country are unforgettable. He said that the brave

sons of the motherland have created new history with their blood while fighting gallantly and the entire nation is proud of the sacrifice of martyrs.

Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that we equally share the grief with the bereaved families of the martyrs in the moment of grief.

Meanwhile, the Provincial Minister for Food, Noor Muhammad Dummer also expressed sorrow over the martyrdom of Captain Hussain Jahangir and Havildar Shafiqullah in the operation against terrorists in Hassan Khel area.



PESHAWAR: Army officers carrying coffin of Captain Hussain Jahangir who embraced martyrdom during an IBO in Hassan Khel.

'Azadi Fellowship Programme' promotes social harmony among diverse youth

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Azadi Fellowship Programme, organized under the aegis of the International Research Council on Religious Affairs (IRCRA), concluded with resounding success, bringing together participants from 15 districts, representing three religions and speaking five different languages.

This diverse gathering intended to foster understanding and promote social harmony among the youth of Pakistan.

The programme witnessed an impressive lineup of speakers from various corners of the globe, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Abu Dhabi, Al-Azhar University Egypt, Romania, Indonesia, Pakistan and many other countries. These speakers shared their insights on religious tolerance, cultural diversity, and the importance of social cohesion.

Participants were treated to a comprehensive tour of Islamabad, which included visits to prominent think tanks, the Islamabad Club, music clubs with theatres, and significant cultural sites such as folk heritage museums, churches, and temples. One of the highlights of the tour was a visit to the National Assembly, where the young participants gained a deeper understanding of Pakistan's legislative processes and democratic framework.

The programme's multicultural environment enabled young people from different linguistic and religious backgrounds to come closer and learn from one another. This

interaction fostered mutual respect and appreciation for each other's cultures and beliefs, creating a strong foundation for future cooperation and understanding.

Throughout the event, participants pledged to promote the national narrative of social harmony and committed themselves to act as ambassadors of Paigham-e-Pakistan for unity and peace. They expressed their dedication to spreading this message within their communities, in a bid to build a more cohesive and tolerant society.

Exchanging his views with media, IRCRA President Muhammad Israr Madani informed that the Azadi Fellowship Programme played a pivotal role in bridging cultural and religious divides, highlighting the importance of dialogue and mutual respect in building a harmonious society.

This year, he said the fellowship focused on enhancing participants' understanding of religious freedom, democracy, and civic engagement. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to implement seed projects in their respective communities, fostering real-world impact, he added.

"The Azadi Fellowship Programme represents our commitment to promoting religious freedom and democratic values in Pakistan. We believe that by empowering young leaders and scholars, we can make significant strides towards a more inclusive and engaged society," Israr affirmed.



LAHORE: Citizens taking bath in the canal along with their families to protect themselves from the heat wave caused by the increasing load shedding in the provincial capital.

PCB decides not to appoint anyone as vice-captain for T20 World Cup 2024

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to not appoint anyone as a vice-captain of the national team for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024. The statement came at the time when sources reported that Pakistan's star speedster Shaheen Afridi had declined the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) offer to become the national team's vice-captain. According to PCB's official statement, "It was unanimously decided not to appoint anyone. As no such offer was made to anyone."

The board further said that the national team is fully united, committed and keenly looking forward to the upcoming matches in the UK and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. Yesterday, sources revealed that the selection committee had offered Shaheen Afridi to become the team's vice-captain, which he refused to accept. It is pertinent to mention here that Shaheen Shah Afridi took over the captaincy of the T20I team after Babar Azam resigned from his role as all-format captain following the national team's dismal performance in the ODI World Cup in India last year.



KARACHI: A protest is being held outside the Karachi Press Club by Gilgit-Baltistan Youth for their demands.

Inter Provincial Women's Softball C'ship kits unveiled

ISLAMABAD (APP): The kits of the teams participating in the first PNSC Inter Provincial Women's Softball Championship were unveiled in a ceremony on Sunday.

Special Olympics Pakistan Chairperson Ronak Lakhani, Patron of Softball Federation Pakistan Fatima Lakhani, President Asif Azeem, SVP Professor Dr. Farhan Essa, Chairperson Yasmin Haider, Vice President Tehmina Asif Individual Member of POA Syed Waseem Hashmi, PNSC Assistant Manager Admin Ayesha Leena and other personalities were also present, said a press release.

On the occasion, the Chairpersons of Special Olympics Pakistan, Ronak Lakhani said Pakistani

women abilities are not less in sports as well as in other fields. By empowering women, we can also shine in sports. It is a great opportunity for female players participating in the softball championship to show their full potential so that they can get an opportunity to represent Pakistan at the international level as well. I thank all the sponsors of the event including PNSC and Comboxx Sports for their patronage to the Softball Federation of Pakistan.

Patron of SFP Fatima Lakhani urged the players of all the teams participating in the championship to become the ambassador of their respective province and make the name of their province known through their sport.

Journalist, athlete Mona Khan released by Greek authorities

ISLAMABAD (INP): National TV anchor and marathon runner Mona Khan has been released by Greek administration on the swift action of Pakistan's embassy in Greece.

According to FO spokesperson, Mona Khan has been released from detention and moved to Athens to meet her son there.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch confirmed the embassy's proactive measures, stating, "The Pakistani Embassy hired a lawyer and ensured consular access to Mona Khan. Embassy officials visited her in jail to provide support and facilitate her release."

Roston Chase shines as West Indies clinch T20I series against South Africa

SABINA PARK (INP): Roston Chase delivered a dazzling 38-ball 67, propelling the West Indies to a 16-run victory over South Africa at Sabina Park, securing an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match T20I series.

Opting to bat first, West Indies captain Brandon King set a strong foundation with a quickfire 36 off 22 balls. Kyle Mayers continued the momentum, smashing 32 off 16 balls, including three sixes. Despite a double strike by South African debutant Nqabayomzi Peter, the home side posted an imposing total of 207-7, thanks largely to a 63-run partnership between Chase and Romario Shephard.

Two Pak Army soldiers... Continued from page 1

strengthen our resolve," the ISPR said.

The funeral prayer of Captain Hussain Jahangir Shaheed, age; 25 years, resident of District Rahim Yar Khan and Havaladar Shafiqullah Shaheed, age; 35 years, resident of District Karak, who embraced martyrdom during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Hasan Khel area of Peshawar District was offered at Peshawar Garrison on Sunday.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the Corps Commander Peshawar along with the Pakistan Army officers, civil authorities, public and soldiers attended the funeral prayer.

The bodies of the martyrs have been sent to their native areas where they will be buried with full military honours. "The armed forces of Pakistan are committed to eradicating terrorism alongside the nation," the ISPR said.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation against terrorists in the Hasan Khel area of Peshawar, which resulted in killing of five terrorists. The prime minister also offered his heartfelt condolence to the family members of Pakistan Army's Captain Hussain Jahangir and Havaladar Shafiqullah, who embraced martyrdom during the operation.

In a message, he prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of the martyrs in paradise.

He said the soldiers of the security forces carried out a successful operation against the terrorists by putting their lives at risk.

Paying tribute to the martyrs, the prime minister said, "We salute them for their bravery". The entire nation is proud of its brave forces, he added.

He resolved to eliminate the menace of terrorism in the country.

The Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed his profound sorrow over the martyrdom of two army personnel during an operation in the Hasan Khel area of Peshawar.

In message on Sunday, the PPP Chairman honored the ultimate sacrifices of Captain Hussain Jahangir Shaheed and Havaladar Shafiqullah Shaheed.

He emphasized that the nation will forever remember their bravery and sacrifice. He extended his deepest condolences and solidarity to the bereaved families of Captain Hussain Jahangir Shaheed and Havaladar Shafiqullah Shaheed.

He commended the security forces for their successful operation, which resulted in the elimination of five terrorists.

He reiterated his steadfast commitment to pursuing justice for the martyrs, vowing that he will not rest until every drop of their blood is avenged.

Media suffocation, not intended: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal said on Sunday that the government was not inclined towards suffocating the media, asserting that there were no such attempts from their side.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that while social media platforms offers vast benefits, it also carries risks, notably in spreading misinformation that can sow chaos in society. He said the government's aim to mitigate these risks and ensure that social media was used responsibly.

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

the country from the risks associated with misinformation.

Regarding Pakistan's Youm-e-Takbir, observed on May 28 to commemorate the country's emergence as a nuclear power, he credited Nawaz Sharif for defying international pressure in the interest of Pakistan's sovereignty and freedom.

He also acknowledged the foundational role played by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan's nuclear program.

He said that the general council meeting of PML-N would be held in Lahore on the historic May 28, where the election for the party's presidency, to be contested by Nawaz Sharif, would take place. He expressed the party's collective sentiment to address the perceived injustice done to Nawaz Sharif.

Australian team lands Islamabad ahead of volleyball series

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Australian volleyball squad arrived in Islamabad on Sunday ahead of a three-match volleyball series against Pakistan.

The Aussies would be in action for the first time in the history of Pakistan organised by Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) on the request of Australian Volleyball Federation.

The visiting team received a warm welcome on the arrival at Islamabad International Airport by the officials of Pakistan Volleyball Federation, Australia will take part in the practice session on May 27 (Monday) followed by the pre-event press conference at 5pm here at a local hotel.

Nehemiah Mote was leading Australian squad while other players include Luke Perry, Arshdeep Dosanjh, Jackson Holland, Trent O'Lea, Matthew Aubrey, Max Senica, Beau Graham, Thomas Heptinstall, Sam Flowerday, Nicholas Butler, Ethan Garrett, William D'arcy Miles, Jacob Baird members of the playing squad while Daniel Iltott will act as head coach, James Begley, Alec Walker, Brendan Garlick will be coaches with team. The first match of the three-match series would be held on May 28 here at Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad, while the second match on May 29 and third on May 30. "All matches will be started from 6:30 PM and entry of the fans and supporters are free", said Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob, Chairman Pakistan Volleyball Federation.

Minister to attend two-day int'l conference in Tajikistan from May 29

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Privatisation and Investment Board Abdul Aleem Khan will visit Tajikistan to represent Pakistan in a Two-Day International Regional Conference under "Road to Tien Shan".

Besides Pakistan, China, India, Armenia, Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan are included in this international conference on May 29 and 30, while the heads of important international financial and investment institutions will also participate, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

It is mentionable that this International Regional Conference is being held under the agreement between the Central Asian countries held on September 24, 2023. According to the details in this International Regional Conference, Asia and Europe from Central a system of connecting the states of Asia with "Fast Track" will be devised and a grand charter will be created for the construction of roads among different countries and access to ports through trade routes, in which Pakistan will have a key role.

Pakistan demands Afghanistan... Continued from page 1

procedures (SOPs) had been made in this regard and were being strictly implemented.

Mohsin said all possible measures were being taken to provide the best security to Chinese and Prime Minister's visit to China during next month was also very important. He said that China's cooperation for strengthening Pakistan's economy was crucial. He said that 11 accused in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the Counter-Terrorism Department was doing great work and they had developed themselves in very short span of time.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the Pakistan government had requested the interim Afghan government to arrest Bakhtiar Shah, Qari Asadullah and Khan Lala and especially TTP Ameer Noor Wali Mehsud, TTP Malakand Commander Azmatullah Mehsud and other senior leaders of the TTP.

He said that Pakistan wanted good ties with Afghanistan and it was possible when Afghanistan would support Pakistan and not allow its soil to be used against Pakistan.

National Counter-Terrorism Authority Coordinator Muhammad Tahir Rai gave detailed briefing about the investigation done related to Besham (Shangla) terrorist attack on March 26. He said entire incident was planned in Afghanistan and objective was to harm Pakistan and China relations. He said that 11 accused namedly Adil Shehbaz, Shafiq Qureshi, Zahid Qureshi, Nazeer Hussain, Faizullah, Fasihullah, Imran Swati, Sakha Ullah, Abdullah, Abdul Rehman and Kamal Khan had been arrested. The arrested accused were in police custody on physical remand. He said that the arrested accused would face trial in local anti terrorism court where challans would be submitted after completing legal formalities. Tahir Rai said that remaining accused belonging to the network including Hazrat Bilal would be arrested soon.

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Educational excellence, teacher service are our vision: Dr. Naseeruddin

Independent Report

QUETTA: Dr. Syed Naseeruddin Shah, the newly elected President of the Senior Educational Staff Association (SESA) Quetta District and District Education Officer Quetta, addressed colleagues and supporters following the success of his panel in the SESA District Quetta elections. His words reflect a commitment to educational development and a positive, constructive approach.

In his victory speech, Dr. Naseeruddin Shah expressed deep gratitude to all the teachers and officers who voted for him. "I thank each and every one of you for entrusting me with this significant responsibility," he said. "We are committed to fulfilling the expectations of our members and advancing the cause of educational development and teacher service in Quetta District."

Dr. Shah reaffirmed his lifelong dedication to promoting education, emphasizing his commitment to enhancing the educational landscape. "I am well aware of the challenges faced by educational institutions, students, parents,



QUETTA: People are enjoying boat ride to beat the heat of scorching sun during a hot day of summer season, at Hannah Lake in Quetta.

DC directs to stop illegal logging

Independent Report

LASBELA: Deputy Commissioner Humaira Baloch issued orders to stop illegal logging in the district.

She sent a letter to the Senior Superintendent of Police and Deputy Conservator Forest to take immediate action.

The Deputy Commissioner, after taking charge, has prioritized the protection of the forest area.

Legend actor Talat Hussain... Continued from page 1

Late Talat Hussain had worked in various drama and stage plays as well as in films including Indian movie 'Souten Ki Beti' and Norwegian movie 'Importeksport'.

His famous movies were Chiragh Jalta Raha, Gumnaam, Importeksport, Insan Aur Aadmi, Jinnah - The Movie, Laaj and Qurban.

The famous dramas of the actor were Aansoo telecasted on PTV, Arjumand PTV, Bandish PTV, Des Perdes PTV, Eid Ka Jora PTV, Fanooni Latif PTV, Hawaaiyan PTV, Ik Naye Morr Pe PTV, Kashkol NTM, Perchaiyan PTV, Tariq bin Ziad PTV, The Castle - Aik Ummed PTV, Traffik on Channel Four and Typist PTV.

The deceased actor Talat Hussain had received Pride of Performance Award in 1982, Amanda Award in 2006, Best Supporting Role for Import Eksport and National Film Awards in 1985 for Best Actor in Gumnan film.

He was born in Delhi, India and his parents were Altaf Hussain Warsi and Shaista Begum. Late actor's family migrated to Pakistan in 1947. The late actor married to Rakshanda in 1972, a professor of University of Karachi.

Talat Hussain's first television play was Arjumand.

He moved to England and joined the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA).

Talat also narrated the translation of the entire Holy Quran in the Urdu language in the early 1970s, then commercially produced on audiotape and CD.

Late Talat also lent his voice to the person of Jesus in the Urdu dubbed version of the famous movie Jesus.

He also worked for National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) in Karachi.

Meanwhile Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Sunday expressed deep sorrow and grief over demise of renowned artist Talat Hussain.

Late Talat Hussain's invaluable contributions to the arts will always be remembered, the acting president said in a message.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to grant the departed soul a high rank in paradise and courage to the bereaved family members to bear this loss with patience.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed his heartfelt grief and sorrow over the demise of Talat Hussain, a veteran film, TV and radio artist.

In a message, the prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of the departed soul in paradise and grant courage to the bereaved family members to bear this loss with equanimity.

He said Talat Hussain was a legendary actor whose dialogue delivery was well-known to an era.

The prime minister said Talat Hussain's lively acting skills won the hearts of drama and films fans worldwide.

His contributions for Pakistan's theater, film, TV and radio will always be remembered, the prime minister said adding that the gap created with his death could never be filled. "May Allah grant the deceased a high rank in Jannat ul Firdaus," he prayed.



QUETTA: Heavy machineries busy in construction work of road carpeting under the supervision of Provincial Government, at Nawan Kali Bypass road in Quetta.

Political will essential for successful urban regeneration: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers at the second and last day of 3rdEconFest on Sunday emphasized that political will was essential for successful urban regeneration, as politicians played a key role in city development.

The event was jointly organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Research for Social Transformation and Advancement (RASTA) and the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE).

They stressed that urban regeneration was crucial for all Pakistani cities and must adhere to proper rules and regulations, which should be publicized. Additionally, they pointed out that unlike many foreign cities, Pakistani cities were lacking efficient public transport systems, which were vital for urban regeneration.

At the EconFest

2024, the panel noted that the original vision for Islamabad as a "Garden City" has faded, with a notable decline in gardens and public spaces.

In another session, the experts stressed the urgent need for deregulation to foster economic growth, citing PIDE Sludge audit reports that identify excessive regulations as barriers to GDP growth. Led by anchor Muhammad Malik, the session featured Mukarram Ansari, Ahmad Waqar Qasim and M Ahsan Malik, who highlighted how Pakistan's 122 federal regulatory authorities impose unnecessary licenses, excessive tax burdens, and redundant requirements that stifle business operations and deter investment. The speakers called for the removal of these impediments, advocating for modernized regulations that facilitate rather than hinder business activities, thereby

enhancing economic productivity and fostering investor confidence.

The experts discussed the future of Pakistan's bureaucracy, focusing on making it more efficient and affordable.

Hamza Haroon emphasized reducing bureaucratic roles in city governance, aligning incentives with economic performance, and fostering competition within civil services. Namra Awais highlighted the colonial roots of the current system and advocated for downsizing and modernizing the bureaucracy to better suit Pakistan's complex society. She pointed out inefficiencies in the hiring and skills of Grade 1-16 officers and the lack of job descriptions for Grade 17-22 officers.

Rana Muhammad addressed pension system leakages and stressed the need for aligning job responsibilities with perks.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar to Pakistan Amb. Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Muqam lauds IOM services for Afghan refugees in Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Engr. Amir Muqam Sunday said that Pakistan continued to bear the world's largest refugee burden for the past 40 years and also urged the international community to acknowledge our efforts in that regard.

Talking to a delegation led by Chief of Mission for the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Pakistan, Ms. Mio Sato, the federal minister commended the International Organization for Migration

(IOM) for its services to Afghan citizen card holders and the host community.

Chief Commissioner for Afghan Refugees Mohammad Abbas Khan, Joint Secretary of SAFRON and other senior officials were also present on the occasion.

The federal minister expressed the desire for Afghan refugees to return their country with dignity, noting that there had been no incidents of forced expulsion or harassment. He emphasized the need for screening to determine their locations and activities.

He said that Pakistan

was aware of the business activities, education, and relationships of Afghan refugees within the country. He highlighted that many Afghans were involved in businesses that are beneficial to both Pakistan and its citizens.

"I will travel to Geneva in June at the invitation of the High Commissioner of UNHCR, and also planned to meet with the DG of IOM," he added.

Chief of Mission MIO Sato expressed gratitude to the minister for meeting despite the holiday and stated her intention to maintain close contact with the Ministry.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation led by Ms. Mio Sato, Chief of Mission, UN-IOM, called on Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions Engr. Amir Muqam at the Ministry of SAFRON.

Sensitising public about heatwave coping measures key, climate change ministry official

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has been experiencing a rise in deadly heatwaves due to global warming in recent years and the increasing heat during the summer months poses a significant risk to people's health.

A media spokesperson for the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Muhammad Saleem Shaikh emphasized the importance of avoiding unnecessary heat exposure to minimize

the toll on people's health. He warned that the situation could be more problematic and serious for children, elderly men and women that weak immune systems. However, individuals have to constantly protect themselves from annoying health problems by all possible means, particularly by avoiding unnecessary outdoor activities during peak hot hours from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, the senior official said.

The official

emphasized that while anyone could be affected by heatwaves, pregnant women seem to be more at risk. He said that it is important that pregnant women avoid going out during high temperatures. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study findings, pregnant women are more likely to develop heat exhaustion, heat stroke or other heat-related ailments sooner than non-pregnant women, he explained.

IFA kicks off awareness campaign amid heat wave

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has launched the general public awareness campaign to use plenty of water, lemon juices, and refrain from vigorous physical activities to beat heat-wave amid hot and humid weather.

Talking to APP, Deputy Director Operations of Islamabad Food Authority, Dr Tahira Saddique said that the people should avoid to visit public places with families especially parks between 11:00 a.m. to 04:00 p.m. due to prolonged exposure to sunlight.

She appealed the citi-

zen of federal capital to stay their homes and do not travel to other cities with children unnecessary and drink ample water or juices to save themselves from heat-wave and avoid getting dehydrated.

She urged the people to include hydrating foods like cucumbers, watermelon, and peaches in their diets especially in lunch time. It is pertinent to mention here, heat-wave among the most dangerous of natural hazards have a significant impact on the country weather as not only does the temperature rise, but heat-related deaths also move up.

Madinah health centers serve 12,000 pilgrims in early Dhu Al-Qadah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Over 12,000 hajj pilgrims received medical care at seasonal facilities and health centers in Madinah between the 1st and 17th of Dhu Al-Qadah, as part of the Saudi Ministry of Health's efforts to support and care for pilgrims during their stay in the city.

According to the Saudi Press Agency, the Madinah Health Cluster reported that 10,748 pilgrims received healthcare services at seasonal health centers near the Prophet's Mosque and the central area.

Raja Farooq says: Pakistan, AJK share unbreakable bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Raja Farooq Haider Khan Sunday said that the people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir share an unbreakable bond, and any attempts to sow discord between them will fail.

Talking to the media in Bakot Sharif, Abbottabad, he emphasized that some miscreants, under the pretense of rights movements, have tried to spread negative propaganda driven by foreign agendas to create hatred between the people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. However, the residents

of Azad Kashmir recognize that they are united by an indissoluble bond through the Kalima Tayyiba, adding he said. Haider underscored that the people of Circle Bakot, the mountainous region, Murree Hills, Galyat, and Azad Kashmir support each other in times of joy and sorrow. "Both Pakistan and Kashmir are ours," he declared. During his visit to Bakot Sharif, Haider paid respects at the shrine of Pir Mian Fakirullah Bakoti (RA) by offering Fateha. He was accompanied by Sajjada Nashin Bakot Sharif Pir Sahibzada Hussain.



ISLAMABAD: People taking drinking water at a filtration plant installed at Sector II-9 in the Federal Capital.

CDA chief orders swift completion of IT work for 93 civil courts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, directed that all the IT work, including the video conference room for 93 Civil Courts, should be completed at earliest.

An official source told APP, Muhammad Ali instructed that the IT work and other repairs be commenced promptly.

The CDA chief said that third-party validation of the 93 civil courts should be carried out by NESPAK while the payments should be made after the satisfaction of the judges.

The official briefed that the construction expenses of the 93 Civil Courts were borne by the CDA and courts have been operational for the past one and a half years.

The 93 Civil Courts were made operational only after the completion of the civil work, he said adding that the courts were constructed at a cost of Rs 2 billion.



ISLAMABAD: Fire fighters trying to extinguish a fire erupted at C Block, G-7/2 in the Federal Capital.

CDA announces six month paid internship to fresh graduates

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has announced a six-month 'CDA Internship Program-2024' to fresh graduates for paid internships in various departments of the organization. "The internship program will start from June 2024 to provide an opportunity to young graduates to gain experience and start their professional careers in the different fields," an official in the CDA told APP.

He said, "The successful candidates will receive a monthly stipend of Rs. 40,000 during their stay of six-month internship

period in various departments of CDA. The eligible candidates must have completed a bachelor's degree (04 years) in the last three years from a government recognized institution in the disciplines including Business Administration/Management, Marketing and Computer Sciences," he added. "The candidates awaiting results are ineligible for the internship program," the official said He said, "The applications submitted in person will not be entertained and applications devoid of requisite information will not be shortlisted."

Final interviews of EST teachers to start on Wednesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training will commence the final stage of selection for EST teachers through interviews by Wednesday.

According to the Education Ministry, the interview committees have been constituted with the consultation and approval of the Establishment Division.

This process is expected to be completed within one week, it added.

"We emphasize that there will be no compromise on merit and transparency. Teaching is crucial for the development of future generations, and we cannot afford any laxity in this process," the Ministry said.

It also added that through this selection process, we aim to recruit almost 240 teachers.

Railway Police reunites 37 children with their parents

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Railway Police have reported reuniting 37 children, both boys and girls, with their parents after finding them wandering at various railway stations or travelling on trains across the country over the past two weeks.

The Rawalpindi division reunited nine children, while the Lahore and Peshawar divisions each reunited six children, official sources in the Railway Police told APP.

They said the Multan and Sukkur divisions found three children, while the Karachi and Quetta divisions reunited seven and three children, respectively. Additionally, the police returned lost luggage and goods to 60 passengers.

To a question, they said the department collected Rs 74.8 million from ticketless passengers during a four-month crackdown, assisted by railway police and train staff.

Approximately

58,446 passengers were caught travelling without tickets, and the collected fines were deposited in the department's official bank account, they added.

They emphasized that crackdowns on ticketless travel are a daily occurrence, and violators are charged for the full journey plus a penalty. Those unable to pay are handed over to the railway police.

Over the past year, they said the Pakistan Railway Police arrested 3,923 individuals for various rule and law violations, registering 3,625 cases across the eight railway divisions.

They said the case distribution includes 658 in Peshawar, 577 in Rawalpindi, 1,044 in Lahore, 326 in Mughalpur workshops, 393 in Multan, 208 in Sukkur, 346 in Karachi, and 73 in Quetta.

The sources said that help desks have been established at all major railway stations to support passengers.



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi calls on MNA Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah in Islamabad.

India using sham elections in IIOJK to perpetuate its military occupation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Elections in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) under military siege are nothing but a façade.

A report released by Kashmir Media Service, Sunday, said India is using sham elections in the occupied territory to perpetuate its military occupation as polls in IIOJK are meant to give a democratic veneer to India's military occupation.

It lamented that India was frequently holding election dramas in the occupied territory to mislead the international community. Elections in IIOJK are aimed at diverting people's attention from the freedom movement, it added.

The report said that polls in occupied Jammu and Kashmir were intended to give an impression that

the Kashmiris were fed up with the resistance movement but they would continue their struggle till taking it to its logical conclusion.

It maintained that the people of Kashmir offered sacrifices not for elections but for a United Nations-sanctioned plebiscite.

The report said the August 5, 2019, illegal actions by the Modi regime show how little India cares for Kashmiris' aspirations.

It said India's sole aim to hold elections is to fortify its illegal occupation of IIOJK but staging polls in IIOJK can't change the disputed nature of Kashmir.

Polls in IIOJK can in no way be a substitute to Kashmiris' right to self-determination and Kashmiri people want plebiscite and not election dramas.

Police determined to address public issues on priority; says SDPO Industrial Area

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the SDPO Industrial Area holds a Khuli Kachehri at Faizabad masjid, a public relations

SDPO Industrial Area issued orders on the spot to address the issues of the participants and assured them that their suggestions will be taken into account.

He highlighted that police were determined to resolve the issues faced by



officer said.

He said that the Khuli Kachehri was attended by citizens and senior police officials. Khuli Kachehri are being held as per the directions of IGP Islamabad across the city to ensure the early redressal of public complaints.

At the outset of the proceedings, the participants shared their grievances and also gave suggestions to resolve them. The

the citizens. However, Khuli Kachehri were helpful in maintaining direct relationships with the public.

He asserted that better strategy on part of the police led to reduction in crime in the city. Islamabad Police are taking steps to control crime further. He asked the participants to cooperate with the police in controlling the crime in the city.

Capital women embrace E-scooter, redefine travel norms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Electric-scooters are revolutionizing urban mobility in Islamabad, particularly for women, by offering a sustainable solution to traffic congestion with zero emissions and low costs. This trend reflects a broader global shift towards environmentally friendly and economically viable e-vehicles. As the city embraces this transformative trend, it moves closer to a cleaner, more inclusive future.

E-scooters are dismantling barriers for women in the federal capital, providing them with the means to commute to classes, offices, and other engagements without relying on time-consuming public transport or costly ride-hailing services.

According to data from the Excise and Taxation Department, from May 2023 to May 2024, a total of 62,397 motorbikes were registered, with 780 under the names of women. This surge in registrations among women marks a notable shift in transportation trends, reflecting growing interest and participation in motorbike ownership.

The Statista, which gathers statistics and market data on Pakistan, in its recent figures about country's growing E-Scooter-sharing market shows that Pakistan is expected to experience substantial growth in the coming years. It is projected that by 2024, the revenue for this market will reach US\$507.60k.

This growth is expected to continue, with a 24.36% annual growth rate (CAGR 2024-2028), resulting in a projected market volume of US\$1,214.00k by 2028. Zainab, a student at Riphah University, shared her experience with APP, expressing satisfaction with her new electric scooter. She highlighted the convenience of charging at home and the ease of reaching destinations on time without waiting at bus stops. This newfound independence has brought her a sense of freedom and relief.

Similarly, working journalist Farah Naz emphasized the practical solution e-scooters provide for daily commutes, particularly for women, bypassing long waits at bus

stops and congested traffic, saving time and money.

Kashif Javed, Business Development Manager of Metro E-Vehicles, highlighted the rapid transition from petrol bikes to e-vehicles, noting a growing interest among people, particularly students and professionals. The conversion of traditional fuel bikes to electric scooters is also growing, he remarked.

Dr. Ejaz Ahmed, a former Director of WWF, appreciated this change, noting the contribution of e-scooters to Islamabad's efforts towards a cleaner, more sustainable future, as they emit zero tailpipe emissions.

Dr. Khalid Walid, Head of the Energy Unit at the Sustainable Develop-

ment Program (SDP), along with Tuaha Adil, Research Economist at the Policy Research Institute of Market Economy (PRIME), collectively emphasized the economic and environmentally friendly advantages of electric vehicles (EVs). They pointed out the immense pressure on foreign exchange reserves due to the transportation sector's oil consumption, highlighting the potential savings and environmental benefits of adopting e-scooters. E-scooters are changing how we navigate cities, empowering women, saving money, and promoting eco-friendliness. With more adopting this electric trend, the capital's transportation future looks brighter and cleaner.



ISLAMABAD: A deserted view of Sri Nagar Highway due to extreme heat wave in Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

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ICJ rebuke

Matters are not going well for Israel where world opinion regarding its murderous activities in Gaza is concerned.

On Friday, days after the International Criminal Court called for arrest warrants to be issued for the Israeli prime minister and defence minister — as well as three Hamas leaders — the International Court of Justice ordered Tel Aviv to halt its bloodthirsty rampage in Rafah. The Israeli response to the world court has not been surprising, with the Zionist state calling the order “morally repugnant and disgusting”.

Furthermore, Israel has continued its campaign of genocidal violence in Gaza after the court order. While Hamas has called for a cessation of hostilities across Gaza, the South African foreign minister — whose country has been instrumental in the legal campaign against Tel Aviv’s atrocities — while welcoming the ICJ ruling observed that Israel doesn’t “care what the global community says”.

The reason for Israel’s criminal behaviour is that it is protected by its powerful Western friends, primarily the US and some European states. The Zionist state knows that it can literally get away with murder. Moreover, while ICJ orders are binding, it cannot enforce them. This requires cooperation of the global community, particularly its most powerful members. But the US and some others have defeated every attempt in the UN to censure Israel, which means that Tel Aviv can effectively thumb its nose at their lordships in the ICJ and ICC.

Nearly two decades after the majority of the international community agreed to the ‘responsibility to protect’ principle to shield vulnerable populations across the globe from violence and persecution, it appears that Palestine’s people are not worthy — in the eyes of powerful global actors — of this protection.

While the efforts of South Africa and other states need to be lauded for trying to bring Israel to justice for its ongoing crimes in Gaza, more practical measures are required to stop the slaughter.

For example, all those states that have supported the bid for Palestinian statehood in the UN — over 140 countries — need to back up these symbolic gestures of solidarity with practical steps to stop Israel’s genocidal campaign. One way to do this could be for these states to suspend all commercial links and arms shipments until Israel promises to respect ICJ rulings and UN resolutions.

As mentioned before in these columns, history has witnessed such a successful global movement in the international campaign against South Africa’s apartheid. The OIC and Arab League, as well as friends of Palestine in Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia must come together to enforce such a blockade against Israel if they are serious about ending the Gaza nightmare.

Otherwise, finely worded legal treatise, and eloquently drafted resolutions will do little to save Palestinians from the Israeli war machine.

Abbas Nasir

With the passage of a bill to muzzle criticism of those in high offices, the Punjab Assembly has taken the lead in legislating fresh curbs on free speech with heavy penalties, even as it says this move isn’t directed at legitimate media criticism but to regulate defamatory content and ‘fake news’.

That the PML-N government, under its chief minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif who opposed such curbs when in opposition, decided to do this signifies a number of things. The first is that the party now seems to be certain it has lost support in its power base of Punjab where it appears to be struggling to counter and contain the traction PFI’s narrative has found among the electorate.

Therefore, the second, and equally important, factor is that the PML-N now appears totally reconciled to being a junior partner in the current manifestation of the hybrid set-up, as the party

feels that is perhaps the only way it can survive in office during the period it attempts to rebuild its lost support.

However, there is a catch here. A party in power can regain lost popularity only through exceptional governance and by spending huge amounts of money on projects where there is a demonstrable benefit to the voter. Can the PML-N government do this?

With the economy the way it is in the IMF straitjacket, there is very little chance that any feel-good goodies are on the way. What is on the cards at least over the next year or two is more hardship for the people of Pakistan, 40 per cent of whom already find themselves below the poverty threshold.

With further increases in utility prices planned and the need to raise more revenue via enhanced taxation, there is very little likelihood of the PML-N coming up with a positive enough performance to transform its fortunes in Punjab, and even

less so elsewhere. It’s pointless to talk of the quality of governance in this setting.

Many experts talk of the need for sweeping economic reforms, including widening the tax base through levies on income from agriculture and windfalls from real estate. In the latter, there are trillions said to be tied up. What else could explain that our savings rate is half to a third of our South Asian neighbours India and Bangladesh?

Such low savings means negligible investment in areas where it is direly needed. So far, real estate is one of the holiest of cows which can’t be touched because all those who form part of the ruling elite have a stake in it whether large or small.

Another red line are the subsidies that this class awards itself every year whether affordable or not and which are now being likened to a millstone around the resource-starved economy’s neck. This is taking down the economy as much as the more or

less tax-free real estate holdings.

Does a weak, feeble hybrid set-up have what it takes to embark on a path to reform that can give some hope? Definitely not: especially when it is weighed down by demands of its senior partners in the governing arrangement who may not even comprehend what is needed as their training and orientation don’t prepare them for such a role.

It isn’t rocket science to say political stability is one of the major prerequisites for economic growth. In the past, the West has bailed out authoritarian regimes in our country, as in others, for its strategic goals whether related to the Cold War, the Soviet presence in Afghanistan or the so-called war on terror. What do we have to show for the largesse we received over three decades — 1960s, 1980s and 2000s? Our competence or lack of it meant we made a hash of things.

As we speak, political stability remains elusive with unprecedented

polarisation in society, and different elements in the power structure locked in a head-to-head clash with each other as they fight for primacy in decision-making. Many of us are reduced to being mere bystanders as this savage fight is being fought.

Against this backdrop, it is normal that those who the public believes are calling the shots come in for criticism. Of course, we have a long history of politicians and even members of the judiciary being slammed left, right and centre. What this new legislation is aimed at is curbing social media criticism of those in positions of real power and authority.

There is no doubt there is an element of unprecedented viciousness in social media criticism and that is what scares those at the receiving end because they seem to fear that it is divisive for society as well as the institution. Hence the curbs — from the X ban to the new ‘defamation’ law.

The problem is that once a society tastes the joy of a free media,

whether by consuming traditional media or, relatively more recently, social media, it is not easy to place them under an oppressive blanket where there is no free flow of information. It does not work.

There are suggestions that some changes may be underway in the coming weeks in the security set-up which may in turn lead to the drawing up of a new game plan. Given the disastrous ‘game plans’ of the past decade, even if it turns out to be true, this speculation inspires little confidence.

The battle of narratives is won in the long run by holding one’s nerve and developing a counter-narrative, which resonates with the popular will. Bringing in draconian curbs is akin to conceding a walkover to the opponent, particularly when there are signs of disarray in one’s own camp.

Curbs are not the answer. Developing your own narrative is. Admittedly, it isn’t in everyone’s gift to see this. — Courtesy Dawn

Moment of truth

Tariq Khosa

“All authoritarian regimes encounter resistance to their rule in one form or another, and all respond with a mixture of repression and co-optation,” wrote Francis Fukuyama in his 2014 magnum opus Political Order and Political Decay.

The Pakistani state, in its current phase, has become an authoritarian kleptocracy. Political dynasties and the leadership at the helm are busy cultivating support through clientelism, patronage, and nepotism. Cronies and sycophants form webs of authority attracting networks of tribute-paying clients, exposing a sharp dichotomy between rulers and citizens.

Why do we find ourselves in this thick fog that does not allow us to find a clear path to progress and prosperity? Why have we become so enamoured of dirty tactics? Why does our public discourse, in the words of David Brooks, amount to “tit-for-tat crudities”? Can our self-inflicted wounds heal? It’s time to search for the truth.

Those at the helm of the state at any given time

matter a lot. Unfortunately, the vision of our founding father of a democratic state and an enlightened society was sabotaged by the nefarious nexus of a political administrator and the first-ever native army chief in 1958.

The dream of a democratic polity went sour, and the nation never recovered. Constitutionalism and the rule of law were sacrificed at the altar of a military-presidential dictatorship. The task of nation-building was assumed by a military junta and powerful civil bureaucracy that co-opted influential and compliant politicians looking out only for their personal interests.

Celebration plans for the ‘decade of development’ fizzled out when street protests by students and lawyers erupted, followed by another military coup in 1969. The self-proclaimed chief martial law administrator and president presided over the breakup of Jinnah’s Pakistan. The results of the 1970 elections were not accepted by the junta, which refused to accept rule by the leader of an East Pakistan-based party that had won a massive man-

date. Revolt and resistance broke out, which even brute force could not curb. Aided by external forces, the country broke up. The lessons of military misrule should have been learnt. But old habits die hard.

The democratic interlude faced political upheavals during the 1970s. The 1977 elections triggered a wave of protests. The army chief, selected arbitrarily by the political leader, imposed yet another martial law. His promise of early elections never materialised. Faced with the consequences of the return of a popular leader deposed by him, he reopened an old murder case file. A complicit judiciary handed down capital punishment, sending the popular leader to the gallows in 1979. Thus was born a political dynasty from Sindh based on the legacy of a gross injustice meted out to a political leader who had mass support.

To counter that political force, born of resentment and rage, another political family was manufactured in Lahore from the military engineering foundry. This family of traders was co-opted to counter the public rage and

install the eldest of the siblings as the ruler in Punjab. The military ruler presided over yet another decade of political decadence in the 1980s until he fell from the skies in a fateful air crash in 1988.

The 1990s witnessed a game of political ping-pong between the two political dynasties from Lahore and Larkana. Both sides and their leaders were ushered into power through political engineering by the military establishment and deep state. When the leader from Lahore refused to take dictation, he won huge public support and returned with a vast public mandate in 1997. However, the Kargil fiasco led to his ouster in 1999 by the then army chief that he himself had appointed.

Both political dynasties, installed and dismissed by the establishment between 1988 and 1999, were condemned to be sidelined after creating a king’s party from the cadres of the same parties. However, nudged by external factors, the leadership of both the mainstream parties was given a reprieve under the military dispensation.

Both leaders returned from almost a decade-long exile from Saudi Arabia and the UAE respectively. One returned defied the military dictator’s plan and expressed support for the unjustly deposed chief justice. Many linked her assassination in 2007 with ‘rogue elements’ in the establishment. We saw the return of her political dynasty that year; it was defeated by the Punjab dynasty in 2013. Meanwhile, the security establishment groomed an alternative to both. A national sports hero emerged as a political force. The balance was shifting to another political power base.

The sports hero won the 2018 elections, allegedly because of the political engineering and machinations of the deep state. The army chief appointed by his predecessor was given a three-year extension by him in 2019, triggering a safely ensconced chief to engineer a political coup d’état by throwing the extension-granting leader under the bus and bringing back his political adversaries to the seat of power.

The sports legend had by then become a victim

of the machinations of the establishment and the deep state. Despite his arrest and disqualification and denial of his party symbol for national elections on Feb 8, his party emerged as the clear victor with a massive mandate, which was denied through Form-47 fraud and a blatant disregard of the rules. We have witnessed the worst persecution and repression orchestrated by the institutions of the state. A coalition of losers is in the saddle, thanks to the deep state’s machinations.

This is now our moment of truth and a test of character for those heading key state institutions. Will history repeat itself in this benighted land, or will we see developments that lead to the rectification of mistakes made by the security establishment and politicians, who must sit together to agree on a new charter of governance, leading to democratic and civilian supremacy over non-elected and unaccountable organs of the state. Above all, it is the judiciary whose independence and fearlessness will lead us to the rule of law and administration of justice.

Nuclear deterrence

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Fifty years ago, in May 1974, India detonated its first nuclear device, calling it Operation Smiling Buddha. While the world remained largely silent, Pakistan’s foreign minister declared Pakistan would “never submit to nuclear blackmail” or “accept Indian hegemony over the subcontinent”. Earlier, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had expressed the resolve that if India ever built a nuclear weapon, Pakistan would “eat grass”, but build one of its own. Given India’s role in dismembering the country in 1971, the Pakistani leadership found it imperative to restore the power equilibrium by nuclear capability to deter further Indian aggression.

In 1998, South Asia became overtly nuclearised. On May 11, 1998, India tested its nuclear devices. Given the significant conventional asymmetry, Pakistan followed suit on May 28 as it could not remain vulnerable. Its nuclear tests restored the strategic balance and re-established nuclear deterrence, which essentially means deterring an adversary from conventional or nuclear aggression due to concerns that there would be retaliation that could eventually lead to mutual assured destruction.

Nuclear weapons are political weapons, ideally not intended for war-fighting. Their main purpose is to deter wars. Since 1998, South Asia has not seen a major war, primarily due to nuclear deterrence. However, nuclear deterrence could not prevent confrontations below the nuclear overhang — for instance, clashes in Kargil in 1999, troops mobilisation in 2001-2, and Indian aggression in

Balakot in 2019. While none of these confrontations assumed the proportions of a major war, owing to nuclear deterrence, the risk of kinetic confrontations escalating into the nuclear dimension could not be ignored. With India’s aggressive doctrines like Cold Start, Pakistan opted for a full-spectrum deterrence posture, while remaining within the ambit of credible minimum deterrence to deter all aggression — from tactical to strategic level.

That said, nuclear deterrence is not a panacea to deter all forms of aggression and resolve our conflict with India. Pakistan has to rely on other instruments of national power, including conventional capabilities, to tackle threats on its borders. Political stability, economic strength, and public support for defence also enhance deterrence. Diplomacy, too, has an important role. Both countries agreed in 1988 not to attack each other’s nuclear facilities. There is also an agreement to prevent airspace violations (1991).

The Vajpayee-Sharif meeting in Lahore in 1999 introduced several confidence-building measures to reduce the danger of nuclear warfare. An agreement was reached on advance notification of missile testing in 2005. In 2006, both sides agreed to reduce the risk of nuclear accidents or the unauthorised use of nuclear weapons.

Given the dangers of a nuclear conflagration, both countries have, directly or indirectly, engaged in discussions on how to maintain strategic stability in South Asia. In nuclear parlance, strategic stability is often defined as removing incentives for the use of nuclear weapons or for engaging in a nuclear arms race.

Another view of strategic stability, to which Pakistan subscribes, is that the nuclear discourse cannot be segregated from regional geopolitics. US-India nuclear cooperation has created an environment of discrimination and imbalance in South Asia, which can be destabilising. Strategic stability requires that there should be no armed conflict or unresolved dispute or even grave mutual grievances, which could lead to instability or a wider war.

The need for regional adversaries to show nuclear restraint and responsibility, nuclear safety and security, and effective command and control cannot be over-emphasised. India’s accidental firing of a BrahMos missile into Pakistan and its failure to inform Pakistan well in time could have easily escalated matters. Nuclear arms must never fall into unauthorised or the wrong hands. Equally important, the leadership must eschew irresponsible rhetoric and brandishing of nuclear weapons (Diwali fireworks, ‘gatal ki raat’).

Emerging technologies, particularly AI, multirole drones, hypersonic missiles, and cyberspace, could also adversely affect nuclear deterrence and strategic stability. Of particular danger are lethal autonomous weapons that can search and engage targets without human intervention.

International negotiations have made little progress towards evolving an international regime that could minimise the dangers of emerging technologies.

It is of utmost importance that India and Pakistan engage in meaningful dialogue to avert risks of escalation in crisis situations, enhance understanding of each other’s nuclear postures, and address mutual threat perceptions. — Courtesy Dawn

Reality bites

Muna Khan

One of my high school teachers, an American middle-aged man, used to poke fun at us for being clueless. He would often reference student protests in the 1960s as great examples of attempts to disrupt the system. Students were unafraid of consequences, he’d say and after any example from that time, he’d add “I know, I was there”. Because he worried about our disconnect with the world, he talked to us about apartheid in South Africa — how boycotts can make a difference on all levels and why it should matter to all of us. I remember him making me feel proud of my passport for not recognising South Africa and Israel. We celebrated years later when Nelson Mandela was released in 1990. We were there, now clueless and would go on to witness the country move to post-apartheid reconciliation.

I’m witnessing something similar, which I can’t yet put a name on for fear I’ll be woefully wrong. So, I’m calling it a shift from ‘don’t care about the world’ to ‘I’m not drinking X because it supports Israel’s war on Gaza’. It’s inspiring.

Generation Z is relentless. They recently upped the ante last month with Blockout 2024, a digital boycott of celebrities for their silence on Gaza.

This began on May 6 on the day of the Met Gala in New York, an annual fashion fundraiser where a ticket costs \$75,000, and garners a lot of media attention. Social media was filled with images of the red carpet amid the violence in Gaza. It was a strange juxtaposition and did not go down well. Influencer Haley Kalil’s TikTok video received a lot of backlash as

she posted images from the Met Gala lip-synched to ‘let them eat cake’, a reference to Marie Antoinette’s phrase which demonstrates an insensitivity to the challenges faced by the poor, or in this case, the Palestinians. It was tone deaf.

Social media users responded by calling for a digital guillotine of celebrities and influencers for their silence on Gaza. The distinction must be made between simply unfollowing and blocking; the latter has an impact as the audience blocks seeing any content from the celebrity. It threatens their brand and potential to earn more.

This year’s Met Gala occurred against a backdrop of genocide and famine in Palestine, and global unrest and food insecurity. According to the Council on Foreign Relations, between the third quarters of 2020 and 2022, median global inflation soared from 1.9 per cent to 8.8pc. To watch singer Camilla Cabello walk the red carpet carrying a \$22,000 purse made of ice is mind-boggling. That is a little over six million Pakistani rupees — for a block of ice with some flowers in it.

Celebrities and influencers are, to borrow from Karl Marx, today’s opiate of the masses. He was criticising religion in the 19th century when he held it responsible for distracting people from reality. Celebrities don’t just distract, they control. It is materialism at its grossest.

In the West, celebrities have been successful in promoting a pro-Israel narrative, one that is so firmly cemented that Pakistani artists trying to make it big in Hollywood, for example, have been tight-lipped since Oct 7. This includes award recipients of the Oscar, Grammy’s, as well as big

Marvel success. And Malala Yousafzai too, who despite many clarifications and statements on X denouncing Israel and calling for a ceasefire, was not spared the ‘digitine’.

We’ve all gone down a celebrity-induced rabbit hole but in our defence, we can’t escape it. News about celebrities — actors, sports people, influencers, Prince Harry, Heeramandi — takes up too much space.

The real problem, of course, is the system that continues to separate the haves and have nots. Celebrities join the ranks of Big Tech, Big Banks, Big Money, Big Real Estate, Big Armies, Big Mafias at the top of a tier that controls wealth and power. Generation Z sees how this plays out in Palestine and wants to break this unjust system that allows for internet personalities to succeed by virtue of living on the internet.

Young people have understood the power they hold in their hands that enables celebrities to profit. And they’re reclaiming it with this Blockout.

It is wrong to disparage this moment as internet activism with no impact. We should be supporting our children boycotting brands instead of saying X is not on the BDS list so it has no meaning. Every action counts — fundraising, lobbying, blocking, boycotting — because they are all attempts to reclaim power. Clicks and likes and engagement feed the news and celebrity machinery. Depriving them of their oxygen is a powerful act.

I was there and saw a post-apartheid world and am hopeful I will witness a shift in how Palestine is seen and dealt with — by people and policies. — Courtesy Dawn

Maryam satisfied with performance of clinic on wheels, field hospitals

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's endeavours for the uplift of health sector bore fruit as thousands of patients benefited from the 'Field Hospitals' and 'Clinic-On-Wheels' projects in the rural and urban areas of the province.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, while expressing satisfaction over the 'Field Hospitals' and 'Clinic On Wheels' projects, said on Sunday that Cancer, TB, and Hepatitis patients were being provided with free medicines at their doorsteps. "We want to see every citizen of Punjab happy, prosperous and healthy. Every sector's uplift is my priority but I have focused my utmost attention on the improvement of health facilities in the province."

The CM said the efforts of doctors and paramedic staff engaged in providing treatment facilities to the people at their doorsteps in spite of the scorching heat are highly praiseworthy. "I am myself monitoring the provision of health and treatment services to thousands of patients through 'Field Hospitals' and 'Clinic On Wheels' projects."

My public service spirit gains further strength on seeing fruitful benefits of health reforms. We are

providing state-of-the-art health facilities where they are found inadequate," she added.

She said that upgradation and revamping of health centres and hospitals is ongoing across the province. "We are undertaking measures so as to make the first government cancer hospital functional in the province. Work has already been launched on the project to establish a complete cardiology and paediatrics in every district of Punjab. I received a public service spirit in inheritance, and I want the provision of each and every facility for the masses across the province," she maintained.



LAHORE: A delegation of Joint Action Committee of Journalist Organizations called on Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

Safe city projects to prove helpful in crime prevention: IGP

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar visited Faisalabad and reviewed the construction of Faisalabad Safe City project.

RPO Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan, MD Safe City Ahsan Younis gave a briefing about the ongoing work on the Faisalabad Safe City project.

The IGP Punjab expressed satisfaction over the progress of the Faisalabad Safe City project. He appreciated the RPO Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan for

Tesori conveys condolences at Talat Hussain's residence

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sindh Governor Kamran Tesori expressed his condolences at the residence of the late actor Talat Hussain on Sunday, offering support to the grieving family.

In a visit reported by a private news channel, Governor Tesori shared his heartfelt condolences, stating, "I have come here today with a heavy heart."

The governor said that his demise was not only a loss for the art industry but also for the entire nation.

Highlighting Hussain's remarkable contributions to the entertainment world, he acknowledged his widespread popularity among audiences.

He assured the family of his unwavering support during this difficult time.

CM pays tribute to martyred military personnel

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid tribute to the great sacrifice of martyred Captain Hussain Jahangir and martyred Havaldar Shafique Ullah in an operation against terrorists in Peshawar's suburban area Hassan Khel.

The chief minister offered condolences and expressed her heartfelt sympathies with the martyred family members. She said, "Martyred Captain Hussain Jahangir and martyred Havaldar Shafique Ullah laid down their precious lives for the sake of their dear homeland.

Our brave soldiers always stamped out anti-state elements without caring for their lives, and I salute the noble spirit of martyrs. The whole nation is standing with the Pakistan Army, and Pakistan Army is our pride."

Syed Fakhar expresses commitment to promotion of sports in the province

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Advisor to the Chief Minister KP on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jihan Sunday expressed his commitment to promoting sports in the province and providing facilities and infrastructure to support athletes in every sport.

He expressed these views while addressing as the chief guest at the final match of the Inter-Departmental Cricket Tournament organized by the Sports Department.

The Advisor announced that more sports competitions and events would be held in the Hazara region, including



KARACHI: National Trade Union Federation of Pakistan protesting for the arrest of the killers of Nasrullah Gadani.

South Punjab - a treasure trove of culture, heritage

MULTAN (APP): Standing out as a land of fine quality cotton, aromatic and tasty mangoes, exquisite monuments and craftsmanship, the South Punjab region also enjoys rich cultural heritage that the people cherish and keep close to their hearts.

Dubbed as the treasure trove of cultural and historic heritage in Pakistan, South Punjab had been the cradle of Indus Valley Civilization and a home to remains of ancient Buddhist site at Mound Dillu Roy in Dera Ghazi Khan. Under the influence of Islamic empires, Islamic architecture and the way of life, the monuments depicting

architecture were plenty in this area.

Remaining off the human eye for a long time, remains of Indus Valley Civilization in Cholistan desert of Bahawalpur at Ganweriwala were discovered by country's eminent archaeologist Dr. Rafiq Mughal during a survey spanning over four years from 1974 to 1977.

According to archaeologist and Director (Retd) Punjab Archaeology Department Saleem ul Haq, the site is being excavated these days by a team led by Dr. Rafiq Mughal and comprising Saleem ul Haq and other experts.

Excavations at Ganweriwala resumed in March 2024 after a gap of



LAHORE: Acting President, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani inaugurating the Water Filtration Plant, in Lahore.

Consultation with all stakeholders on Defamation Bill is important: Governor

LAHORE: A Joint Action Committee of Journalist Organizations called on Punjab Governor, Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House, Lahore today. The delegation comprised representatives of CPNE, PBA, PFUJ, APNS, Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMAND), Irshad Arif President CPNE, Arshad Ansari President Lahore Press Club/Secretary PFUJ, Senior Vice President of APNS Imtihan Shahid, Former President CPNE Kazim Khan, Muhammad Usman Vice President, Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMAND), Tariq Mehmood, General Secretary Association of

Electronic Media Editors and News Directors, Naveed Kashif Pakistan Broad Casters' Association, Muhammad Usman Vice President AEMAND were present in the meeting. General Secretary PPP Central Punjab, Hasan Murtaza, former MPA Makhdoom Murtaza Mehmood, Shehzad Saeed Cheema Information Secretary Central Punjab were also present.

The representatives of journalistic organizations informed the Governor Punjab about their reservations on defamation bill. Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that consultation with all stakeholders on the Defamation Bill is very important. He said that he would try his best to bring

'Safe City' project to be completed in two phases: Zia Lanjar

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Home Minister Zia ul Hassan Lanjar has announced the launch of "Safe City" project aimed at making Karachi one of the safest cities in the country. The project worth over Rs 3 billion will be completed in two phases with the first phase expected to be completed within 12 months.

The minister stated that the project would not only reduce the crime rate but also help eliminate criminal elements. He said that the second phase of the project would focus on expanding the scope of the



KARACHI: Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori talking to media persons at the residence of late renowned artist Talat Hussain after condoling the death with his son Ashar Hussain.

KP Food Authority conducts major operation against adulteration mafia

PESHAWAR (APP): The officials of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food safety teams conducted raids in Swabi, Nowshera, Malakand and Mardan, spokesperson Food Authority told media men here on Sunday.

The inspection team seized 800 liters of fake drinks from a vehicle at the blockade on Swabi's Jehangira Road, Spokesman said.

On receiving secret information, 1200 liters of fake drinks were recovered from a vehicle in Nowshera and taken into official custody, spokesperson said. Heavy fines imposed on owners of fake drinks, further action under the Food Safety Act initiated, the spokesman said.

He said that on inspection of food items businesses in Sakhakot Bazaar of Malakand Division, 200 liters of milk was destroyed as it was found to be substandard. Mardan Food Safety Team checked in Takhtbhai Bazar, inspected samples

UBL organises 11th Literature and Arts awards ceremony

KARACHI (APP): The 11th UBL Literature and Arts awards ceremony was held here in a local hotel in which best Pakistani writers and artists were honoured with prestigious awards. According to a statement issued here on Sunday, the various award categories received hundreds of nominations from all over Pakistan. The competition was open to all Pakistani authors who had published their original work in 2021 and 2022. Entries were shortlisted by an esteemed panel of judges. The jury members in the Urdu category were Dr. Asghar Nadeem Syed, Dr. Arfa Syeda, Dr. Anwaar Ahmed, Kishwar Naheed and Dr. Nasir Abbas Nayyar, while for the English category included Dr. Naazir Mahmood, Dr. Aroosa Kanwal and Haris Khaleeq. The Children's Urdu Literature award was given to Ahmed Jahangir, English Fiction to Haroon Khalid Akhtar, English Non-Fiction to Tariq Rehman, Urdu Fiction to Shaheen Abbas and the Urdu Non Fiction award was given to Dr Aurangzeb Khan.

The awards also included a special category to celebrate the wide-reaching impact of a celebrated artist who has produced exemplary work across a long, distinguished career. The prestigious "Lifetime Achievement" award was awarded to the exemplary Zaheda Hina.

The ceremony was hosted by Sajid Hassan and Faiza Gillani. The awards were interspersed by light entertainment provided by violinist Saleem.

PML-N govt to make country prosperous

SARGODHA (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-N MPA and Chairman District Committee for Chief Minister's initiatives, Rana Munawar Ghouse, said that PML-N federal and Punjab governments would make the country prosperous as they were taking public-friendly steps.

Talking to APP on Sunday, he said as per the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the provincial cabinet had approved a Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) in Sargodha, which is a proof of public welfare initiatives of the

20 dead, 1369 injured in 1273 RTCs in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least twenty persons were killed and 1369 injured in 1273 road accidents in all 37 districts of Punjab during the last 24 hours.

Out of these, 623 people with serious injuries were shifted to different hospitals, while 746 victims with minor injuries were treated at the incident site by Rescue Medical Teams thus reducing the burden of Hospitals. Furthermore, the analysis showed those 741 drivers, 69 underage drivers, 155 pedestrians, and 441 passengers were among the victims of road traffic crashes.



SKARDU: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan presiding over the meeting of Religious Scholars during his visit.

Teachers protest against attending school during summer holidays

RAWALPINDI (APP): Teachers from Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI) on Sunday staged a protest against the directives to attend school daily during the summer vacations.

Among the protesting teachers were Arifa Batool, Shahbana Raza, Momina, Mubashira Nawaz, Shazia Begum, Rafia Shahid, Ghazala Majeed, and Hina Shah Nawaz.

They expressed their

concerns to the Director General of FGEIs and urged him to review the order. The teachers emphasized the difficulties of commuting long distances to school every day in the intense summer heat. They queried the logic of their presence at school when students were on holidays. The teachers pointed out that the initial announcement of the holidays was made on May 24th.

ANF recovers 324 kg drugs in nine operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover 324 kg drugs and arrested 15 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman.

He informed that 27 kg ice was recovered from a parcel sent to Japan at a courier office in Karachi while an accused was arrested.

900 grams ice was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Islamabad Airport.

In two separate operations in Balochistan.



KARACHI: Supporters of Jamat-e-Islami (JI) are holding Special Persons March against Israeli aggression and atrocities on the Gaza Strip and solidarity with the Palestinians, at Rashid Minhas road in Karachi.

Pakistan's regional exports increase 20.61% in 10 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 20.61 per cent in the first ten months of the financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding months of last year.

"The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$3,655.483 million, which is 14.24 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$25,669.182 million during July-April (2023-24)," State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Pakistan carried out its border trade with the farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives.

Pakistan's exports to

China witnessed an increase of 37.68 per cent to \$2,341.089 million in ten months of this year from \$1,700.303 million last year while exports to Afghanistan witnessed a nominal decline of 0.54 per cent from \$435.954 million to \$433.567 million.

The country's exports to Bangladesh also decreased by 15.82 per cent to \$542.165 million this year from \$644.104 million whereas exports to Sri Lanka rose by 35.83 per cent to \$326.995 million from \$240.732.

The exports to India increased to \$1.376 million from \$0.250 million in the previous year.

Exports to Nepal decreased by 1.38 per cent to \$2.420 million from \$2.454 million while to Maldives increased by 13.90 per cent to \$7.671 million from 6.783 million, it added.

On the other hand, the imports from seven regional countries were recorded at \$10,925.280 million during the period under review as compared

to \$8,617.786 million during last year, showing an increase of 26.77 per cent.

The imports from China during July-April 2023-24 were recorded at \$10,648.334 million against the \$8,343.937 million during July-April 2022-23, showing an increase of 26.61 per cent during the period.

Among other countries, imports from India are worth \$172.076 million against the imports of \$151.987 million, an increase of 13.61 per cent while imports from Afghanistan decreased by 47.34 per cent from \$13.959 million to \$7.350 million.

Meanwhile, imports from Sri Lanka increased to \$49.055 million from \$40.923 million whereas Pakistan imports from Bangladesh recorded \$48.040 million from \$66.218 million during last year. The imports from Nepal into the country witnessed a decrease of 61.71 per cent from \$0.734 million to \$0.281 million, it added.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Food Bilal Yaseen presides over the meeting of stakeholders regarding reduction in Bakery items.

Kirmani discusses farmers issues with Federal minister

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani on Sunday met Federal Minister for Water and Power Awaiz Leghari.

According to a handout issued here, during the meeting provision of uninterrupted electricity to farmers of Punjab and other facilities came under discussion.

Federal Minister assured the Punjab agriculture minister that his ministry would extend all possible support to Punjab

Agriculture department in this regard.

Kirmani also apprised the federal minister about the progress on Punjab Chief Minister's Transforming Punjab Agriculture Plan under which tube-wells were being shifted to solar power.

He said that hefty amount of Rs 12 billion had been allocated for shifting tube-wells to solar energy and this would help in saving electricity expenses.

Govt to ensure affordable, quality food to public: Bilal

Says bakery product prices set to fall after bread reduction in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Minister Bilal Yasin has said that all possible measures are being taken to provide affordable and quality food items to the public.

Presiding over an important meeting to reduce the prices of bakery items here on Sunday, he said that the government will ensure the reduction in the prices of bakery products.

Secretary Food Punjab, DG Food Authority, DG Industries and Deputy Commissioner Lahore participated in the meeting. Bakery Association and

representatives of 21 famous bakery brands also participated in the meeting.

The food minister said that the prices of wheat, flour and fine have decreased by 30 to 48 percent in 2 months.

"The prices of roti and naan have been reduced and we'll ensure that the prices of bakery products are also reduced."

Bilal Yasin took suggestions for an immediate reduction in the prices of bakery products in the stakeholders' meeting. He said that on the request of bakery owners, they have been

given time to voluntarily reduce prices till Monday, May 27.

Bilal Yasin asked the bakery owners to voluntarily reduce the prices of their products and biscuit brands. On Monday, May 27, the final reduction of prices in bakery items will be determined in a meeting with the administration.

The food minister said that the administration will ensure the availability of bakery products at low prices across Punjab. He added that the prices of 60 products made from wheat should be reduced systematically.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani meeting with Federal Minister for Water and Power Sardar Awaiz Leghari.

Pakistan to export female nursing staff to Malaysia

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), an attached department of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, would export around 100 female nursing staff to a health firm in Malaysia.

According to an official, the demand for female nursing staff in Malaysia was increasing with the passage of time due to the highly qualified and expert staff of health already working in the different hospitals in Malaysia.

He said that OEC had already announced the application from job seekers to apply for Malaysia and prescribed qualifications and experience.

He informed me that 100 nurses were required for ICU with a diploma in

nursing, a bachelor of science in nursing, or a post-RN from a recognized institution.

The candidate should have registration from the Nursing Council and a minimum of three years of related working experience in the hospital setting.

He said specialized post-basic training in OT/ICU and pediatrics would be preferred, and he should not be older than 45 years. The basic monthly salary would be 3,000 to 4,500 RM.

The health firm would provide an allowance per month, including a general nursing allowance for pediatric nurses.

Allowances include a Specialized Allowance of 1100 RM, a General Nursing Allowance of 700 RM, and a Degree Allowance of 400 RM and Post Basic Allowance, 800 RM.

Oil, Gas Conference Pakistan-2024 set for May 29

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Oil and Gas Conference Pakistan (OGCP-2024), aimed at showcasing Pakistan's potential in the energy sector, focusing on advancements in domestic production, exploration, and sustainable practices, is set to take place here on May 29. The event, organized by Energy Update in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) and the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), promises to be a landmark gathering for Pakistan's energy sector, according to M. Naeem Qureshi, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, here on Sunday. Keynote speakers, panelists, and distinguished guests at OGCP-2024 would include Masroor Khan, Chairman of OGRA.

18,371 retailers register under FBR's Tajir Dost Scheme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Sunday informed that a total of 18,371 retailers have been registered under the Tajir Dost Scheme by 25 May.

According to the FBR data, around 14,472 retailers registered through Tajir Dost scheme and 3,899 registered other than this scheme.

The data revealed that 5,303 retailers from Karachi, 5,112 from Lahore and 1,567 from Islamabad have registered under the scheme. Similarly, 2,138 traders from Rawalpindi, 1,534 from Peshawar and 980 from Quetta and 1,737 from other cities have also been registered.

Call for promoting new hi-tech hybrid seeds

LAHORE (APP): Former caretaker federal minister for National Food Security Dr. Kauser Abdullah Malik said on Sunday that promotion of new and hi-tech hybrid seed varieties of various crops under public-private partnership could revolutionize the agriculture sector of Pakistan. He added that industry-academia synergy was also need of the hour to achieve this goal, citing that Guard Agricultural Research and Services (GARS) was a best platform in the private sector for industry-academia linkages to promote high quality hi-tech hybrid seeds of rice and other crops.

Dr Kasur, who is also a former dean of postgraduate studies at Forman Christian College University, appreciated their research efforts and emphasized for industry-academia linkage arrangements with the GARS such as collaboration in research and development of new seed varieties; internship programmes and employment opportunities for young talented graduates of school of life sciences, FCC. He added that the GARS was also good platform for exploring disease resistant high yield new seed varieties.

He expressed these views in a meeting with Pakistan Hi-Tech Hybrid Seed Association (PHHSA) Chairman Shahzad Ali Malik here.

Later, Dr Kasur along with other leading researchers also visited the rice production facilities and rice quality laboratory and lauded state of the art technology employed for ultra modern research.



QUETTA: President Anjuman-e-Tajir Abdul Raheem Kakar, Maulvi Noorud Din Agha, Mir Yaseen Mengal and others inaugurate Qazi and Sons Plaza at Archer Road.

Agriculture backbone of country, says Saqib Ali

KHANEWAL (APP): Secretary Agriculture South Punjab, Saqib Ali Ateel, said that agriculture was the backbone of our economy and Pakistan's future is linked with agriculture.

He expressed these views during his visit to the early cotton MNH 75 Sultan fields at Chaudhry Imtiaz Farm at Adhiwala on Sunday.

He added that Punjab holds special importance as approximately 70 per cent of the country's total cotton production comes from Punjab. He said that the cotton not only kept the wheel of the national textile industry running but

also generates foreign exchange through its export.

Mr Saqib further said that the agricultural staff was always present in the field to guide farmers.

He advised farmers to irrigate crops according to the needs and weather conditions. On this occasion, Deputy District Officer Agriculture Extension Rana Habib-ur-Rehman, Assistant Director Agriculture Dr. Khalid, Inspector Khurram Nawazish Raza, Muhammad Ramzan, and other agriculture department staff along with progressive farmers Chaudhry Imtiaz Ahmed.

PFC to participate in London Tech Week expo

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council CEO Mian Kashif Ashfaq said on Sunday that PFC would participate in the five-day international London Tech Week expo, commencing on June 10, 2024.

Chairing the PFC Board of Directors meeting here, he said the event offers a significant platform to showcase the diverse and high-quality range of Pakistani furniture products to a global audience. By presenting at London Tech Week, he added, the PFC aims to highlight the craftsmanship and innovation inherent in Pakistan's furniture industry, seeking to captivate potential buyers and partners from around the world. The expo serves as an opportunity for PFC to explore new export markets, forge international business relationships, and enhance the visibility of Pakistani furniture on a global scale.

PFC's involvement underscores its commitment to promoting Pakistan's furniture sector and contributing to the country's economic growth through increased exports. He said Trade Development Authority Pakistan in collaboration with Pakistan Software Exports Board had made these elaborate arrangements to facilitate Pak exporters and importers.



MULTAN: Women purchasing handmade fans from a roadside vendor due to a power outage during hot weather in the city.

80-member 'Business & Trade Delegation' from Pak arrives in Ethiopia

ISLAMABAD (APP): An 80-member Business and Trade Delegation from Pakistan arrived in Addis Ababa early on Sunday to explore business, trade and investment opportunities in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) for five days.

Upon arrival, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDR Ethiopia to Pakistan Jemal Bekir Abdula along with Industrial Park Development Corporation and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received the trade delegation and splendidly accorded a warm welcome at the Bole International Airport. This is the second Business and Trade Delegation organized, coordinated and facilitated by the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad within one and half years of its establishment in Pakistan.

A large number of giant businesspeople including industrialists and investors are part of this

business and trade delegation and will stay in Addis Ababa from May 26th to May 31st, 2024 for business engagements including participation in the 6th International Manufacturing Trade Fair, Ethio-Pakistan Business Forum, B2B and B2G meetings, industrial parks visits, and cultural nights.

The composition of the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia is from across-sector that included agriculture and agro-processing, manufacturing, mining, tourism, ICT, fertilizer, chemicals, construction, pharmaceutical, surgical and other. The objectives of this delegation are to introduce extraordinary business, trade and investment opportunities and incentives in diverse economic sectors of Ethiopia to the delegation and establish a solid connection between the business community of the two countries for further solidifying the Ethio-Pakistan relations.



FAISALABAD: Citizen shopping at Sunday market at People's Colony.

China ready to boost oil ties with Gulf countries

BEIJING (APP): China stands ready to deepen cooperation with Gulf countries across the entire oil and gas industry chain, and open up new avenues for collaboration in the renewable energy sector including power batteries and photovoltaic facilities, officials and executives said.

By deepening their collaboration, both regions can reap the benefits of their complementary strengths and expertise to ensure a stable and diversified energy supply and foster sustainable development, they said at the ongoing China-GCC Countries Forum on Industrial and Investment Cooperation, which began in Xiamen, Fujian province, China Daily reported on

Sunday.

Amid a complex and ever-changing international landscape and energy market dynamics, both China and the Gulf Cooperation Council nations face significant challenges in ensuring energy security and achieving energy transition, said Dong Xiang, deputy director-general of the National Energy Administration's international cooperation department.

Headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the GCC is a political and economic union of six Arab states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — that border the Persian Gulf.



LAHORE: Labourers carrying baskets of bananas on their head during auctions as shopkeepers participating in bidding of fruit (Banana) at Fruit Market in the Provincial Capital.

New workable plan vital to reduce circular debt: Murtaza Mughal

LAHORE (INP): President Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), Dr. Murtaza Mughal has said that using higher tariffs to eliminate circular debt has not worked.

In a statement issued on Sunday, he said that constant hike in tariff have worsened theft, lowered power use, and compromised national development therefore failed policy should be reversed and a new workable plan should be prepared.

Dr Murtaza Mughal demanded that officials who messed up the Neelum Jhelum project should be dealt in accordance with law and must not pardoned.

Continuously increasing price of

electricity was strangulating the masses and the economy therefore it should be reconsidered, he stressed. The business leader said that consumers should not be made to pay the price of the power bureaucracy's incompetence and corruption, which was unacceptable.

He informed the IMF was assured to keep the circular debt below Rs2.31 trillion, which reached 2.7 trillion in November last year and may now reach around 3 trillion.

The increase in circular debt includes insufficient collection of bills, rampant theft, line losses, high production costs, capacity payments, and other issues that need to be addressed on priority.



HYDERABAD: Laborers are busy in packing unripe mangoes to earn their livelihood for support their families, at Vegetable Market in Hyderabad.

30 more Gazans killed as Israeli strikes continue

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: Israeli forces bombed the Gaza Strip, including Rafah, on Saturday, killing at least 30 more Palestinians a day after judges at the top United Nations court ordered Israel to "immediately halt" its offensive. Although Israel pressed on with its offensive against Hamas, mediated negotiations between the two sides are due to restart next week, an official with knowledge of the matter said.

The decision on talks was taken after the head of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency met the head of the CIA and the prime minister of Qatar, said the source.

"At the end of the meeting, it was decided that in the coming week negotiations will open based on new proposals led by the mediators, Egypt and Qatar, and with active US

involvement," the source said. Hamas did not immediately comment on the status of talks.

Since the crisis in Gaza unfolded more than seven months ago, mediators have struggled to secure a breakthrough, with Israel seeking the release of prisoners held by Hamas and the latter seeking the release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel and an end to the bombardment.

Bombings have continued in Gaza despite the mediation and despite judges at the top United Nations court ordering Israel on Friday to immediately halt its military assault on Rafah, where it says it is trying to root out Hamas fighters.

The International Court of Justice, or World Court, has no means to enforce its emergency ruling in a case brought by South

Africa, which accused Israel of genocide.

But the case was a stark sign of Israel's global isolation, particularly since it began its offensive against Rafah this month against the pleas of its closest ally, the United States.

Israeli bombings have left a total of 35,903 Palestinians dead in Gaza and 80,420 injured.

The Israeli military said it had carried out "operational activity in specific areas of Rafah" on Friday, including killing Hamas fighters, dismantling part of Hamas's tunnel system, and locating "stash of weapons".

Further north in the coastal territory, where the Israeli military says it is trying to prevent Hamas from re-establishing its hold, Palestinian medical workers reported Israeli airstrikes that killed 17 people.



Chinese Premier Li Qiang arrives to attend the trilateral summit with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts in Seoul, South Korea.

Taiwan's president says wants to work with China

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

The drills began around Taiwan on Thursday, just three days after Lai Ching-te was sworn in, part of an escalating campaign of intimidation by China which views the island as part of its territory.

During the two-day drills, China vowed that what it described as "inde-

pendence forces" would be left "with their heads broken and blood flowing".

Lai told reporters on Sunday that he wanted Taiwan and China to "jointly shoulder the important responsibility of regional stability".

"I also look forward to enhancing mutual understanding and reconciliation through exchanges and cooperation with China [...] and moving towards a position of peace and common prosperity," he said at an event in Taipei.

US lawmakers visiting Taiwan this week

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: A delegation of US lawmakers led by Michael McCaul, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, is visiting Taiwan this week, the de facto U.S. embassy said on Sunday.

The delegation is in Taiwan from Sunday to Thursday, the American Institute in Taiwan said in a statement, a trip that comes shortly after China ended two days of war games around the island.

US expected to lift ban on sale of offensive weapons to Saudi Arabia, FT reports

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

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

Soon after taking office in 2021, Biden adopted a tougher stance over Saudi Arabia's campaign against the Houthis in Yemen, which has inflicted heavy civilian casualties, and over Riyadh's human rights

record, in particular the 2018 killing of Washington Post journalist and political opponent Jamal Khashoggi.

Saudi Arabia, the biggest US arms customer, has chafed under those restrictions, which froze the kind of weapons sales that previous US administrations had provided for decades.

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

Four US vessels run aground near Gaza pier

Monitoring Desk
TAMPA: Heavy seas battered the US maritime humanitarian mission to Gaza on Saturday, US Central Command (Centcom) said, with four vessels serving a floating aid delivery pier breaking free from their moorings.

No injuries were reported and the aid pier remained fully functional, Centcom said in a statement, adding that no US personnel would enter Gaza. Two of the affected vessels were now anchored on the beach near the pier and the other two were beached on the coast of Israel near Ashkelon, Centcom said, adding that efforts to recover the vessels were under way with assistance from the Israeli navy.



ASHDOD: Paragliders pass above US troops working around vessels used for delivering aid to Palestinians via a new US-built pier in Gaza.

4 children among 27 dead in India amusement park fire

Monitoring Desk
GUJARAT: Four young children were among 27 people killed when a fire in India ripped through a crowded amusement park, police said, as rescuers on Sunday scoured the site the morning after the blaze.

Survivors reported having to kick down doors and leap out of windows to escape the inferno that swept through a centre packed full of young people enjoying games including bowling, Indian media reported on Sunday.

Lines of bodies draped in white cloths were laid out before being taken away from the centre in Rajkot, a city in the western state of

Burkina Faso extends junta rule by five years

Monitoring Desk
BURKINA FASO: Burkina Faso's ruling junta will remain in power for another five years after participants in national talks proposed extending the transition back to democracy by 60 months from July, according to the text of an approved new charter. The military authorities seized power in a 2022 coup and promised to hold elections in July this year to restore civilian rule, but also said that security considerations would take priority. According to the new charter, signed by military leader Ibrahim Traore, the transition is set at 60 months from July 2.

Police shoot man dead in New Caledonia after protesters attack

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: A policeman in riot-hit New Caledonia on Friday killed a 48-year-old man after being attacked by demonstrators in the aftermath of President Emmanuel Macron's visit to the French Pacific territory, prosecutors said.

A police officer and his colleague were "physically attacked by a group of around fifteen individuals" in Dumbea just outside the capital Noumea, forcing him to draw his weapon, said prosecutor Yves Dupas.

New Caledonia airport to remain closed until at least June 2

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: New Caledonia's international airport will remain closed until at least next Sunday, its operator said, nearly two weeks after rioting erupted on the French-ruled Pacific island over a contested electoral reform.

Seven people have died in the riots, in which cars and businesses have been torched and shops looted. French President Emmanuel Macron, who visited the island on Thursday to try and ease tensions, has hit pause on the reform, but fallen

short of pro-independence parties' demands that it be shelved altogether.

Hitting pause was "a gesture of appeasement", Macron said in an interview published by Le Parisien newspaper. "But I will never make a decision to postpone or suspend under the pressure of violence," he said. If pro and anti-independence parties on the island fail to reach a broad deal on the island's future, Macron would either call a special congress of the two houses of parliament.

Spanish minister says Gaza aggression is 'real genocide'

Monitoring Desk
MADRID: The Spanish defence minister said on Saturday that the conflict in Gaza is a "real genocide", as relations between Israel and Spain worsen following Madrid's decision to recognise a Palestinian state. Israel has strongly rejected accusations made against it by South Africa at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that it is committing a genocide against Palestinians, saying it is waging war on the Hamas group.

The remark by Spanish Defence Minister Margarita Robles in an interview with TVE state television echoed a comment by Spanish Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Diaz who earlier this week

also described the Gaza conflict as a genocide.

"We cannot ignore what is happening in Gaza, which is a real genocide," Robles said in the interview, during which she also discussed the Russian invasion of Ukraine and conflicts in Africa.

She also said Madrid's recognition of Palestine was not a move against Israel, adding that it was designed to help "end violence in Gaza".

"This is not against anyone, this is not against the Israeli state, this is not against the Israelis, who are people we respect," she said. Spain, along with Ireland and Norway, declared this week it would recognise a Palestinian state on May 28.

Death toll in Kharkiv attack rises to 14 as Zelensky warns of Russian troop movements

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned Sunday that Russia is preparing to intensify its offensive along Ukraine's northern border, as the death toll rose to 14 in an aerial bomb attack on a large construction supplies store in the city of Kharkiv.

The bombing of Kharkiv on Saturday afternoon also left 43 injured and 16 missing, Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said initially after the attack. In a video statement from Kharkiv, Zelenskyy said that Russia is preparing offensive actions 90 kilometers (55 miles) northwest of Ukraine's second largest city. He said that Russians "gather another group of troops near our border".

He did not specify where the troops are being assembled, but Ukrainian officials have expressed

strong concern about the Sumy region. Both Kharkiv city and Sumy with about 250,000 people are within about 25 kilometers (15 miles) of the Russian border.

Moscow's troops have in recent weeks captured villages in the Kharkiv area as part of a broad push, and analysts say they may be trying to get within artillery range of the city. Ukrainian authorities have evacuated more than 11,000 people from the region since the start of the offensive on May 10. Russia launched wide missile and drone attacks on much of Ukraine during the night. Ukrainian officials said air defense units intercepted 31 Shahed drones and 12 cruise missiles launched by Russia in the Mykolaiv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Poltava, Zaporizhzhia, Khmelnytskyi, Kirovohrad, Vinnytsia and Chernihiv regions.

Macron heads to Germany in first French presidential state visit in 24 years

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron lands in Germany on Sunday for a three-day state visit followed by a bilateral cabinet meeting as the European Union's two biggest powers seek to show unity ahead of next month's EU parliamentary elections.

Macron's trip to the capital Berlin, Dresden in the east and Muenster in the west is the first French presidential state visit to Germany in 24 years.

The visit will be watched as a checkup on the health of the German-French relationship that drives EU policymaking, at a time of major challenges for Europe: from the Ukraine war to the possible election of Donald Trump as US president in November. Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz have very different leadership styles and have publicly clashed on issues from defence to nuclear energy since the latter took power in late 2021. However, they have reached compromises

on various fronts of late, from fiscal reform to changes to power market subsidies, allowing the EU to strike deals, and put on a more united front.

"There are tensions in the German-French relationship but in part precisely because they have dealt with some difficult topics," said Yann Wernert at the Jacques Delors Institute in Berlin, noting the two countries had also converged on the need to expand the EU eastwards.

The visit is "an attempt at the highest political level to demonstrate that the relationship is working," said Mujtaba Rahman, managing director for Europe at the Eurasia Group think tank. "But there are still fundamental gaps on major questions that are looming over the EU." One key such gap is on European defence, in particular if Trump wins the Nov. 5 US presidential election. Defence experts view him as a much less predictably reliable ally for Europe than his Democratic rival, President Joe Biden.

After World Court ruling, Palestinians want action not words

Monitoring Desk
DEIR AL-BALAH: Forced from her home by Israel's seven-month-long Gaza offensive, Salwa al-Masri has little hope her plight will be alleviated by a ruling from the UN's top court ordering Israel to halt its offensive in Rafah.

"The massacres are only increasing," she said, as she cooked a meal on an open fire outside a tent in Deir al-Balah.

"They shouldn't say one thing, while the action is something different," said Masri, who fled her home in northern Gaza earlier in the war. "We want these decisions to be implemented on the ground."

Judges at the World Court, also known as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), ordered Israel on Friday to halt its offensive in Rafah governorate. It marked a landmark emergency ruling on a case brought by South Africa accusing Israel of genocide in its assault on the Gaza Strip.

But the World Court has no means to enforce its orders, and Israeli war cabi-

net minister Benny Gantz said Israel would continue its "just and necessary" war against the Hamas group to return its hostages and ensure its security.

Hamas fighters killed some 1,200 people in Israel in the Oct. 7 attack and abducted around 250 more, according to Israeli tallies. Gaza health authorities say more than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in the Israeli retaliatory offensive which has laid waste to much of the enclave.

Israel has rejected South Africa's accusation that it is committing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza war, arguing that it is acting to defend itself and fighting Hamas.

"Israel doesn't care about the world, it acts as if it was above the law because the U.S. administration is shielding it against punishment," said Shaban Abdel-Raouf, a Palestinian displaced four times by the Israeli offensive.

"The world isn't yet prepared to stop our slaughter at Israeli hands," said Abdel-Raouf, who was reached by phone.



Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak lays a brick during a bricklaying workshop at Cannock College, in Cannock, Staffordshire, Britain.

At least 9 dead in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas after severe weather roars

Monitoring Desk
AUSTIN: Powerful storms killed at least nine people and left a wide trail of destruction Sunday across Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas after obliterating homes and destroying a truck stop where drivers took shelter during the latest deadly weather to strike the central U.S. Five of the deaths were in Texas, near the Oklahoma border, where a tornado Saturday night plowed through a rural area near a mobile home park, officials said. Storms also caused damage in Oklahoma, where guests at an outdoor wedding were injured. Tens of thousands of residents were without power across the region.

"It's just a trail of debris left. The devastation is pretty severe," Cooke County Sheriff Ray Sappington told The Associated Press.

Officials said multiple people were transported to hospitals by ambulance and helicopter in the Texas county of Denton, but they did not immediately know the full extent of the injuries. Sappington said the dead in Texas included three family members who were found in one home near the small community of Valley View. At least two people were reported killed in Arkansas, including a 26-year-old woman who was found dead outside a destroyed home in Olvey, a small community in Boone County, according to Daniel Bolen, with the county's Office of Emergency Management. Another person died in Benton County, Arkansas. Melody Kwok, a county communications director, said multiple other people were injured and that emergency workers were still responding to calls.

6 newborns killed in fire at children's hospital in Delhi: police

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

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

"Legal action is being taken against the owner of the hospital," Choudhary said. He did not give further details on how the children died. In addition to the six who died, another baby among the 12 brought out of the suffocating fumes was dead before the fire began, Choudhary said, without elaborating further.

Twelve injured as Qatar Airways Dublin flight hits turbulence

Monitoring Desk
DUBLIN: Twelve people travelling on a Qatar Airways flight from Doha to Ireland were injured during a bout of turbulence, Dublin Airport said on Sunday, adding that the plane landed safely and as scheduled.

Flight QR017, a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, landed shortly before 1 pm Dublin time, the airport said.

"Upon landing, the aircraft was met by emergency services, including Airport Police and our Fire and Rescue department, due to 6 passengers and 6 crew [12 total] on board reporting injuries after the aircraft experienced turbulence while airborne over Turkey," Dublin Airport said in a statement.

Yemen's Houthis free more than 100 prisoners

Monitoring Desk
SANA'A: Yemen's Houthi group freed more than 100 detainees in Sana'a on Sunday, calling the move a "unilateral humanitarian initiative" to pardon prisoners and return them to their families.

"Most of them are humanitarian cases, including the sick, the wounded, and the elderly," said Abdul Qader Al-Murtada, head of the Houthi-run prisoner affairs committee, who announced the release and said the detainees had been government soldiers captured at the battlefield.

But Yemen's internationally recognised government said the detainees were not soldiers, but civilians the Houthis had kidnapped from homes, mosques and workplaces.

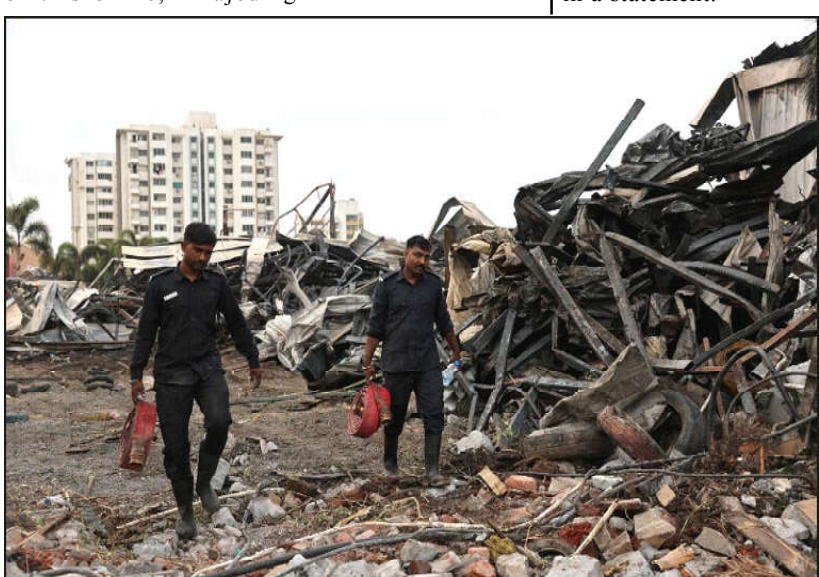
"Releasing these victims under any name does not absolve (the Houthis) of this crime," Majed

Fadail, deputy minister for human rights in Yemen's internationally recognised government wrote in a post on social media platform X.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) confirmed on Sunday the unilateral release of 113 "conflict-related" detainees and said in a statement that it assisted the detainees to ensure their release was humane and dignified.

"I feel completely at ease, as if I was born again today. Because we were desperate and thought we would never get out," said Murshed Al Jamaai, a detainee released on Sunday.

Yemen has been mired in conflict since the Houthis ousted the government from the capital Sana'a in late 2014. The Saudi Arabia-led military coalition intervened in 2015, aiming to restore the government.



Firefighters carry hose pipes next to debris following a fire in a gaming zone in Rajkot, in the western state of Gujarat, India.

Ahsan Iqbal says Govt committed to empower youth through education, skills

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning and Development Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday announced that the government was committed to providing the youth with advanced education, digital training and equal employment opportunities to prepare them for future challenges.

He emphasized that nations with fewer resources have surpassed Pakistan because of their political stability and continuity of policies, said a news release.

In contrast, Pakistan has suffered from internal discord and extremism due to political instability and lack of policy continuity.

The minister highlighted that visionary long-term plans like Vision 2010 and Vision 2025 were never fully implemented.

Addressing a ceremony at University of Narowal where laptops were distributed to students under the Prime

Minister's Laptop Scheme, Professor Iqbal criticized the 2018 elections, labeling them as fraudulent and responsible for imposing an incompetent government on Pakistan.

This government, he said wreaked havoc on the economy, causing immense suffering for the 240 million citizens.

"The present government has realigned the country's direction, bringing stability and improvement across various sectors", Ahsan Iqbal said.

Economic ties with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, and China are being restored, and the stock market is reaching new heights, reflecting the confidence of both domestic and international investors in the government's policies.

Professor Iqbal highlighted the government's vision to provide a digital platform to the youth, enabling them to propel Paki-

stan into the world's top ten economies by its 100th anniversary.

He said record funds have been allocated for higher education, with plans to establish universities in every district and institutions for technical education.

Laptops are being distributed on merit, with options for students to purchase on easy installments if they do not qualify on merit. The initiative aims to equip the youth with digital technology for employment, he said.

While addressing the issue of intolerance and unrest in Pakistan, a country founded in the name of Islam, he stressed that Islam signifies peace and brotherhood.

The organization and harmony in the universe exemplify these principles. By adopting these principles of organization and mutual cooperation, society can achieve peace and progress, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Laghari in a meeting with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur.

Kashmir settlement according to UN resolutions stressed

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): Kashmiri refugees have taken out a massive rally in Muzaffarabad, today, and appealed to the United Nations to organize a referendum in Jammu and Kashmir according to its approved resolutions.

Thousands of people, including children, elderly and women, participated in the rally and shouted slogans against India and in favour of freedom and Pakistan. The participants of the rally appealed to the International Court of Justice to take immediate steps to stop Indian war crimes in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They marched from Shaheed Burhan Wani Chowk to the United Nations Observer Office.

The participants of the rally were raising slogans like "Indian usurpers leave Jammu and Kashmir", "Kashmir is ours", "Indian usurpers leave Jammu and Kashmir" and "We will take away freedom from India."

The participants carried banners and placards appealing to the United Nations to resolve the Kashmir dispute immediately. The slogans of "Go India Go Back" were also written on the banners.

Addressing the rally, the speakers said this gathering of refugees from occupied Jammu and Kashmir and citizens of Muzaffarabad rejects the Indian military occupation of Kashmir.

The speakers de-

manded the United Nations to take immediate steps for a just solution to the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the approved resolutions of the Security Council. They rejected the Indian aggression of October 27, 1947, the illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019 and the unilateral decision of the Indian Supreme Court of December 11, 2023. The speakers appealed to the international organizations including the United Nations to play their role for the immediate release of All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders, journalists, human rights activists, leaders and activists of political and religious parties languishing in different jails of India.

CM Gandapur calls on Interior Minister to discuss KP situation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur held a meeting with Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi and Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Laghari in Islamabad.

During the meeting, they deliberated on the current situation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, focusing particularly on load shedding and electricity-related issues.

The Federal Ministers and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister reached a consensus to collectively address these issues.

They decided to schedule another meeting tomorrow for further discussions.

Yesterday, the Chief Minister attended the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) meeting in Islamabad.

Speaking to journalists after SIFC's meeting, he asserted that he has put forward KP demands in Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) meeting, asking the federal government to clear its dues to the province.

The KP chief minister said that his government will not compromise on province rights and will not allow anyone to take "undue advantage".

During the apex committee's meeting, CM Gandapur said that he opposed imposition of tax on Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA). "The deadline regarding electricity dues also came under discussion," he said.

It is pertinent to mention here that on March 13 KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur held his first meeting with Prime Minister (PM), Shehbaz Sharif belonging to rival Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

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QUETTA: Provincial Advisor for Women Development Department Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi inspecting a class room during her visit to Women Technical Training Center Institute.

JI announces national movement to uphold supremacy of constitution

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has announced a national movement following Eid to uphold the supremacy of the constitution and law. Speaking at a press conference in Mansoorah, following the conclusion of a two-day session of the JI Majlis Shura, he outlined a comprehensive agenda for the movement, crafted in consultation with the Shura.

Rehman emphasized the necessity of wide-ranging electoral reforms and the timely completion of the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project. He underscored the importance of electoral transparency, demanding that election results be com-

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

Regarding government attempts to control social media, Rehman issued a stern warning, condemning measures such as the Punjab Defamation Act aimed at stifling freedom of expression. He asserted that the JI's movement seeks to liberate people from oppressive systems, emphasizing the need for all individuals, including politicians, judges, generals, and bureaucrats.



MUZAFFARABAD: Refugees protesting against Indian atrocities in Occupied Kashmir for the sake of independence by raising the flags of Pakistan and Kashmir at Azadi Chowk.

Empowerment of women crucial for national progress, maintains Dr. Rubaba

QUETTA: The Advisor to the Chief Minister for Women Development Department, Dr. Rubaba Khan Buledi, has emphasized the importance of empowering women, saying that it is essential for national progress and development.

She expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of a training program organized by the Women Technical Training Centre (WTTTC) in collaboration with Mercy Corps for Afghan refugee girls.

Dr. Buledi said that women's empowerment is crucial for the country's social and economic development, and that it is our national responsibility to provide them with their due place and protection in society. She added that without the active role of women, the dream of a bright and prosperous Pakistan cannot be fulfilled.

Women's empower-

ment is necessary for the social and economic development of any country, and their role is vital in ensuring the stability and prosperity of a nation.

Dr. Buledi commended WTTTC for not only empowering young women through skills training but also raising awareness about important economic and social issues. She expressed hope that the government, non-governmental organizations, and social personalities will work together to achieve this goal. At the end of the ceremony, Dr. Buledi distributed certificates among the trainees who completed the training program.

Other dignitaries present at the ceremony were included Principal WTTTC Kanwal Saeed, Chairperson Commission on the Status of Women Balochistan Fauzia Shaheen, and officials from various government and non-government organizations.

CM grieved over death of actor Talat; pays rich tributes

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti has expressed grief and sorrow over the death of renowned actor, Talat Hussain.

In a condolence message issued here on Sunday, the Chief Minister paid tributes to the late Talat Hussain and said that he was very talented artist. He said that Talat Hussain promoted reformative process through his positive characters in the TV dramas.

The Chief Minister also said that Talat Hussain was a worthy of love artist among the Pakistani people, who would always be remembered.

He expressed heartfelt empathy and condolence with the bereaved family members.

Minister Salik flays blasphemy allegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Sunday expressed regret over the recent unrest in Sargodha following an alleged blasphemy incident.

In a statement, he condemned the allegations and the subsequent disorder, underscoring the importance of adhering to the rule of law and maintaining peace.

"The reaction of Punjab Police and other law enforcement agencies in

promptly addressing the situation is commendable," Salik said emphasizing that reacting impulsively to rumours is contrary to the teachings of religion, which advocate for patience and due process.

He reminded the citizens that Pakistan has established legal procedures to handle accusations of blasphemy and acts of hatred. He issued a stern warning against taking the law into one's own hands, noting that such actions will be met with legal consequences.

Tarat grieved over demise of senior artist Talat Hussain

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Culture Attullah Tarar on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Talat Hussain, a great actor of television, film, theatre and radio.

In a message, the Federal Minister expressed his heartfelt condolence and sympathy to the family of the deceased.

He said he was deeply grieved to hear the news of the death of Talat Hussain who was a unique artist who brought life to every character with his voice and acting.



LAHORE: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeemur Rehman addressing a Press conference.

Pakistan-led UN panel urges more help to developing countries in improving communications systems

UNITED NATIONS (APP): The United Nations Committee on Information (COI) has concluded its 46th session after approving two resolutions calling for boosting aid to developing countries in building communications infrastructures, and for reaffirming the "crucial role" of the UN Department of Global Communication (DGC) in addressing the spread of misinformation in the era of artificial intelligence.

The session was presided over by Ambassador

Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN.

The COI, a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly, addresses public information issues, overseeing the DGC and guiding its policies, programmes, and activities to ensure alignment with 193-member Assembly's objectives.

By one draft resolution, titled "Information in the service of humanity", the General Assembly would urge countries and the UN to reduce existing

disparities in information flows by increasing assistance for the development of communications infrastructures in developing countries. It would also condemn resolutely all attacks against journalists; provide support for the strengthening of practical training programmes for broadcasters and journalists in developing countries; and enhance regional cooperation among developing countries, as well as between developed and developing countries.

SESA district Quetta elections: "Ilam Dost" panel emerges victorious

QUETTA (6AM Report): The Senior Educational Staff Association (SESA) District Quetta conducted its elections for the 2024-2026 term on Saturday. The electoral battle unfolded between two panels: "Ilam Dost," symbolized by a book, and "Taleem Dost,"

Bazai, Joint Secretary: Miss Naila, Deputy General Secretary (Female): Miss Saeeda, Junior Vice President (Female): Miss Khair-un-Nissa, Finance Secretary: Ehsanullah Khan, Vice Chairman: Riaz Ahmed Khan, Coordinator: AshrafUddin, Press Secre-

DC visits cooling stations

SIBI: Deputy Commissioner Jahanzeb Sheikh visited various cooling stations set up by the Bright Star Development Society in different areas of the city.

The cooling stations provide citizens with cold water facilities to beat the heat and avoid heatstroke.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of awareness and precautions to avoid heatstroke and directed officials to ensure the provision of facilities to the public without any negligence.

ACC decides to start drive to establish peace

QUETTA: The Awami Action Committee has decided to start a mass public movement for establishing peace and securing rights of the people.

The Awami Action Committee also decided to make contacts with all segments of the society including Ulemas, lawyers, traders, transporters, Tribal elders and political parties for having full public support.

The Committee was presided over by Abdul Mateen Akhunda and

participated by political leaders belonging to different parties and other concerned. The participants discussed the protest dharna going on in Chaman besides the law and order situation in the province.

They expressed concern about the issues of law and order in different areas of the province.

They were of the view that the border should remain open at Mir Jawa, Taftan, Gabd and Raimdan so that the people may benefit from the border trade.

WEF lists best countries for tourism in 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The World Economic Forum (WEF) has unveiled its much-anticipated list of the best countries for tourism in 2024, highlighting the top destinations travelers should consider for their next adventure.

The list evaluates several aspects, including infrastructure, natural resources, and environment-friendly policies. The United States has been named the best country for tourism in 2024, while Spain follows closely as the second-best country for tourism.

The US stands out for its excellent infrastructure catering to the tourism market, providing a wealth of facilities for visitors.

Spain's rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and lively atmosphere make it a favorite among tourists seeking a mix of history and modernity. The third place is Japan, the only Asian country to make it into the top five.



symbolized by an inkpot. A total of 1705 votes were cast, with the "Ilam Dost" panel securing 995 votes, while the "Taleem Dost" panel received 710 votes.

The newly elected officials from the "Ilam Dost" panel are: President: Dr. Syed Naseer Ali Shah, General Secretary: Quadratullah Rind, Chairman: Naseeb Ur Rahman Kakar, Organizer: Zainullah Khan, Senior Vice President: Syed Siraj Agha, Junior Vice President: Muhammad Sadiq, Deputy Organizer: Munir Ahmad

Mercury soars to 50 celsius in five districts of Sindh, Punjab

ISLAMABAD (INP): Temperatures in some districts of Sindh and Southern Punjab reached to as high as 50 Celsius (122 Fahrenheit) on Sunday.

Maximum temperatures in Dadu, Qambar Shahdadkot and Jacobabad districts of Sindh and Rohjan and Rajanpur in southern Punjab soared to 50 degree Celsius. While maximum temperature recorded 49 Celsius in Sindh's Nawabshah, Sukkur, Shikarpur, Ghotki and Kashmore districts and Punjab's Rahim Yar Khan and Liaquatpur. Moreover, mercury reached to 45 Celsius in Faisalabad and 44 Celsius in Lahore. Most of the districts in Sindh experiencing extremely hot weather while coastal districts of the province remain hot and humid.



QUETTA: Nomadic families are moving to colder areas after the heat wave has increased in Sindh, at Western Bypass in Quetta.

Secretary Health for ensuring facilities to maternal, new born

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Health Balochistan Saleh Muhammad Baloch emphasized that efforts should be made to ensure the provision of facilities to maternal and new born in the province and no negligence would be tolerated in this regard. He said that the MNCH program with the medical superintendents in the districts hospitals should ensure that women give birth in the presence of expert lady doctors, attendants and provide adequate pre and postnatal health care of the mother and new born.

Provincial Coordinator Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (MNCH) Dr. Gul Sabeen Azam briefed the secretary about the program, said a news release issued here Sunday.

Deputy Director MNCH Dr. Samina Bugti, Finance Officer Kamil Baloch, Staff Officer Secretary Health Shaukat Baloch and IT Incharge Sikandar Zeb were present in the briefing. Dr. Gul Sabeen Azam said that the MNCH program with the support of WHO was providing training to the lady doctors, midwives and LHV's working in labor rooms, RMNH centers and gynecological departments of different districts of Balochistan, in pregnancy, postnatal and newborn care. He said that through the MNCH program, despite the limited resources, doctors, nurses, lady health workers, community midwives have been deployed in the maternity and child departments.