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CM Bugti, Malala Yousafzai others attend signing ceremony: University of Oxford to provide scholarships to students of Balochistan

CM Sarfraz Bugti says we are proud to provide our students with opportunity to study at Oxford University, where Benazir Bhutto and other great leaders have studied; Noble Laureate Malala thrilled to see GoB taking steps towards promoting education and empowering youth of the province

Independent Report

LONDON: In a landmark development, the University of Oxford has agreed to provide scholarships to students from Balochistan, Pakistan, under the Benazir Scholarship Programme.

The agreement, in this connection, was signed between the Oxford University and the Government of Balochistan, with Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Malala Yousafzai, the global ambassador for girls' education, in attendance at the landmark ceremony held at Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford.

The Principal Secre-

tary to Chief Minister, Imran Zarkoon signed the agreement on behalf of the provincial government.

Under this programme, as mentioned in an official press release issued on Sunday, talented students from Balochistan will receive full scholarships to pursue higher education at Oxford University, one of the world's most prestigious institutions. The program aims to provide access to quality education and empower the youth of Balochistan.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said, "We are proud to provide our students with the opportunity to study at Oxford University, where Benazir Bhutto and other great leaders have studied. Education is key to unlocking the potential of our youth, and we are committed to providing them with the best opportunities."

It is yet another milestone achieved by the incumbent PPP government, striving hard under the supervision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, CM Bugti remarked.

Malala Yousafzai, the Nobel laureate and education activist, praised the initiative, saying, "I am thrilled to see the Government of Balochistan taking

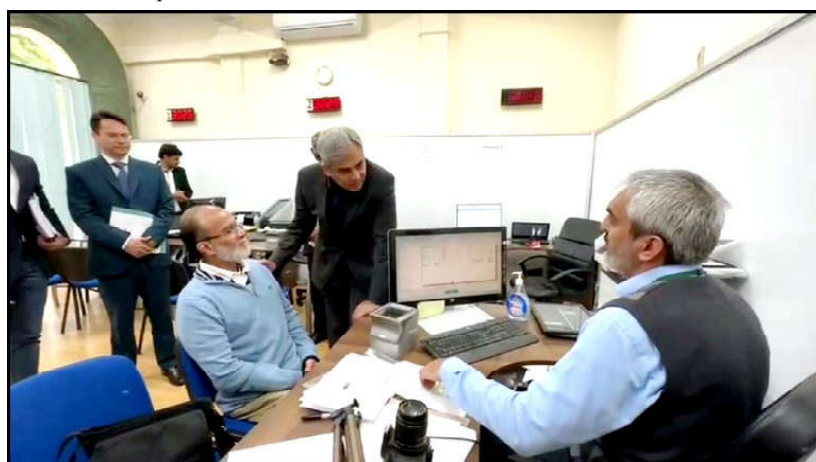
steps towards promoting education and empowering the youth of the province."

The agreement was signed in the presence of 150 delegates, including Malala Yousafzai, former caretaker Prime Minister and Senator Anwarul Haq Kakar, Aamir Ibrahim, Muhammad Khesgi, Farooq Sheikh, and Professor Kamal Munir.

This historic agreement marks a significant milestone in the journey towards quality education and empowerment for the youth of Balochistan.



LONDON: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and officials of Oxford University exchanging documents of Benazir Bhutto Scholarship Program.



Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi visiting NADRA and Passport Centers in London.

Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail says Public friendly policies of federal Govt. receiving great appreciation at public level

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has stated that the Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif-led federal government's public friendly policies are getting great appreciation at the public level.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, the Governor said that new avenues of development are determining by meeting the public aspirations, decreasing the inflation especially bringing down the rates of petrol and petroleum products and drawing attention of the investors from all over the world towards the opportunities of investment in the country.

The Governor maintained that Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif is taking special interest in development of Balochistan besides provid-

ing new opportunities of employment and livelihood to the unemployed youth of the province.

He said that the world is changing at fast pace and it requires from all those who are in power to prepare comprehensive strategy to set and achieve new targets and priorities.

He stressed that we desperately need the visionary and wise people for formation and preparation of public friendly policies that are compatible with the modern requirements.

He said that is a fact that public interest happens to be the center of all policies and development projects in the democracy. Therefore, it is duty of all elected public representatives to reach fruits of development projects to the masses and play their due role in establishing rule of law.

Deputy PM, Iran's FM discuss situation in Gaza

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Sunday received a telephone call from Acting Foreign Minister of Iran Ali Bagheri, discussing matters of mutual concern and the dire situation in Gaza.

The two sides discussed the situation in Gaza and unabated Israeli atrocities there, a Foreign Office statement said.

The deputy prime minister reiterated Pakistan's full support for all initiatives aimed at ending the genocide in Gaza and for humanitarian relief to the Palestinian people.

ECP sets June 6 date for PTI intra party election case hearing

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has scheduled June 6 for the hearing of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) intra-party election case, following its removal from the agenda on May 30 due to the unavailability of a bench. The Election Commission has sent notices to Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Barister Gohar Ali and Raouf Hassan.

Magnitude 4.8 earthquake jolts Swat, adjoining areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): An earthquake with a magnitude of 4.8 jolted Swat and its adjoining areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Sunday.

According to a private news channel, the quake's epicenter was Tajikistan border, with a depth of 195 kilometers.



QUETTA: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango talking with different delegations.

Seven-day anti-polio campaign due to begin in 14 districts of Balochistan today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The seven-day anti-polio campaign is due to begin in 14 districts of Balochistan from today (Monday). However, the immunization campaign has been deferred for five days and would commence on June 8, 2024.

According to the Coordinator Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication, Syed Zahid Shah, at least 7,636 teams have been formed for vaccinating above 1.884 million children below five years of age in all 20 districts of the province.

The districts included in the campaign starting from Monday (today) are included: Quetta, Pishin, Killa Abdullah, Chaman, Hub, Chaghai, Duki, Lasbela, Khuzdar, Zhub,

Noshki, Killa Saifullah, Loralai and Mastung.

While remaining other districts in which immunization would start are included: Naseerabad, Jaffarabad, Sib, Usta Muhammad, Dera Bugti and Sohbatpur.

The EOC Coordinator informed that in these six districts, the polio immunization campaign has been postponed for time being owing to the heatwave to be prevailed there.

He informed that all necessary arrangements have been finalized for the anti-polio campaign.

It may be mentioned here that three polio cases have been reported in three districts of the province i.e., Chaman, Killa Abdullah and Districts during the current year.

Col Helen's elevation to Brigadier's rank beacon of hope for Christian community

RAWALPINDI (APP): Colonel Dr Helen Mary's promotion to the rank of brigadier was a beacon of hope for the Pakistani Christian community.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release on Sunday, Colonel Dr Helen Mary Robert was another living example of merit and national representation in the Pakistan Army.

The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, while addressing the First Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, said: "You are free, whatever religion, caste or creed you belong to has nothing to do with state affairs."

On another occasion, the founder of Pakistan said: "Minorities shall be deemed to be citizens of Pakistan without distinc-

ISPR says: Col Helen's elevation to Brigadier's rank beacon of hope for Christian community

tion of caste, colour, religion or creed and shall enjoy all their rights and privileges and the rights of citizenship."

The Pakistan Army made the same decree of the Quaid-e-Azam a slogan and today decisions are made in the Pakistan Army regardless of religious, linguistic and gender discrimination.

Colonel Dr Helen Mary recently became the first Christian woman to be promoted to the rank of Brigadier in the Pakistan Army.

Col. Dr. Helen Mary Robert has been serving as a pathologist in the Pakistan Army Medical Corps for 26 years.

Colonel Dr Helen Meri considered it an honour to serve the country and the nation while living in the Pakistan Army

PM Shahbaz hails Hamzah Sheeraz's victory in Riyadh boxing bout

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday extended his warm felicitation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on hosting a successful boxing event at the Kingdom Arena in Riyadh.

"Congratulations to brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on hosting an impressive boxing bout at Kingdom Arena, Riyadh," the prime minister wrote on his official X timeline.

Expressing delight on the victory of Pakistani origin young superstar Sheeraz Hamza, he said "We are proud of you and look forward to welcoming you soon as world champion," he commended.



ZIARAT: Provincial Minister for Food Haji Noor Muhammad Dummer presiding over a meeting to review Harnai Development Projects Public Sector Development Program.

Gwadar to become internationally acclaimed world-class port city: Ahsan

Independent Report

BEIJING (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal said that Gwadar will become an internationally acclaimed world-class port city, which will have tremendous opportunities for its people.

"We hope that Gwadar will become an internationally acclaimed world-class port city, which will have tremendous opportunities for its people," he told Xinhua while applauding the development of Gwadar Port under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Terming Gwadar as a very important and strate-

gic port in this region, he said that China has shown its remarkable contribution and the development of different regions of Pakistan including Gwadar under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

"In Gwadar, we have seen that China has not only developed the port facility but also has contributed towards socio economic development of the people," he added.

Ahsan Iqbal said that China has set up a state of the art modern hospital for the people of Gwadar who have as good facilities in that hospital as big cities like Karachi or Lahore.

Similarly, it has helped

set up a technical training institution. It has also helped poor people with solar panels to provide them electricity and has also undertaken other initiatives to improve the lives of the local people.

"So, we really appreciate that China has contributed immensely to the uplift of Gwadar, but it is just the first steps go other port has a long way to go," he added. He remarked that in partnership with the Gwadar and in partnership with China, we hope that Gwadar will become an internationally acclaimed world class port city, which will have tremendous opportunities for its people.

Spokesman of GoB dispels impression of emergency landing of CM's plane

Independent Report

QUETTA: The spokesman, Government of Balochistan, Shahid Rind has dispelled the impression of emergency landing of the plane of Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti.

In an official statement issued here on Sunday, the spokesman of provincial government said that the plane of Chief Minister didn't make an emergency landing at the airport.

He said that there was fire alarm in an engine of the aircraft of Chief Minister Balochistan after landing in Islamabad.

He said that the Chief Minister's plane had took off for Islamabad from Quetta.

Dummar vows to work for development of Ziarat, Harnai together

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Food Department, Noor Muhammad Dummar has stressed that we have to work together for development of Harnai and Ziarat.

He said that we have to ensure that we have to make our efforts compatible with our efforts.

The Provincial Minister Noor Muhammad Dummar was in meeting with the administrative officers of Ziarat and Harnai on Sunday.

During the course of meeting, there was comprehensive discussion on different matters including the challenges faced in the official matters of the two districts.

The administrative heads of the departments presented reports of their respective departments.

There was also discussion on the development works, review of public sector development programme besides the schemes for the next financial year.

Efforts to be taken to expand green bus service to other routes: Hamza

Independent Report

QUETTA (APP): Over 11,000 people travel daily in eight buses of 'Quetta Green Bus Service' being run from Balochistan University to Baleli.

Commissioner Quetta Division, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat while talking to APP said that the state-owned public bus transport project in Quetta has become fully successful as over 11,000 people ride daily from Baleli to Sariab Road route.

He said that around 25 more buses would be added soon to the project as a total of 100 green buses would be on roads in Quetta after some time.

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QUETTA: Member Election Commission Shah Muhammad Jatoti presiding over meeting of Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Framework.

To facilitate maximum people Efforts to be taken to expand green bus service to other routes: Hamza

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Tahir Ashrafi urges govt, private Hajj organizers to prioritize pilgrims' comfort

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has expressed his satisfaction with the ongoing Hajj operations and called upon government and private Hajj organizers to ensure the comfort and ease of pilgrims.

Talking to media, he emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards of service, particularly in ensuring the well-being of the intending pilgrims.

Ashrafi lauded the current Hajj operations, noting significant improvements in logistical arrangements, transportation, and accommodation for the pilgrims. He highlighted that the collaborative efforts between the Saudi and Pakistani authorities had resulted in a more organized and efficient Hajj experience this year. I am pleased with the way the Hajj operations have been conducted so far. The cooperation between the Pak-Saudi authorities has been exemplary, ensuring that our pilgrims can perform their religious duties with dignity and peace of mind," Ashrafi stated. The PUC chairman also issued an advisory for pilgrims urging to book their Hajj packages through authorized organizers to avoid falling victim to fraudulent activities. He said the Saudi and Pakistani authorities, alongside the Hajj Organizers Association Pakistan (HAOP), had emphasized the necessity of legitimate booking to ensure a safe and genuine pilgrimage experience.

Ashrafi said to assist pilgrims in making legitimate

arrangements, the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, and HOAP had disseminated comprehensive guidelines from time to time. He said these guidelines, frequently shared through a section of media, were designed to protect innocent pilgrims from the clutches of fraudsters.

Ashrafi advised the prospective pilgrims to verify the credentials of Hajj organizers, ensure that the organizers were officially recognized by the relevant Saudi and Pakistani authorities and follow the booking procedures as outlined in the official guidelines. By adhering to these recommendations, he said pilgrims could secure their journey and avoid any potential scams that could jeopardize their pilgrimage.

Ashrafi said the Dar-ul-Ifta of Saudi Arabia had issued a significant religious decree stating that performing Hajj without official permission was forbidden. "This Fatwa aims to uphold the sanctity and order of the pilgrimage by ensuring that all pilgrims follow the proper channels and guidelines established by the Saudi authorities," he added. Ashrafi said pilgrims traveling from Islamabad and Karachi had expressed immense satisfaction with the "Road to Makkah" project. He said this initiative had significantly streamlined the travel process, making the spiritual journey to the holy land more efficient and comfortable.



QUETTA: Deputy Chairman Senate Saydal Khan Nassar in a group photo with Provincial General Secretary PML(Q) Balochistan S R Nassar, Saifur Rehman Taran and other after a meeting



QUETTA: Nomads shift their luggage along with their family members dangerously travels on an overloaded vehicle which may cause any incident, passing through road towards their destination in Quetta.

Aaron Jones steers USA to victory over Canada in T20 WC opener

DALLAS (INP): Aaron Jones played a scintillating 94-run knock to power the United States of America (USA) to victory against Canada in the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 opener here at Grand Prairie Stadium.

Chasing 195, the USA won the match by seven wickets with 14 balls to spare. The home team lost the first wicket on the second ball of their pursuit as Kaleem Sana dismissed Steven Taylor.

Andries Gous joined skipper Monank Patel (16) and together they added 42 runs for the second wicket before the latter got caught behind off Dilon Heyliger.

With 153 required off 81 balls, Jones came down to the crease and joined a settled Gous.

However, they turned things around with their belated hitting, scoring 131 runs for the third wicket in

only 58 balls. The partnership was dominated by Jones, who smashed Canadian bowlers all across the park, while Gous scored a 46-ball 65, featuring seven boundaries and three sixes.

Jones continued the onslaught after Gous' wicket, ending the game in the 18th over with a massive six over the deep midwicket boundary. The right-handed batter smashed ten sixes, during his entertaining innings of 94 runs from 40 balls. He also hit four boundaries.

Canada's Kaleem Sana, Dilon Heyliger and Nikhil Dutta bagged one wicket each. Earlier, Canada were invited to bat first by the USA and had a stable start with a 43-run opening stand between Aaron Johnson and Dhalaiwal.

Johnson scored 23 off 16 with the help of five boundaries before falling to Harmeet Singh in the last over of the

powerplay.

Meanwhile, Pargat Singh got run out with 66 runs on the board. Kirton then joined Dhalaiwal and together they constructed a blistering third-wicket partnership of 62 runs in just 37 balls. Corey Anderson broke the partnership with the wicket of Dhalaiwal, who top-scored for Canada with 61 off 44. The opening batter struck six boundaries and three sixes.

Kirton continued his strokeplay, scoring 51 runs from 31 balls with the help of five boundaries, including two sixes before Ali Khan ended his stay at the crease. Shreyas Movva gave a finishing touch to the innings with an unbeaten 32 off 16, laced with two sixes and two boundaries to push the team's total to 194-5 in 20 overs. For the USA, Ali Khan, Harmeet Singh and Corey Anderson claimed one wicket each.

Babar Azam ready to take the gauntlet at T20 World Cup

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Men's cricket Captain Babar Azam has said that he was ready to take the gauntlet whoever be the opposition, and had the belief to do well at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in the West Indies and USA 2024.

In a podcast released by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) here on Sunday, a resolute Babar Azam said it did not make any difference if Pakistan team were involved in 'Group of Death' during the second round of the T20 World Cup, adding that every team was a strong unit.

In the first-ever 20 team ICC T20 World Cup, Pakistan are placed in Group A, along side co-hosts USA, India, Canada and Ireland and are most likely to make to the second stage of the mega event. In the second stage, relying on the team rankings, Pakistan will be grouped with England, West Indies and South Africa. The other group is most likely to comprise New Zealand, Australia, India and Sri Lanka.

Pakistan grouped with the two-times T20 World champions West Indies and England besides South Africa, the podcast host Sami Burney suggested that it had become 'group of death' as one mistake would mean elimination.

Babar's response was, "in this era of T20 cricket, no team was a weak unit and we are, accordingly, planning against all oppositions. We may overcome any team through proper planning, hard work and good performance."

On belief and talent, he said talent could take one to a certain height, and the stardom was subject to strategy, planning and hard work. He said adaptability to foreign conditions, especially at the United States was vital to the good results, adding that almost all top-ranked teams were playing in the US for the first time. However, he said many Pakistan cricketers are playing cricket in the United States and the team management has collected information from players.

"Playing in the Dallas, New York and Florida will be a new challenge as we have no information on the pitches, ground dimensions and other statistics as compared with the other cricket venues of the world," Babar responded.

About USA and Canada challenge, he said though Pakistan team has never played against the USA and Canada but they have some first-hand

knowledge about the opposition cricketers through data and analytics, adding that cricket was not playing one match after the other but it was a whole science.

On Pakistan-India fixture in New York on June 6, Babar said the Pakistan and India contest is the most-talked-about match in the world of cricket, adding their meeting carries different vibes and excitement.

"The whole world seems to move towards the Pakistan-India match as it remains talk of the town for weeks in advance. This does create nerves but focus and sticking to the basics helps one get over the pressure of the game," Babar responded.

Babar agreed with the query that it was not about overcoming against India but the team must win against all other teams to be claim the title, adding that any team could give you a surprise if you lose your focus.

About responsibilities of the captain beyond the field, Babar said a captain's job was not limited to the cricketing field only but he was involved in planning and strategy beyond the field. A captain has to have strong communication with

the 15-members of the squad and the management, adding that he had to have a strong liaison with his team-mates and take them along through thick and thin. "Motivating your team mates was vital to good performance in the match," Babar added.

Babar was upbeat to play yet another final at the ICC T20 World Cup 2024 after losing in the semi-final of the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 in UAE and losing to the defending champions England in Australia in 2022, adding that the team needed to learn from its mistakes and improve on its performance.

About elusive ICC trophy in Babar's captaincy, he was of the view that it was a dream to lift an ICC trophy as captain, adding that he had captained the team in U 19, T20 and ODI cricket. On team environment, he said the team was closely gelled and enjoyed in the success of each other. He said the players celebrate success of each and stand by the player when the chips are down. He said the players were honest to each other. He said the senior players always step up to help the young cricketers in the team.

On his regrets in the

ICC events, Babar said the loss against Australia in the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 in the UAE was due to poor fielding and bowling, while the loss against Zimbabwe in the 2022 World Cup was the most painful loss of all. However, he said the team lost the final against England in the ICC T20 World Cup 2022 due to an unfortunate injury to ace fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi.

On team selection for the T20 World Cup, Babar Azam said presence of the experienced fast bowling quartet of Shaheen, Naseem, Haris and Amir was a headache, adding that it is difficult to decide a combination in the presence of such bowling attack. He made special mention of the experienced Imad Wasim.

Babar said that the team combination has been sorted out and the players should be ready to accept the roles assigned to them by the head coach and the captain as per the requirement of the occasion.

On Gary Kirsten, Babar said Head Coach Gary Kirsten has loads of experience in player management and he is sure to lift the team to lift the trophy in the West Indies and USA.

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Saudi envoy pledges royal Hajj invite for World Cup-winning Pak team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al Maliki on Sunday announced that the Pakistan cricket team will be the royal guests on Hajj next year if they win the T20 World Cup.

In a special video message released, the Saudi ambassador extended his best wishes to the Pakistan cricket team for the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup 2024.

"My message to my brothers of the Pakistan cricket team is that, God willing, you will win this tournament. The Pakistani people will celebrate the team's success in the World Cup," said the ambassador.

He also expressed his prayers for Pakistan's prosperity and development, adding that if the team clinches the ICC T20 World Cup 2024, they will be honoured as royal guests during Hajj next year.

Four persons shot dead in Rajanpur land dispute

RAJANPUR (APP): Four persons were killed while another two sustained serious injuries following a dispute between two groups of Rind tribe at Pajhad area in Rajanpur on Sunday.

According to DPO Capt Retd Dost Muhammad, there was an exchange of firing between two groups of Rind tribe over possession of a piece of land. As a result, four persons named Aasim,

Ahsin, Kaleem Ullah and Khadim Hussain were died. Similarly, another two persons sustained serious injuries in the incident.

The injured persons were shifted to THQ Jampur. Harind Police Station started legal action against the alleged outlaws.

Heavy contingent of police have also been dispatched in the area to avoid further clashes.

Naqvi orders expedited...

Continued from page 1

time can file a complaint at the following email address: complaints.passport@interior.gov.pk

The minister also took notice of the staff shortage at the passport and NADRA centres and directed effective staff management to address the issue.

During his visit, Mohsin Naqvi met with the staff of the passport and NADRA centres and directed them to issue passports to overseas Pakistanis within the specified time. He appreciated the performance of NADRA staff and encouraged them to continue providing efficient services to overseas Pakistanis.

Interior minister also met with overseas Pakistanis present at the centres and inquired about their issues.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, Dr Mohammad Faisal, was also present on the occasion.

WAPDA wins Memorial Basketball Tournament

ISLAMABAD (APP): WAPDA emerged victorious in a nail-biting showdown against Pakistan Air Force, clinching the All Pakistan Muhammad Majid and Abdul Nasir Memorial Basketball Tournament on Sunday at Siddique Memon Sports Complex Karachi.

In a fiercely contested match, both teams displayed exceptional skills and tenacity, battling until the final moments.

Wapda, however, seized control in the last quarter, securing a thrilling 68-67 points victory, said a press release.

Zainul Hassan of Wapda emerged as the hero of the day, contributing a stellar performance with 34 points, while teammate Muhammad Israr added 10 points, respectively.

Despite a valiant effort from PAF, Wapda's dominance in the closing stages proved decisive. Umair Jan

led the scoring for PAF with 26 points, followed by Umair Siddiqui with 12 points.

Managing Director of United Medical and Dental College Dr. Bilal Faiz who was the chief guest of concluding ceremony presented the winning trophy to the captain of the Pakistan Wapda team while Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) Secretary General Khalid Bashir, Karachi Basketball Association (KBBA) President Muhammad Yaqoob, Tournament chief organiser Dr. Umer Daraz Khan, PBBF Associate Secretary Yaqoob Qadry and other dignitaries were also present during the concluding ceremony.

Earlier in the third position match, Punjab Rangers secured a convincing 72-61 points victory against Islamabad, claiming the third position.

Peshawar to host Games to celebrate World Organ Transplant Day on June 5

PESHAWAR (APP): On World Organ Transplantation Day, once known as the city of flowers, Peshawar is going to host the Transplant Games to bring joy to organ transplant patients. This announcement was made by Dr. Asif Malik, an eminent physician and the administrator of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Medical Transplantation Regulatory Authority (KPMTRA), during a meeting with sports organizers and players. Secretary KP Badminton Association Muhammad Amjad, Provincial Table Tennis Association President Kifayat Ullah Orakzai, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Coach Naem Khan, and various players were in attendance. Talking to APP, Dr. Asif Malik highlighted, "For the first time in Pakistan's history, sports competitions will be held to commemorate World Organ Transplantation Day.

Events will include cricket, volleyball, dot games, table tennis, and badminton. Participants will be patients who have under-

gone liver, heart, lung, kidney, pancreas, or solid bone marrow transplants." The main objective of these competitions was to raise awareness about organ transplantation and help recovered patients rediscover the joys of life. Regular participation in sports was crucial for the well-being of transplant patients.

Dr. Asif Malik stated, "The competitions will take place at Hayatabad Sports Complex on June 5, with support from the Directorate General Sports and Provincial Sports Associations. Special guests at the closing ceremony will include Syed Aqil Shah, President of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Olympic Association, and squash legend Qamar Zaman, who will distribute prizes to the athletes." "These groundbreaking competitions are a first for Pakistan, inviting organ transplant patients from across the province to participate," Dr. Malik emphasized. He expressed confidence that the event would significantly raise awareness about organ diseases and transplantation.

Huma Mir performed the duties of Moderator. Many prominent personalities from the showbiz and drama industry attended the condolence reference. Event began with a showreel depicting Talat Hussain's life. President Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi, Muhammad Ahmed Shah, veteran journalist and analyst Mazhar Abbas, esteemed actor Mustafa Qureshi, Munawar Saeed, Noorul Huda Shah, Qudsia Akbar, Sajid Hasan, Tipu, Rohina Hussain, Ashar Hussain, Tazeen Hussain, Dr. Rakhshanda Talat Hussain, Zaheer Khan, Iqbal Latif, Amjad Shah, Dr. Alia Imam, Rehan Sheikh, Khalid Ahmed, Ayaz Khan, Khalid Anam, actor Faisal Qureshi, and Javed Saba.

Well-known personalities paid tribute to Talat Hussain in wonderful words

KARACHI (APP): Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi organized a condolence reference in honour of the renowned voice and TV actor Talat Hussain.

Event witnessed heartfelt expressions of condolence from a distinguished array of individuals including the President Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi, Muhammad Ahmed Shah, veteran journalist and analyst Mazhar Abbas, esteemed actor Mustafa Qureshi, Munawar Saeed, Noorul Huda Shah, Qudsia Akbar, Sajid Hasan, Tipu, Rohina Hussain, Ashar Hussain, Tazeen Hussain, Dr. Rakhshanda Talat Hussain, Zaheer Khan, Iqbal Latif, Amjad Shah, Dr. Alia Imam, Rehan Sheikh, Khalid Ahmed, Ayaz Khan, Khalid Anam, actor Faisal Qureshi, and Javed Saba.

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Cancer society cautions against e-cigarettes, hookah among youth

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Cancer Society Dr Ahmed Ijaz Masood on Sunday issued a stark warning about the escalating popularity of tobacco products like e-cigarettes and hookah among youth.

Speaking to Pakistan Television News (PTV), he said that these products were more dangerous than traditional cigarettes due to the harmful substances they contain.

Dr Masood explained that the tobacco industry uses various tactics to hook young people into lifelong addiction by giving these products different names and promoting them through branded materials. He highlighted that e-cigarettes, which contain nicotine and potentially harmful toxins like heavy

metals, can damage the lungs and respiratory system.

"Unfortunately, popular shows, movies and dramas portray smoking in a glamorous fashion," Dr Masood said, urging a discouragement of such scenes. He noted a 110 per cent increase in tobacco-related scenes in popular shows among youth aged 15 to 24, which often depict smoking glamorously.

Dr Masood cited global statistics, stating that an estimated 38 million boys and girls aged 13 to 15 use tobacco products. "Nicotine is especially harmful to developing brains," he added, stressing the urgent need to raise awareness about the dangers of smoking.

Efforts to be taken to expand...

Continued from page 1 to expand the green bus service to other routes to facilitate maximum numbers of Quetta dwellers.

Hamza Shafiqat said after the inclusion of 25 more buses, the daily capacity will increase to facilitate 50,000 commuters. He said that green buses operate from 7 am to 10 pm. He said that safe travel in a pleasant environment is the right of the citizens and feels glad that our female segment can now travel with satisfaction.

The green bus service has made it easier for people of all age groups especially, women, students and senior citizens, to reach work timely with the pro-

vision of convenient travel facilities. Residents of Quetta praised the Balochistan government's project of state-run "Green Bus Service" to provide a decent transportation facility which would also reduce heavy traffic congestion in the city.

Talking to APP, Aziz Ullah Nasar said that Quetta city was in dire need of public transport facilities as most of the roads cannot sustain the pressure of traffic, leading to congestion and environmental problems. "Traffic jam is a big issue in Quetta where people waste hours due to rush in the morning, afternoon, and evening on the roads," he added.



LAHORE: Citizens taking bath in the canal on holiday during the rising heat in the provincial capital.

'Jamia Dar-ul-Uloom Haqqania' Indonesian envoy shares strategies for pluralism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires, Rahmat Hindiarta has visited Jamia Dar-ul-Uloom Haqqania to share Indonesia's exemplary experiences in managing pluralism highlighting its approach to fostering harmony in a diverse society.

The session commenced with Vice Chancellor Maulana Rashid-ul-Haq Sami, accompanied by his brother Maulana Hamid-ul-Haq Haqqani, extolling Indonesia as a model of Islam. Reflecting on his recent visit to Indonesia in November 2023 as part of the Pakistani Ulama and Scholars Delegation, Maulana Rashid emphasized, "The cleanliness and public order are intrinsic to life in Indonesia. The Indonesian people are known for their friendliness and mutual respect." In his address, the

Chargé d'Affaires noted Indonesia's status as the world's largest Muslim-majority country, despite its distance from Islam's birthplace in Makkah. "Indonesia comprises 17,000 islands with a population of 280 million, 87 percent of whom are Muslims. The rest are Catholic, Protestant, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian," he explained to the Haqqanian students in Arabic.

Highlighting the challenges of managing pluralism, Hindiarta underscored Indonesia's success through the implementation of Pancasila, a foundational philosophical theory of Indonesia. He remarked, "Indonesia does not explicitly declare itself an Islamic country. However, the first principle of Pancasila is the belief in One Almighty God." He said his visit co-

incided with Pancasila Day, celebrated on June 1, every year. He said Pancasila, first presented by President Sukarno on June 1, 1945, encapsulates five principles: belief in One Almighty God, just and civilized humanity, Indonesian unity, democracy guided by inner wisdom through deliberation, and social justice for all Indonesians. These principles were pivotal during the preparation for Indonesia's independence, reflecting a commitment to a cohesive national identity amidst diversity, he maintained. In response to a teacher's query about Pakistan fostering unity among its diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, the Chargé d'Affaires expressed optimism, asserting that Pakistan could achieve stronger bonds as long as the spirit of "One Pakistan".



ISLAMABAD: DIG Operations/ Security Ali Raza conducted a visit to the Security division to assess security arrangements.

DIG Ops/ Security visits Security division; orders to enhanced security measures

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the DIG Operations/ Security Ali Raza conducted a visit to the Security division to assess security arrangements and issue directives for enhancing security measures, a public relation officer said.

He said that, the DIG Ops/ Security interacted with officers of the Islamabad Police entrusted with the security of the diplomatic enclave. He issued directives to senior officers for the enhancement of security measures at the embassies.

Emphasizing the need for effective monitoring on

both internal and external routes of the diplomatic enclave, the DIG Ops/ Security stressed the importance of ensuring effective surveillance through the Safe City centralized camera systems.

The Islamabad Police remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining a peaceful environment and ensuring the protection of the lives and property of the citizens within the federal capital.

Citizens are urged to cooperate with the police and report any suspicious activities or items by dialing helpline "Pucar 15" or via ICT-15 app.

CDA launches one-window service at sector C-16 for affectees' convenience

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) has set up a one-window facility at Sector C-16 for allottees of the same sector to resolve their issues conveniently.

Established under the direction of Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the one-window facility will help resolve issues related to built-up property (BuP), including land matters affecting local residents.

CDA revenue staff have been deployed at the

one-window facility. Affected individuals can now seek assistance at the One Window in Sector C-16 instead of visiting the CDA office for their property claims.

The Chairman directed to accelerate sector development by resolving issues of affected individuals. Following his visit, sector development has sped up significantly.

Development works are ongoing round the clock under the guidance of Chairman CDA.



ISLAMABAD: Gypsy men making makeshift home at roadside in the Federal Capital.

HRCP builds case for constitutional amendment to strengthen LGs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) held a consultation in collaboration with Dehleez on the need for constitutional protection for local government by presenting its policy paper, proposing a constitutional amendment of Article 140A. Legislators, policy makers and civil society members debated the paper at length. Director Farah Zia in her introductory remarks, stressed the need for a more comprehensive constitutional protection for the local government bodies.

Zafarullah Khan, civic educator and researcher for HRCP's policy paper, presented on the proposed amendment and expanded on the idea of devolution in other federations across the

world, many of which have provincial constitutions. He underscored why an amendment, delineating a specific period for local government elections, is essential to guaranteeing that citizens' needs are represented and addressed at every level. Other participants also weighed in on the proposed amendment. PML-N MNA Bilal Kiyani endorsed the idea of a constitutional amendment to ensure the continuity of local governments, and hoped that with the establishment of standing committees and caucuses, it can be reviewed in earnest.

AWP's Farman Ali emphasized the importance of democratizing the political parties alongside constitutional amendments to strengthen local governance.

OEC starts Japanese language course for skilled workers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) has launched a short Japanese language course for skilled workers to get jobs in Japan as basic knowledge is must for job seekers who were interested to work in Japan.

An official source told APP, he said that OEC as a manpower promotion public agency which was playing a vital role to provide maximum jobs to Pakistanis in abroad to generate the huge remittances.

In this regard, OEC seeking application from eligible candidate to apply for the Japanese language course, should have minimum education middle, 18-39 age limits and one year experience must for relevant field.

Tahira Naqvi's legacy honored on her death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): June 2 marked the death anniversary of the talented artiste Tahira Naqvi, who was widely celebrated for her natural acting abilities.

Tahira Naqvi began her career in radio and gained fame through her roles in television dramas, especially the PTV drama serial 'Waris'. In addition to her success on television, Tahira Naqvi appeared as a supporting heroine in two films.

She starred alongside Asif Raza Mir in 'Badaltay Mousam' (1980) and with Agha Sikandar in 'Mian Bivi Razi' (1982).

Born on August 20, 1956, in Daska, Sialkot, Tahira Naqvi's promising career was cut short when she succumbed to lupus on June 2, 1982, in Lahore.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada and PPP Senator Sherry Rehman cutting the cake on the 78th anniversary of Italy's Republic Day, alongwith Italian Ambassador Ms. Marilina Armellini at Federal Capital.

Pakistani Medical Mission ready to handle Hajj health emergencies, assures Head

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan's Hajj Medical Mission (PHMM), led by Director Brigadier Jamil Ahmed Lakhair and comprising 400 dedicated members, stands fully equipped with medicines to provide optimal healthcare services to Pakistani pilgrims in Saudi Arabia.

"By the grace of Allah Almighty, I am confident that the PHMM is fully equipped, prepared, and competent enough to tackle any medical emergency situation, if it arises... May God forbid, in a highly professional manner," PHMM Head Director Brigadier Jamil Ahmed Lakhair told APP in an interview on Sunday.

The team, working tirelessly since the start of the month-long pre-Hajj flight operation on May 9,

includes various medical specialists working in shifts across two hospitals and 11 dispensaries in Makkah, Madinah, and Jeddah. Brigadier Jamil assures readiness to handle any medical emergency with professionalism. This year, around 179,210 Pakistanis will perform Hajj obligation under both government and private schemes. Brigadier Jamil, who is a classified healthcare administrator and public health specialist with vast experience in command, staff and training appointments at various healthcare setups and institutions, said the mission includes almost all types of medical specialists, including cardiologists, chest specialists, physiologists, pulmonologists, pathologists, radiologists, and dermatologists.

Brigadier Jamil Ahmed Lakhair, a seasoned

healthcare administrator and public health specialist, highlighted the diverse expertise within the PHMM team, encompassing specialists like cardiologists, pulmonologists, dermatologists, and more.

"They are all available to serve the guests of Allah Almighty in three shifts, with ample medicines in stock" he remarked.

Answering a question, the PHM Head said Pakistan had established two hospitals and 11 dispensaries in the holy cities of Makkah, Madinah and Jeddah to provide healthcare for Hajj pilgrims. One main hospital and eight dispensaries are in Makkah, one hospital and two dispensaries in Madinah and one dispensary in Jeddah near the King Abdulaziz International Airport.

Farewell ceremony held in honor of SI Asghar at CPO

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: A farewell ceremony was held in honor of Sub-Inspector Muhammad Asghar at the Central Police Office Islamabad here on Sunday, a public relations officer said.

He said that, senior police officers and a large number of officials were also present on the occasion. The ceremony was held in recognition of the services of the retiring Sub-

Inspector of police.

The Personal Staff Officer to IG Islamabad said that retirement is part of the service as the one

presented a police shield and gifts to the retiring Sub-Inspector and also expressed best wishes for his future endeavors.



Inspector of police. The Personal Staff Officer to IG Islamabad said that retirement is part of the service as the one

Action to be taken against wrong parked vehicles: IGP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Police has launched a campaign against those involved in parking their vehicles wrongly and creating inconvenience for pedestrians and smooth flow of traffic by occupying footpath areas.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi directed the Police to launch campaign against wrong parking vehicles in especially at busy markets and gave special instructions to SSP Traffic Muhammad Sarifz Virk to monitor it, a public relations officer said on Sunday.

All Zonal DSPs were directed to ensure implementation of traffic laws and take action against those involved in creating problems for traffic discipline in the city.

The action was taken against showroom and shopping malls' administrators in G-11 Markaz, F-10, F-11, G-8, G-9, I-8 Markaz, Blue area, Jinnah

Super Market, F-6 Super Market, Aabpara and Bhara Kahu markets. Vehicles were removed from footpath areas and they were warned to follow rules otherwise strict action would be initiated against them.

During the ongoing Year, the Islamabad Police also issued more than 42,000 fine tickets to those involved in wrong parking while several vehicles were impounded at police stations for not vacating footpath areas.

The SSP Traffic said that, to ensure convenience for road users is among the top priority of Islamabad Police by maintaining traffic discipline and every possible effort would be made for the purpose.

Additionally, special squads have been constituted for the purpose of removing illegal parking and vacating footpaths while indiscriminate action would be taken against violators, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Visitors enjoy boat riding at Rawal Dam in the Federal Capital.

Education is top priority of incumbent govt: Wani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Education is among this government's top priorities, said Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, while speaking as the chief guest at the graduation ceremony of the 9th Cohort of Teach For Pakistan Fellows held the other day.

Speaking on the occasion he said "The Teach For Pakistan model inspired me to design a Tech Fellows Program in Gilgit Baltistan during my stint there before I took up my current assignment; I urge Pakistan's development partners to help Teach For Pakistan expand its Fellowship program all over the country?"

The occasion also marked the completion of the Education Fellows project, a partnership between the Education Ministry, Teach For Pakistan, and the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Under this project, 87 teaching Fellows, the brightest graduates of top-tier universities, taught around 8000 students for two years in 47 public

schools in underserved, rural areas on Islamabad's outskirts.

"The Education Fellows project has provided a blueprint for replication and scaling up the best practices in teacher recruitment, training, M&E, accountability, and coaching support for systemic change in education," said Khadija Bakhtiar, CEO of Teach For Pakistan.

On average, she said that Pakistani children lag 4-5 years behind their grade level. She said that during the two-year Fellowship, the Teach For Pakistan classrooms close as much as 4.4 years of the gap.

"Having taught almost 25000 students across 107 schools, Teach For Pakistan is expanding its program to under-resourced public schools in Sindh, beginning from Karachi in August", she maintained. Commending the government's unwavering commitment to education under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's stewardship, Education Team Lead, FCDO, Mazhar Siraj stated that the empirical evidence from the project is a testament to the fact.



ISLAMABAD: Children catching birds from nests on soil dunes in the Federal Capital.

IFA seals bakery, destroys 2,000 dirty hatchery eggs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has sealed a bakery in Islamabad's Lehtar Centre after a surprise inspection revealed severe health and safety violations.

Talking to APP, Deputy Director Operations of IFA, Dr Tahira Siddique said that the inspection, led by food safety teams (FSTs), uncovered the use of rotten eggs, poor sanitation, and unhygienic conditions, prompting immediate action.

She said that the IFA team discovered the bakery using 2,000 dirty hatchery eggs in their sweets, which were subsequently destroyed. The eggs bought cheaply from hatcheries, were part of a broader issue of unsanitary practices at the bakery, she added.

Dr Tahira highlighted the severe lack of cleanli-

ness, noting the presence of live and dead flies in the processing area and sweets, as well as rusted and dirty machines.

Furthermore, the inspections revealed that the bakery used non-food grade paper for packaging and stored sweets in broken, rusty trays. This level of negligence posed serious health risks to consumers, leading to the bakery's closure and the destruction of all defective products, she added.

She emphasized that using broken and dirty eggs in food preparation was a grave violation of food safety laws. She said that the IFA's investigation also aimed to target those supplying these substandard eggs.

She warned that the use of such eggs in bakery products could lead to serious stomach and liver diseases.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in construction work at Park Road with the help of heavy machinery during development work in the Federal Capital.

Women pilgrims credit Religious Minister Salik for enhancing facilities

ISLAMABAD (Online): A group of Pakistani women pilgrims credited the better Hajj arrangements and facilities to the Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

They expressed gratitude to the federal minister for providing them with enhanced facilities and better services through out from travelling Pakistan to their residences in Saudi Arabia.

Sharing their experience, the women also expressed satisfaction with the clean and neat accommodations, high-quality and hygienic food, and the helpful and cooperative staff.

The women pilgrims were interviewed by a media team of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony in Madinah for use of social media accounts.

They acknowledged the efforts of the federal minister in improving the services provided to pilgrims, stating that they face no challenges concerning living, eating, traveling, or performing their religious

rituals. One of pilgrims, Nasreen Akhtar, from Sialkot, praised the cleanliness of her hotel and the quality of the food, and commended the performance of the cooperative staff. Another pilgrim, Lubna, also from Sialkot, described the living environment as peaceful and praised the administration of the Hajj mission for taking proper care of the pilgrims.

Another pilgrim from Sialkot, Nida was thankful to the government for providing accommodation near Masjid-e-Nabvi, stating that it takes her only three minutes to reach the masjid.

She also mentioned that the staff quickly responded when she complained about a problem to visit Riyazul Jannah.

A pilgrim from Pattoki, Shazia appreciated the good reception at the airport and the efficient transfer of luggage to the hotel.

She added that the pilgrims do not see any negligence in terms of performance, cooperation, or behavior from the supporting staff.

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Dutch courage

The Election Commission of Pakistan continues to act as if it has no interest in ensuring fairness. Just days after it was ordered by a Lahore High Court judge to notify six more election tribunals for Punjab, for which nominations had been sent weeks earlier by the LHC chief justice, a senior ECP official, responding to a reporter's question, brushed aside the injunction as "meaningless".

It seems the ECP had grown more confident about defying the LHC since Commission officials met the law minister and attorney general to discuss, among other things, the controversial ordinance passed recently by the acting president, Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani. The ordinance in question empowers the Commission to appoint whoever it pleases to election tribunals without worrying about what the LHC chief justice has to say.

It bears highlighting that these election tribunals are supposed to rule on complaints made by losing candidates against the irregularities and illegalities they claim were committed during the vote-counting process. Many of these claims — especially those pertaining to changing results — have been supported by the findings of independent observers, election watchdogs, and even statements made by other losing candidates. In recent weeks, the courts have also separately overturned several controversial decisions by the ECP concerning the recounting of votes and changing of results well after the elections were concluded.

As regards the matter at hand, it bears recalling that the LHC chief justice had sent a list of nominations to the ECP for the purpose of appointing more tribunals in Punjab, where the number of complaints far exceeds the capacity of the two tribunals that have already been appointed. For weeks, the ECP sat on these nominations and refused to appoint more tribunals till Mr Gilani's ordinance came along like a deus ex machina to do away with the 'problem' entirely.

The ECP can now appoint whichever judge it pleases, be they retired or serving, to sit in judgement against its own decisions. It will be difficult not to view with deep suspicion the fact that the ECP, which is constitutionally mandated to ensure non-partisanship in all election-related matters, seems to have agreed to lean on an ordinance, one of the most patently undemocratic legislative tools available, just so it may bypass Section 140 of the Elections Act as it existed in its original condition.

One wonders how this will engender public faith in the impartiality or fairness of the tribunals that will eventually be formed by such blatant disregard for checks and balances. Alas, the Commission has been supported wholeheartedly in implementing its twisted interpretations of the democratic process by some willing collaborators in the legislature. They must take stock of the long-term harm their actions are causing to the Pakistani democracy.

Abbas Nasir

US President Joe Biden seems to have put his personal credibility on the line by spelling out what he called a comprehensive three-phase Israeli proposal. He said "it is time to end this war" in Gaza and secure a "lasting ceasefire". That fact alone ought to trigger hope, if not optimism.

As the contours of the proposal emerged in Biden's statement to the media at the White House, many commentators pointed out that the deal wasn't different from the one Hamas agreed to at the beginning of May, which was rejected by Israel. (The details of the deal on the table are covered in the news pages.)

As most of the diplomatic activity and negotiations take place away from the public eye, Biden's statement, televised live across the world, suggested that prior soundings out of the parties may have happened and there was a good chance of the proposal being accepted.

The one major difference from the last time was that Joe Biden was sticking his own neck out and un-

derwriting the agreement as he said the US, Qatar and Egypt will make sure that negotiations stay on track and that the parties to the conflict, ie, Israel and Hamas stay engaged. This meant a lasting ceasefire.

Minutes after the Biden address, Qatari sources confirmed to Al Jazeera that negotiators were in touch with Hamas to ascertain the latter's reaction to the proposal. A little later, Hamas issued a statement saying they viewed the proposal "positively".

Bizarrely, though the US president called it an Israeli proposal, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seemed to add some conditions to it. Equally strange was the fact that he has, on occasion, publicly distanced himself from his own negotiators.

It could be that for a far-right genocidal Israeli leader to say outright he was ready for a ceasefire before his stated goals for the (largely one-sided) war had been achieved, was too tall an ask. In fact, he is far from achieving his aim of total destruction and annihilation of Hamas and,

brave words aside, may have to step back.

Any sane person would want this genocidal war to end and the hostages, both Israelis (numbering some 200) and Palestinians (several thousand), even if the latter are called 'prisoners', to be freed and reunited with their families.

But why has it taken the killing of some 40,000 Gaza Palestinians, including 14,000 children, the flattening of 80 per cent of Gaza, and the destruction of its infrastructure including schools, universities, hospitals, roads and civic services, for this proposal to finally have a chance of working?

Let's take the players one by one. President Biden, just five months away from an election, is trailing in the battleground or 'swing' states, having angered and alienated many Blacks, Muslims, young voters and progressive Democrats by his unconditional support of Israel, which has translated into the export of billions of dollars' worth of arms, bombs, ammunition and military equipment to the Zionist state.

Israel is said to have

assured him at the start of its genocidal assault on Gaza — following last year's savage Oct 7 attack on Israel by Hamas, which killed some 1,200 Israelis, including approximately 400 security personnel — that the war would be over well ahead of the US presidential election so that the voters would have forgotten about it by the time polling day came.

That didn't happen. In fact, stories started to appear in some sections of the Israeli media that Netanyahu and his military commanders had clashed over the lack of clarity and direction in the military regarding the endgame of the Gaza campaign.

If the far-right coalition aimed to execute Nakba II and hoped that its brutal bombing campaign and the pain inflicted on the Palestinians would lead to mass migration from Gaza, the resilience of the Palestinians was staggering.

They faced Israel's genocidal military campaign with fortitude, despite sacrificing more than anyone else in the 21st century. Their spirit to sur-

vive on their own land has remained unconquered. All this was happening before the eyes of the world as Israeli censorship and the blocking of foreign journalists' access to Gaza failed because heroic local journalists valiantly reported the truth to the world. Over 100 of them were murdered in the line of duty.

As for Hamas, soon after Oct, it was offering to swap Israeli hostages for some Palestinian prisoners and a ceasefire. That was an unrealistic position to take immediately after its Oct 7 carnage in Israel, in which many civilians were also targeted. However, even now if it can secure a ceasefire and keep a residual presence in Gaza, it would not be a loser. The pain and suffering of Gaza could well be a decisive factor.

This may appear an overly simplified look at a very complex situation, but given time and space constraints here, a more in-depth analysis isn't really possible and is beyond the scope of this piece.

As for Israel and Netanyahu, everyone knew they would have to

apply the brakes if the US asked them to. Unlike past excesses committed by Israel in Gaza and the West Bank, this conflict was being beamed live to the world's smartphones and creating revulsion at the genocidal policy.

Mounting international pressure and the brilliant South African case in the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court prosecutor's decision to seek arrest warrants for Netanyahu, among others, may have evoked an arrogant and belligerent response from the Israelis, but it did gnaw away at their genocidal intent. Notwithstanding brave words and tough demands, the Israelis may be amenable to a deal at this point.

This isn't to say a ceasefire is a foregone conclusion at this stage. However, it would be correct to believe this is the closest we have come to an end to hostilities in Gaza since last October. A free Palestine remains an elusive dream even as it remains the only guarantee of lasting peace in the Middle East. -- Courtesy Dawn

Muhammad Amir Rana

Pakistan's law-enforcement agencies have completed the investigation of the Dasu terrorist attack carried out against Chinese nationals in March, in record time.

This is, indeed, a remarkable achievement, but it does not seem to have impressed the Chinese authorities very much, as there have been reports that Beijing wants a large-scale anti-terrorism operation, like Zarbi-Azb, against the militants.

On March 26, a convoy of Chinese nationals travelling from Islamabad to the Dasu Hydropower Project site in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kohistan district was attacked by Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terrorists. The government announced compensation of \$2.5 million for the families of the five Chinese nationals who lost their lives in the attack. A joint investigation team comprising police and intelligence agencies' personnel was immediately formed to address Chinese concerns regarding the capability of Pakistani law enforcers to probe a high-profile terrorist attack.

The reports of China's demand for a massive counterterrorism operation are reflective of Beijing's concerns over the escalating threats to Chinese nationals working on CPEC-related and other projects in this country. Pakistan has a history of launching such counterterrorism operations at the request of China. The Lal Masjid operation in Islamabad in 2007 was launched after Chinese President Hu Jintao called Gen Musharraf. Prior to the operation, women students of the Jamia Hafsa madrasah had kidnapped Chinese health workers who they believed were commercial sex workers.

International pressure, including from the Chinese, also worked in 2014 when the Pakistan military launched Operation Zarbi-Azb in North Waziristan. China fully supported the Financial Action Task Force's recommendation that Pakistan comply with its counterterrorism financing and anti-money laundering commitments. The maximum favour the Chinese officials extended to Pakistan in this case was to support the country's need for more time to fulfil the financial watchdog's requirements.

However, China's latest demand regarding a large-scale operation does not seem feasible, as the TTP and its affiliates are hiding in Afghanistan, and cross-border operations would trigger a major conflict in the region. Moreover, there is also the Baloch insurgency, which is a complex issue that needs to be handled delicately. There is already an ongoing encounter between the insurgents and security forces in Balochistan. Any misadventure is likely to incur heavy political and security costs.

Pakistan's economy is in the throes of a deep crisis, and a massive military operation would entail its own costs. At the same time, it seems that the Pakistani leadership is underestimating the demands of its friends for a fully secure environment for their investment. This is not only about China, a major investor in Pakistan, but also other friends of the country, such as Saudi Arabia, which have concerns similar to Beijing's when it comes to putting their money here. These states are taking security concerns very seriously.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman recently approved a coopera-

tion agreement between the Presidency of State Security in the kingdom and the military intelligence in Pakistan to combat terrorism and its financing. The Pakistani leadership appears overly confident in its assessment that the security challenges at home can be mitigated as before; it wants the states that are looking at investment prospects in the country to trust its capabilities. However, terrorist incidents such as the Dasu attack will only shake the confidence of foreign investors.

No doubt, the Taliban's Afghanistan has emerged as a major security challenge for the country, but terrorism and extremism have a long history of state institutions using them as tools for political and strategic purposes. One can be aware of the dynamics of terrorist groups and take precautions, but what about intolerance, which can erupt suddenly and result in the lynching of innocent people?

The state has fanned the flames of intolerance in society, and this has eroded the social fabric and made conditions insecure for the minorities and for those who think differently from the state. Intolerance has be-

come a huge hurdle in the way of economic progress, including foreign investment. How will the Chinese forget the incident last year when one of their nationals barely escaped lynching by a mob at the Dasu Hydropower Project site? The Chinese official was simply asking employees to complete their work before going for prayers.

Security firms dealing in risk assessment most often cite the killing of Priyantha Kumara Diyawadana, a Sri Lankan national lynched by a mob on Dec 3, 2021, in Sialkot, to show who controls the environment for investment.

If you were to ask a Pakistani official or leader, they would claim that Pakistanis are moderate in their views and the most tolerant society among Muslim nations. Such a claim was recently made in Beijing. Lynching incidents are dismissed as the actions of a few misguided and emotional youths.

However, defending the indefensible causes more damage and shakes even friendly countries' confidence in one's ability to maintain security. The truth is that Pakistan's social indicators are amongst the

poorest anywhere. A major reason for this is substandard education and an extensive network of religious institutions that nurture extremism and intolerance in the country. The establishment has not stopped considering the political utility of religious institutions either.

Extremism and intolerance are thriving with state support, as the power elites are not willing to review their connection with the clergy. Making policies to counter extremism and terrorism satisfies their conscience, and they believe that by simply placing policy drafts in the cupboards of the relevant ministries, they will automatically solve the issue. The maximum effort by the state to solve the problem has been to create institutions to counter extremism. Eventually, these institutions are used to appease the clergy. China goes by its own model to forcefully 'harmonise' its ethnic and religious communities. However, for Pakistan, the first and foremost priority must be to abandon its approach of pacifying the sentiments of the hardliners, and instead, stand with the weak and the victims, regardless of their religion or community.

Gaza in flames

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Nothing seems to make Israel stop its murderous spree and war crimes in Gaza. Besides killing and injuring thousands, Israeli military operations have impeded humanitarian access, pushing Gaza to the brink of famine.

On May 20, the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor applied for warrants to arrest senior members of the Israeli and Hamas leadership. Tel Aviv termed the move "disgraceful", while President Biden called it "outrageous". Twelve Republican US senators wrote a threatening letter to the ICC that if "you target Israel, we will target you".

On May 24, the International Court of Justice ordered Israel to halt its offensive in Rafah. South Africa had brought this case before the ICJ, accusing Israel of subjecting the Palestinians to a genocide. Israel refused to accept the order. Instead, it carried out deadly air strikes (May 26) against Palestinians, killing 45 and injuring over 100.

On May 29, Algeria, on behalf of the Arab states, circulated a proposed resolution calling for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. While most countries welcomed the Algerian initiative, the US lost no time in vetoing it, while the UK abstained.

Despite the recent ICJ orders, and an earlier call by 153 member states of the UN General Assembly in December 2023, Israel continues to defy demands to protect civilians and uphold humanitarian obligations in Gaza. Israel's daily assaults have demonstrated that there is no longer any rules-based interna-

tional order. The spirit of multilateralism and respect for human rights have been battered by the ongoing relentless show of unilateralism in Gaza.

Why is Israel rejecting every call to stop its killing spree? One obvious reason is the unending support it receives from the US and some European countries. These countries have often lectured the world on the sanctity of human rights, yet they are reluctant to condemn what Israel's military is doing to defenceless civilians. The double standards of these champions of human rights have been exposed.

Yet, one is encouraged to see how the people in the US and Europe have come out to condemn the excessive use of force by Israel. Special tribute must be paid to the students of leading universities in the US, who have risked their academic careers but have not stepped back from voicing their support for the oppressed. Some European governments are now responding to the calls of their people. Spain, Ireland, and Norway have announced formal recognition of the state of Palestine. Several others had already done so, including Sweden, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. The UK and Australia are also considering recognition.

Sadly, the Muslim world has not been able to exert enough pressure on Israel to stop its atrocities in Gaza. Iran, however, has emerged as a country that has demonstrated its capability to give a punishing response to Israeli aggression while avoiding a wider war.

What is Israel's endgame? Some analysts argue that Israel would like to see all Gazans pushed into Egypt via

the Rafah crossing so that its cherished goal of a Greater Israel can be fulfilled. Others opine that Israel will continue its war until Hamas has been destroyed — for that it enjoys complete American support. Nikki Haley, former governor of South Carolina, was seen recently writing 'Finish them' on an artillery shell in Israel.

Clearly, the key to ending the war in Gaza is in the hands of the US. However, the Israel lobby in the US is so strong that the government is unable to stop Tel Aviv from what it is doing to innocent civilians. John Mearsh-se-imer of the University of Chicago and Stephen Walt of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government wrote a book in 2007 titled The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy that describes how this lobby nudges US foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction, which in their view is not in America's national interest and not even in Israel's long-term interest.

Meanwhile, Benjamin Netanyahu is becoming increasingly unpopular in his own country as well. In a poll conducted by the Israel Democracy Institute recently, only 15 per cent of respondents wanted Netanyahu to continue in office after the war in Gaza ends. There is also the financial stress that this war is inflicting on Israel's economy. International opinion is fast developing against Israel. Netanyahu and his cohorts will soon discover that Israel cannot buy peace for itself by making others insecure. He would be well-advised to remember what Albert Einstein said: "Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding." -- Courtesy Dawn

Muna Khan

I am not alone in worrying about the future of journalism. I learned this in my conversations (in person and online) with journalism instructors in the US, Canada and Armenia. Then there are the many conversations I have with my friend, ZB, a journalist and media instructor in Karachi: how do we get young people to read the paper or how can the mainstream media reduce the trust deficit with its audience? What will happen to journalism as the government doubles down on its efforts to tighten a muzzle on us? Instructors and practitioners in the US, for example, have plenty of reason to worry because it's been a terrible year with layoffs at Los Angeles Times, Vice, Deadspin, to name a few. Northwestern University, my alma mater, estimates that by year's end, the country may lose one-third of all its newspapers and two-thirds of all its newspaper staff since 2005. They say this will increase news deserts across the US.

Where will people turn to for news then?

Many news outlets in the US were bought by Big Billionaire Businesses which seem to employ a similar strategy: buy distressed newspapers for cheap, lay off staff and then earn profit from papers' advertising revenues.

In its reporting in 2020, Vanity Fair referred to one New York-based hedge fund — which owned among many papers the LA Times until it was bought by biotech billionaire doctor Patrick Soon-Shiong in 2018 — as a "vampire that bleeds newspapers dry".

It wasn't always like this, but at least in the US, newspapers were owned by a small group of families because they were good investments. The

Paper cuts

decline began with the disruption caused by the internet and then the 2009 recession. Some papers struggled more because they invested in print rather than digital. "When the time came to ask people to pay for content," one editor told Vanity Fair, "it came at the same time when the content had been diminished. That kind of set the table."

This is true for media in Pakistan where I only know of Profit magazine that has a paywall and subscribers, allowing them to practice independent journalism.

Big Billionaires who invested in failing newspapers did so because they were "looking for profit maximisation over the next few years" as the editor said. When the quest is for profit, reporting will fall by the wayside. Today, "journalist" has been replaced with 'content manager'.

Big Billionaires don't put money back into the paper and if they do, it is often at the cost of local journalism. The world's third richest man, Jeff Bezos owns the Washington Post, which he bought for \$250m in 2013, made it profitable but then a decade later laid off 240 staff members. The New York Times bought the Boston Globe for a whopping \$1.1bn in 1993 but sold it for \$70 million in 2013 to John Henry, a billionaire who owns a baseball team. He claims the paper has been profitable since 2018, but this is disputed by media insiders who say "the billionaires who wanted to save the news industry are losing a fortune".

The idea that benevolent billionaires will save journalism is flawed. Also, rich men buying media don't adhere to newspapers' principle: holding the powerful to account.

Who then is left to

be the country's — and communities' — watchdog? Vloggers whose motivation is solely to earn money off the audiences they lure in with their 'journalism'? The disinformation machinery in Pakistan is truly mind-boggling and I'm curious to see whether the new defamation law will help calm the storms created by some of these vloggers.

The problem is the media industry hasn't figured out a way to create a business model that is not dependent on the market — advertising, subscriptions, etc. (There are exceptions like The New York Times and Wall Street Journal.)

We face new challenges in how to get quality journalism out to audiences. This requires new thinking: whether it is treating journalism as a public good, non-profit journalism, journalist owned co-operative models. This means rethinking journalism as something that just can't be monetised. This is why we should support calls for a robust public media system that receives funding but is independent and produces quality journalism for the sake of public good.

So far, we've seen governments in power use PTV, for example, as a loudspeaker to advertise their policies and quash dissent. This is not the model Pakistanis deserve.

It may seem rich (pardon the pun) of me to demand a poor government create a fund for public media even though it has the funds for lavish renovation projects. But until then, I hope you will be wary of billionaires buying media everywhere. What is their motive? Surely, it is not our well-being and right to information in a fair manner. -- Courtesy Dawn

CM Maryam orders early completion of Lahore development plan

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Sunday chaired a meeting to review progress on the Lahore development plan, which includes the provision of drainage system, construction of access roads and streets, installation of streetlights and restoration of parks.

The CM said a durable end-to-end waste disposal system will be developed in each zone of Lahore. She directed authorities concerned to set up a dedicated 'Project Management Unit' to ensure effective implementation of the development plan. The Chief Minister also approved a proposal to use separate colours for the identification of each zone.

Earlier, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was briefed that the construction, repair and development of 6 zones of Lahore including Ravi, Shalimar, Samanabad, Data Ganj Baksh, Nishtar Town, Gulberg and Railway area will be undertaken in Phase-I. At a cost of Rs 74 billion 15 crore, Phase-I is expected to be completed within 10 months, and will benefit more than 93 lac people living in these 6 zones.

The Chief Minister was also apprised that the construction, repair and development of other zones including Allama Iqbal, Wagah and Aziz Bhatti, under Phase-II, will start after the completion of Phase I.

Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Minister for Local Government & Community Development Zeeshan Rafique and Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik attended the meeting. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Principal Secretary to CM Sajid Zafar Daal, Secretary Local Government and other senior officers were also present.



LAHORE: Sri Lankan delegation led by Vidura Wickramanayaka, Minister of Buddhadasna Religious and Cultural Affairs in a group photo with Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House.

Sindh govt to promote use of electrical vehicles for reducing pollution: Dharejo

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Industries and Commerce Jam Ikramullah Dharejo and Secretary Industries and Commerce Muhammad Yasin Shar Baloch said that the Sindh government would promote the use of electrical vehicles for reducing environmental pollution.

During his visit to Yousuf Dewan Companies here Sunday, he held a meeting with Chairman of the group, Dewan Muhammad Yousuf Farooqui, Group CEO Automotive Dr. Usman Hayat and others. The meeting focused on the revival of the national economy, its impact on the automotive industry and the launch of electrical vehicles in Pakistan.

The provincial minister discussed various aspects of industrial development with Dewan Muhammad Yousuf Farooqui, including workforce and market competitiveness. They explored ways to stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities and enhance the industry's contribution to the national economy.

Jam Ikramullah Dharejo emphasized the government's commitment to supporting industrial growth and development, highlighting initiatives to improve the business environment, facilitate investment and promote innovation.

He also viewed the Dewan KIA Shehzore LCV truck, a locally manufactured vehicle by Dewan Muhammad Farooque Motors Limited at their state-of-the-art manufacturing plant in Dewan City, District Thatta, demonstrating the capabilities of Pakistan's automotive industry.

He appreciated the industry's resilience and potential for growth.

Minister says: PML-N to bring vibrant local government system

SIALKOT (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government Zeeshan Rafique has said that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) wants to bring a strong and vibrant local government system in the province.

He expressed these views during an open court in his constituency PP-51 camp office Daska City.

"As soon as the government was formed in Punjab, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif established a committee consisting of provincial ministers, assembly members, and senior officers to remodel the local government system, which has completed 80 percent of its work," he added. The minister said that the local government department was collecting basic information in digital format for solid waste management at the rural union council level and tehsil level in all the districts of the province and after the final approval from the Chief Minister, sanitation in rural areas would be outsourced under which manual, mechanical sweeping, waste collection, drain cleaning and waste disposal would be ensured. He said that the participation of citizens is indispensable for an effective and long-lasting sanitation system in villages and cities. "Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has been focusing on cleanliness since day one. The study of international models of public-private partnership is also ongoing, in the light of which companies were selected on merit in 148 tehsils of Punjab.



HYDERABAD: Members of Sindh Journalists Alliance are holding protest demonstration against the killing of Journalists and demanding for justice at Hyderabad press club.

DC inaugurates modern EPI training hall

FAISALABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh on Sunday formally inaugurated a new modern EPI (Expanded Immunization Program) training hall at the office of the District Health Authority.

The EPI training hall is one of nine developed in different districts of the Punjab province with the support of the International Health Organization (WHO).

CEO Health Dr Asfand Yar, WHO divisional officer Dr Mudassar Saleem, and other officers were present on the occasion.

The EPI halls have already been made ready in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Sahiwal, Dera Ghazi Khan and Rahim Yar Khan Districts.

Earlier, CEO health Dr Asfand Yar gave a presentation about EPI program in detail.

SP conducted visit to Wah Cantt police station

RAWALPINDI (APP): Superintendent of Police (SP) Potohar Nasir Nawaz on Sunday conducted a surprise visit to Wah Cantt police station and checked the public service delivery in the police station.

According to police spokesman, SP reviewed police station building, front desk, records, lock up to ensure the provision of all possible resources to police station.

The SP also reviewed the facilities being provided to the public and directed that merit and justice be provided to the people. Furthermore, SP directed the officials to make the surroundings clean. He made it clear that strict action would be taken against the officials who were found negligent in performing their duties.

Meanwhile, Rawalpindi police apprehended eight outlaws and recovered drugs.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a meeting to review progress on the Lahore development plan.

Advisor Tourism visits Peshawar Museum Living nations learn from history by preserving it: Zahid Chanzeb

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture and Archeology Zahid Chanzeb along with the officials of the Tourism and Archeology Department made a detailed visit to Peshawar Museum and witnessed its various parts.

On this occasion, Director Archeology Dr Abdul Samad showed him the dance floor of the Victoria Dancing Club which was later converted into the museum, having been built in 1907 with full splendour in the memory of Queen Victoria in a short period of one year.

Later, an Englishman, Bob Wrightson, leased it and turned it into a dancing studio and entertainment club. However, it was converted into a museum in 1974. Dr Samad told the advisor that the museum is open for tourists seven days a week and is also a major source of income due to the rush of tourists.

He said that the uniqueness of this museum in the entire subcontinent is that 90% of the relics of the Gandhara civilization in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the entire life story right from the birth to the death of Buddha.

He expressed his satisfaction that the museum has preserved rare artefacts and statues including the Gandhara civilization belonging to this region, many of which traced back to the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. The advisor said that living nations always preserve their history and learn from it in the same way, and such nations, by dint of their continuous efforts, get out of the swamp of backwardness and reach the pinnacle of development with great speed, he added.

KP govt urged to fund Hindko Academy

PESHAWAR (APP): Gandhara Hindko Board, a literary and cultural organization, on Sunday urged the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to provide funds to Gandhara Hindko Academy and set up a Saraiki Academy as well in the province to promote Saraiki language and culture.

M u h a m m a d Ziauddin, General Secretary of the Board, made the appeal after a meeting of the board members, said a press release.

Ziauddin, a research scholar and author of several books, said that as per official statistics, Hindko was the second main language of KP and the sixth widely spoken regional language of the country.

"This language remained deprived of official patronage for a long time subsequent to Independence. After 68 years of wait, the KP government set up Gandhara Hindko Academy in 2015 under the public-private partnership."



LAHORE: Members of Sunni Ulema Council are holding protest demonstration against for acceptance of their demands, at Lahore press club.

Four-day PCR training for S.Asian medical entomologists concludes

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Under the auspices of the Directorate of Malaria Control, National Health Services and with financial support from the Malaria Consortium South Asia and the Asian Pacific Malaria Elimination Network (APMEN), a four-day PCR training session for South Asian medical entomologists was successfully concluded at Arid University, Rawalpindi, said an official handout issued here Sunday.

The training session saw participation from medical entomologists from all four provinces of Pakistan, as well as officials from Afghanistan, Indonesia and Bangladesh. During the training, the participants were extensively taught and observed molecular identification techniques, which will facilitate the diagnosis of Vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue.

Punjab launches anti Polio campaign targeting 6.4 million children

ISLAMABAD (APP): Head of the anti-polio program in Punjab, Khizr Afzal said on Sunday that preparations for the anti-polio campaign have been completed, with the campaign set to commence on Monday.

According to a private news channel, the anti-polio campaign will be organized in six districts including Lahore, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Multan, Mianwali, and Okara.

Khizr Afzal said that the campaign aims to vaccinate 6.4 million children across the province. The campaign will last seven days in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad.

He said that in the other districts the campaign will run for five days. He further stated that over 40,000 polio workers will participate in the campaign, with more than 14,000 polio workers active in Lahore alone.

Pakistan is committed to extend cultural ties with Sri Lanka: Saleem

Independent Report
LAHORE: Sri Lankan delegation led by Vidura Wickramanayaka, Minister of Buddhadasna Religious and Cultural Affairs called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore. In the meeting, issues of mutual interest, ways to enhance cooperation in economic, tourism and other sectors between the two countries were discussed. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Saleem Haider Khan said that Pakistan and Sri Lanka have cordial relations. He underscored the need to enhance existing bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The Punjab Governor said that Pakistan is committed to extend cultural ties with Sri Lanka. Governor Punjab said Government of Pakistan has preserved the are ancient Buddhist relics in the historical places Taxila, Takht Bahi and Swat Valley. He said that the Buddhist monuments in Pakistan provides opportunities to increase religious tourism between Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Governor Punjab said that there is a need to explore new avenues of cooperation between Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the economic and tourism sector and ensure sustainable development in the region. He said that we invite Sri Lanka to explore the possibilities of joint ventures in tourism and hospitality sectors and to invest in the tourism sector. Governor Punjab added that Pakistan is committed to promoting peace and cooperation in South Asia.

The head of the delegation said that he is taking away pleasant memories from here. He praised the hospitality of Pakistanis and especially the liveliness of the people of Lahore.

Later, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan was met a delegation of All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association led by All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association President Kashif Adeb Jadhawi and Malik Riasat at Governor House Lahore.

Use of plastic products banned from June 5

FAISALABAD (APP): The Environment Protection Agency has announced that there will be a complete ban on the use of plastic products from June 5.

According to the district administration spokesperson here on Sunday, plastic bags with thickness less than 75 microns and size less than 12x16 inches and ear buds with plastic sticks will be banned.

The plastic sticks with balloons, plastic flags, and plastic candy sticks, plastic ice cream sticks will also be banned.

The polystyrene disposable cups, glasses.

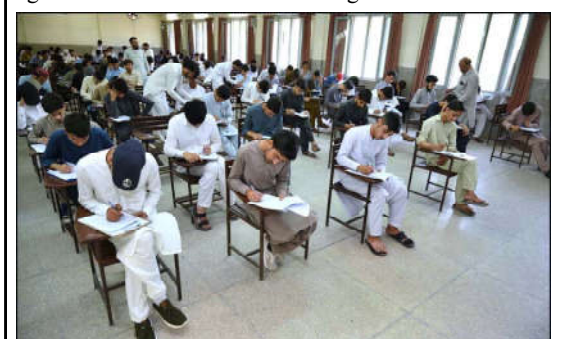


HYDERABAD: Mehwish Ajaz Additional Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad giving cold water (Sharbat) to people during hot weather.

All set to launch campaign against plastic use: Marriyum

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb has said that the Punjab government is taking important steps in the perspective of "No to Plastic Campaign".

In a statement, she said that on the special directions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a campaign has been launched to protect the masses from deadly diseases being caused by plastic usage. She said that from 5th June, preparations have been made to ensure strict implementation of the mechanism to ban the manufacture, production, distribution and sale of illegal plastic bags. "Plastic usage causes cancer and other deadly diseases and sole usage of plastic is increasing environmental pollution and causing serious health issues. A crackdown will be launched against factories which are manufacturing illegal plastic products," she added. "Earlier, numerous notices have been sent in this regard. From June 5, hotels, restaurants and other eateries will be strictly prohibited from serving food in plastic bags. A complete crackdown will be launched against the owners found involved in violating this prohibition. Legal action will be taken against eatery owners and heavy fines will also be imposed," she added. Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said that according to the law, the use of polythene bags of less than 75 microns and single-use plastic utensils have been completely banned. An awareness campaign on the topic of "Plastic is death" will be launched for the general public on non-usage of plastic. Public service messages will go viral through social media.



PESHAWAR: Matric students across KPK participate in Goodwill and CUSIT Talent Scholarship Test held by Peshawar Model Degree Colleges.

Role medical graduates play in shaping wider health landscape is commendable. Qasim Shah

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Jinnah Medical College (JMC) Peshawar proudly hosted its convocation ceremony, an illustrious event celebrating academic achievement and excellence. The distinguished gathering was graced by the esteemed presence of Syed Qasim Ali Shah, the honorable Health Minister, who attended as the chief guest.

Accompanying him were eminent personalities including Vice Chancellor KMU Meritorious Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq, Registrar KMU Inam Ullah Khan Wazir, and Principal Prof. Meritorious Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq, extending a warm welcome to Provincial Health Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah and all attendees, conveyed heartfelt congratulations to the position holder students and their parents. He also commended the relentless efforts of Principal Prof. Dr. Amir Khan, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ishaq, Owners, and all faculty members for their invaluable contributions to the success of the institution. In his address, the health minister expressed profound appreciation.

VC KMU

Govt to improve fumigation system, digitalize pesticide registration: Rana Tanvir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for National Food Security, Rana Tanveer Hussain said here on Sunday that the government would formulate a comprehensive strategy to improve the fumigation system.

The strategy included enhancing the number of fumigation companies and digitalizing the registration system of pesticides to

streamline the processes, the minister said during a meeting with Plant Protection Department (PPD). The minister underlined the role of Plant Protection Department in the development of agriculture sector adding that efforts would be made to further improve its performance and bring it up to high standards and ensure its operations meet

top quality benchmarks, according to press release issued by the ministry.

The minister said that PPD would be developed on modern lines to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness and all resources would be utilized to address staff shortages within the department. "We have a strong commitment to promote merit and transparency

within the department. Corruption and inefficiency will not be tolerated in any form within the department," he remarked and added the system will be digitalized to ensure transparency in operations.

Tanveer highlighted the importance of establishing effective system for the inspection of rice and mango plants for timely examination.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan talking to media persons during his visit to Property Exhibition at Expo Centre Lahore.



CHINIOT: Farmers are drying corn on the old bridge over Chenab River during intense heat in the city.

Over Rs 16 billion disbursed among 15,00,000 beneficiaries under Benazir Kafaalat scheme

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has disbursed over Rs.16 billion among over 15,00,000 beneficiaries from across the country so far under the Benazir Kafaalat quarterly payments (April-June).

"Till May 30, over Rs. 16 billion has been disbursed among over 15,00,000 beneficiaries which make 46 per cent of the total beneficiaries", said an official source.

The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (April-June) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to the beneficiaries is continued across the country in two phases to disburse Rs. 10,500 per household among over nine million registered beneficiary families.

In the first phase, the payments are being issued among the beneficiaries in all districts of Islamabad, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

The payments are also being disbursed in Peshawar, Mardan and all districts of Malakand and Hazara Division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, all districts of Karachi Division and District Hyderabad in Sindh province and Gujranwala, Sahiwal, Rawalpindi and all districts of Sargodha Division and District Vehari in Punjab.

Payments to the beneficiaries in the remaining districts are being issued in the second phase.

The beneficiaries can receive their payment through the nearest centers after receiving the message from 8171.

The beneficiaries, in case of any complaint, can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil offices or call the toll-free helpline number 080026477 of the Benazir Income Support Program.

The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (April-June) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to the beneficiaries is



MULTAN: Woman is plucking vegetables in the field.

MCCI appreciates govt's vision to introduce Industrial Policy

MULTAN (APP): Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) appreciated the process for initiation of a five to 10 years industrialization policy in order to strengthen the country's economy.

A seminar in this regard was held at Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry which was also attended by representative of Ministry of Industry and Production Usman Khan, President MCCI Rashid Iqbal and many other known industrialists.

The industrialists shared different suggestions to strengthen industry in an amicable way. Usman Khan addressing the seminar stated that the role of industry in the country's progress could not be denied. He observed that the government was

initiating industrial policy for five to 10 years and seeking suggestions from industrialists of different Chambers. He stated that economic growth in the country was 0.5 percent however the country's population was increasing by over 3 percent. This is a highly alarming thing, he added.

Senior trade leader Ghulam Bilal Javed, after consulting with his associates Baba-e-Tajir Amin Hussain Babar, Major Arshad Mahmood, Ghulam Hussain Chand Babar, Abiduddin, Haji Manzoor Elahi, Abdul Haseeb Chughtai, Dr. Anas Rashid, Basit Khan, Ammar Babar, Haji Ehsan, Bakht Mir Jan Durrani, Haji Mukhtiar and others, announced joining the Sarhad Business Alliance.

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LAHORE: Workers are making room coolers at his Work Place as per increasing demand in summer season.

Sindh Agriculture Minister for devising mechanism for interest-free-loans to students

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Agriculture Minister Muhammad Bux Mahar said that the Research Wing of the Agriculture Department would devise a mechanism to provide interest-free loans to the students of Sindh Agricultural University, Tandojam. He said that he would also talk to the Chief Minister regarding the grant so that the youth of Sindh could start their own agricultural business.

Mahar said that climate change had become a major problem, the biggest impact of which is on agriculture, which needed more budget to work on capacity building and provide more training to agriculture officers.

He directed DG Research Noor Muhammad Baloch to improve the production and quality of mangoes, dates and cotton.

The DG Research, while briefing the meeting, said that the Research Wing had introduced 13 varieties of wheat by 2023 and 14 varieties of cotton by 2020, the yield of which was 85 to 80 maunds per acre, while 11 varieties of rice, sugarcane 11 varieties and 7 varieties of vegetables had been introduced.

He stated this while presiding over a high-level meeting of the Agricultural Research Wing of the Department of Agriculture at the Sindh Secretariat, a communique said on Sunday.

The provincial minister said that the Research Wing should introduce new varieties of wheat, rice and sugarcane crops and give the varieties to the farmers of the province for free.

He further informed that the Agricultural Research Wing had trained more than 300 women.

RCCI-ICCI join hands to resolve business community issues

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Islamabad Chambers of Commerce and Industries (ICCI) of the twin cities have reiterated their firm resolve collective efforts to solve the issues of the business community.

Both the chambers also agreed to organize joint events to promote industrial and commercial activities for the benefit of the region.

which a delegation level meeting was held between the two chambers. During the meeting, problems being faced by the business community of the twin cities was discussed.

Industrial zones, expo center, alternative dispute resolution, issues related to FBR, RDA, CDA, close contact with the district administration and government officials and the business community were also discussed in detail during the meeting.

A joint working group comprising members from both sides will be established to further enhance collaboration and cooperation between the two chambers.

According to spokesman Rawalpindi Chamber, a delegation of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) led by its president Saqib Rafiq visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI) on Sunday, during

which a delegation level meeting was held between the two chambers. During the meeting, problems being faced by the business community of the twin cities was discussed.

Industrial zones, expo center, alternative dispute resolution, issues related to FBR, RDA, CDA, close contact with the district administration and government officials and the business community were also discussed in detail during the meeting.

Saqib Rafique, president RCCI on the occasion underlined the need to establish a business facilitation center (BFC) for the close coordination of business and industrial activities Establishment of expo centers and industrial zones are inevitable, both cities are expanding, to promote SMEs and reduce traffic pressure from the



FAISALABAD: Owners proudly display their pets during the competition 26th International camel and Goat contests of beautification, weigh and milk, contest is jointly arranged by the Faculty of Animal Husbandry (FAH), UAF and International Goat and Bull Association at UAF Stadium.

Real estate – Paying price of an economic gimmickry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Billions of rupees black money was thrown to the real estate basket when former Premier Imran Khan announced incentives for tax evaders, paving way for whitening their black money and resultantly creating an artificial boom in this sector.

Seeing the market dynamics hundreds of thousands common people with moderate income also stepped in having a desire to buy some property for their kids and future needs. But, they were mistaken as the bulk investors sold out their properties to individual buyers and made their way leaving them in turmoil.

If some invested their retirement dues, the others

invested their savings or the provident fund money – they were accumulating penny after penny over the decades with an innocent desire of getting their children married after earning some profit by selling their plots.

But, swayed by desire to have an abode, they fall prey to real estate tycoons least knowing about their exploitive tendencies and plans to suck their hard earned money.

Some developers and builders described the PTI era boom in real estate as a bubble that when burst, washed away the belonging of hundreds of thousands small investors leaving them in dire desperation.

"This policy of the previous government was

Pakistan's 49.6mln tonnes solid waste potential source of energy, recycling for circular economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's annually generated 49.6 million metric tonnes of solid waste is a potential source of waste-to-energy, resource recovery and recycling to promote the circular economy, simultaneously addressing waste management and livelihood creation.

This was the crux of the consultative workshop on Integrated 'Solid Waste Management in Pakistan' organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Climate Change's Living Indus Initiative.

Secretary, the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Muhammad Farooq in his opening remarks said waste management was a complex issue that demanded multisectoral and stakeholder interventions to promote workable and bankable projects that not only manage the trash but also generate a separate economy providing livelihoods and green entrepreneurship among the communities.

He said, "Pakistan is producing 5 billion plastic bags every year that end up in water bodies, channels, drains and rivers across the country. The federal government has banned the

one-time use of polythene and plastic bags". The Living Indus Initiative is the project of the government of Pakistan to restore and purge the largest river of the country from plastic pollution, contamination, degradation and habitat loss, he added.

Farooq said creating synergies under the project was a challenge for the government and it was struggling to get finances as it would require around \$6 billion to implement it. He added that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have been requested to provide some funding to start the project.

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CMACGM team visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh welcomed Deputy Regional Head/Regional CCO, CMA CGM, (Dubai) Omer Rishi on his visit to the Sialkot Chamber.

His team included GM/CEO CMA, CGM Pakistan Imran Bawani, CCO (Pakistan) Mahsin Mohammad and D.Y. Commercial Head (Pakistan), CMA CGM Pakistan Rashid Mehmood.

Furniture sector be given industry status: PFC

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq has urged the government to accord the furniture sector an independent industry status in the upcoming federal budget.

Chairing the council's meeting here Sunday, he emphasized that this status change is crucial for boosting exports and driving economic growth. He pointed out that the furniture sector holds significant potential for export earnings, yet it remains underdeveloped due to the lack of formal industry recognition and

support.

To unlock this potential, Ashfaq proposed that the government should introduce a comprehensive package of incentives for the furniture industry. These incentives could include tax breaks, subsidies for raw materials, and easier access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises. Additionally, he called for investment in skill development and technology to enhance the quality and competitiveness of locally produced furniture in international markets.

During an important meeting held at SCCI, VP SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh said that it was confidence building for the freight forwarder's community of Sialkot that the CMA CGM team had arrived at the chamber and listened to basic market problems.

Mr. Sheikh also appreciated the positive steps taken by the management of CMA CGM, Pakistan.

Deputy Regional Head/Regional CCO, CMA CGM, (Dubai) Omer Rishi thanked VP SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh and all the participants for their presence.

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LAHORE: Citizens taking bath in the canal on holiday during the rising heat in the provincial capital.

'FTO sends viable budget proposals to FBR'

LAHORE (APP): Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Asif Mahmood Jah has sent a set of 24 viable and business-friendly budget proposals on income tax, sale tax and customs to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) mainly aimed at accelerating the economic growth and development.

FTO Advisor Dr Waqar Chaudhry disclosed this, while addressing an awareness session for business community arranged under the aegis of Coordinator to FTO Meher Kashif Younis, here on Sunday. He said that

FTO's all proposals are based on the solid suggestions solicited from presidents of chambers, stakeholders and leading trade associations at an important meeting of central advisory committee.

In order to promote entrepreneurship and corporate culture, it has been proposed that the rate of corporate tax may be reduced from 29 percent to 20 percent. Although, tax credit is available to startups, but corporate tax rate is too high for a company aging three years.

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Zelensky accuses China of pressuring other countries not to attend upcoming Ukraine peace talks

Monitoring Desk
SINGAPORE: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused China on Sunday of helping Russia to disrupt an upcoming Swiss-organized peace conference on the war in Ukraine.

Speaking at Asia's premier security conference, Zelensky said that China is pressuring other countries and their leaders not to attend the upcoming talks. He did not say which ones.

"Russia, using Chinese influence in the region, using Chinese diplomats also, does everything to disrupt the peace summit," he said at a news conference at the Shangri-La defense forum. "Regrettably this is unfortunate that such a big independent powerful country as China is an instrument in the hands of (Russian leader Vladimir) Putin."

China has staked out what it says is a neutral

position on the war, putting it at odds with Ukraine, the United States and most of Europe. Its trade with Russia has grown, easing the economic impact of Western sanctions. And American, Ukrainian and other intelligence agencies say there is evidence that Chinese parts are winding up in Russian weaponry, even if China is not directly arming its neighbor.

The Swiss had been hoping China would attend the peace conference in mid-June, but Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning signaled on Friday that that was unlikely. China has been calling for a peace conference with equal participation of all sides, including Russia, which has not been invited.

"There is still a clear gap between the arrangements for the meeting and the demands of the Chinese side, as well as the general

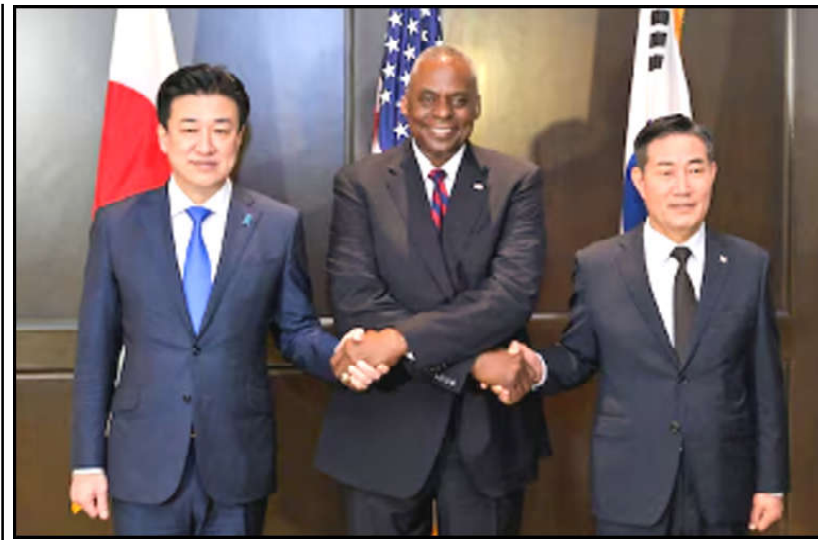
expectations of the international community," Mao said. "This makes it difficult for China to participate in the meeting."

The foreign ministry did not respond immediately to a request for comment on Zelensky's accusation.

The Ukrainian leader said of China's pressure on others, "That is not only support to Russia, that is basically support of war."

In a speech to the security conference earlier in the day, Zelensky urged top defense officials to attend the upcoming talks in Switzerland, saying he was disappointed at the failure of some countries to commit to joining.

Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun spoke before Zelensky at the Shangri-La conference but he did not appear to be in the room when Zelensky made his appeal.



Japanese Defense Minister Minoru Kihara, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and South Korean Defence Minister Shin Won-sik attend a trilateral meeting on sidelines of the Shangri-la Dialogue in Singapore.

Israel hammers Rafah with tanks and artillery

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: Israeli forces hammered Rafah in southern Gaza with tanks and artillery on Saturday, hours after US President Joe Biden said Israel was offering a new roadmap towards a full ceasefire.

Residents reported tank fire in the Tal al-Sultan neighbourhood in west Rafah, while witnesses in the east and centre of Rafah described intense shelling. "From the early hours of the night until this morning, the aerial and artillery

bombardment has not stopped for a single moment", a resident from west Rafah told AFP on condition of anonymity. "There are a number of occupation (Israeli) snipers in high-rise buildings overseeing all areas of Tal al-Sultan... making the situation very dangerous," the resident added.

Shortly after Biden's announcement, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu insisted his country would still pursue the war until it had reached all its aims.

Woman among 17 hopefuls registered to replace Raisi

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: US-sanctioned former Revolutionary Guards commander Vahid Haghani was among candidates who registered on Saturday to run for election as Iran's president after Ebrahim Raisi died in a helicopter crash, state media reported.

Haghani, a close aide to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, told reporters after registering that his qualifications were based on "experience from serving 45 years in the presidency and the leader's office". The US Treasury designated Haghani in 2019

among nine individuals in Khamenei's inner circle responsible for "advancing... domestic and foreign oppression".

Iran says most US sanctions are prompted by baseless accusations. Former parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani, a prominent conservative, was among candidates who registered on Friday, as was Abdolnaser Hemmati, a former central bank governor.

An election official told reporters on Saturday that 17 hopefuls had signed up since registration for the June 28 election opened on Thursday.

Sri Lanka monsoon floods kill 14, schools shut

Monitoring Desk
COLOMBO: Flash floods, mudslides and falling trees have killed at least 14 people in Sri Lanka as the island nation is battered by monsoon storms, the country's disaster centre said on Sunday.

Some drowned, including three members of the same family swept away near the capital Colombo on Sunday. Others were buried alive in mudslides, including an 11-year-old girl and a 20-year-old man, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC) said.

The shutdowns were in place in all but three regions of Ukraine following Saturday's drone and missile attack on energy targets that injured at least 19 people. Ukraine's state-owned power grid operator Ukrrenergoprojekt said the shutdowns affected both industrial and household consumers. Sustained Russian attacks on Ukraine's power grid in recent weeks have forced the government to institute nationwide rolling blackouts. Without adequate air defenses to counter assaults and allow for repairs, though, the

Activist arrested for attacking Monet painting in Paris

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: A climate activist was arrested on Saturday for sticking an adhesive poster on a Monet painting at the Musee d'Orsay in Paris to draw attention to global warming, a police source said. The action by the woman, a member of "Riposte Alimentaire" (Food Response) — a group of environmental activists and defenders of sustainable food production — is the latest in a string of protests aimed at drawing attention to global warming by defacing art.

US, South Korea and Japan agree to hold joint military exercises

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: The United States, Japan and South Korea agreed to hold new trilateral joint exercises this summer, a joint statement issued by US Department of Defense said on Sunday, after a meeting of the three allies' defense ministers.

US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, Japan's Defense Minister Minoru Kihara and South Korea's Defense Minister Shin Won-sik met on Sunday in Singapore on the sidelines of the annual Shangri-La Dialogue security summit there.

The three "committed to continue to

strengthen trilateral cooperation to ensure peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula, the Indo-Pacific, and beyond," according to the statement.

The three also agreed to establish a Trilateral Security Cooperation Framework this year in an effort to institutionalize their three-way defense cooperation.

The top defense officials of the three countries criticized North Korea's recent launches of ballistic missiles and a military spy satellite using ballistic missile technology as a violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

Energy shutdowns hit Ukraine after Russian attacks target infrastructure

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine imposed emergency power shutdowns in most of the country on Sunday, a day after Russia unleashed large-scale attacks on energy infrastructure and claimed it made gains in the eastern Donetsk province.

The shutdowns were in place in all but three regions of Ukraine following Saturday's drone and missile attack on energy targets that injured at least 19 people. Ukraine's state-owned power grid operator Ukrrenergoprojekt said the shutdowns affected both industrial and household consumers. Sustained Russian attacks on Ukraine's power grid in recent weeks have forced the government to institute nationwide rolling blackouts. Without adequate air defenses to counter assaults and allow for repairs, though, the

shortages could still worsen as need spikes in late summer and the bitter-cold winter. Among the most significant recent strikes were an April barrage that damaged Kyiv's largest thermal power plant and a massive attack on May 8 that targeted power generation and transmission facilities in several regions.

Following Saturday's barrage, Ukraine's air force said Sunday that air defenses had shot down all 25 drones launched overnight. Russia claimed Sunday that it had taken control of the village of Uman'sk in the partially Russian-occupied Donetsk region. Russia's coordinated new offensive has centered on Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region, but seems to include testing Ukrainian defenses in Donetsk farther south, while also launching incursions in the northern Sumy and Chernihiv regions.

Australia seeks military talks with China, ties with Philippines

Monitoring Desk
SINGAPORE: Australia has asked for military talks with China and is comfortable growing closer to the Philippines, Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said on Sunday at the Shangri-La Dialogue security summit.

China and the Philippines are locked in confrontation in the disputed South China Sea and their encounters have grown more tense as Beijing presses its claims to shoals in waters that Manila says are well within its exclusive economic zone.

Australia has stepped up its presence in the region and a joint amphibious exercise with the Philippines at Palawan island in August was Australia's biggest outside its own borders last year.

Australia has also said its recent encounters with China's military fell short of being safe and professional, and Marles said he discussed the issue with Chinese defence chief Dong Jun on the sidelines of the

conference on Saturday. "The substantive request that we had out of the meeting with China was to grow the defence dialogue," Marles told Reuters.

"We really want to get it ultimately back to where it was before it was stopped, and that would be at the level of our chiefs of defence force and our secretaries of defence meeting annually."

Chinese defence officials met their Australian counterparts in Canberra last year in their first formal meeting since 2019.

Since then, Australia has complained of a close encounter with a Chinese jet over the Yellow Sea and sonar being deployed while Australian divers were in waters close to Japan, which it said was dangerous.

"They could have led to a very significant negative result. That would be a very bad thing if that ever happened, and we've got to avoid it. That's why it's really important," Marles said.

Canada raised foreign interference concerns with China

Monitoring Desk
SINGAPORE: Canada expressed concern about Chinese military action against Taiwan since the island's January presidential election during his meeting with Jun, held on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue defence summit in Singapore. The minister said Canada would increase its presence in Asia and was engaging with India to "address issues of disagreement".

Diplomatic relations soured after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last year said Canada was "actively pursuing credible allegations" that Indian agents were potentially linked to the June 2023 murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen. Canada charged three Indian nationals for the killing last month.

"There can't be any toleration for the territorial murder of Canadian citizens on Canadian soil," Blair said. "But I think (the charges) have created the circumstances where we can begin to address issues of disagreement and some of the concerns that India has also expressed to us."



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong meet in Singapore.

Chinese defense minister accuses US of causing friction with its support for Taiwan and Philippines

Monitoring Desk
SINGAPORE: China's defense minister on Sunday acknowledged the importance of newly renewed military-to-military communications with the United States as tensions escalate in the Asia-Pacific, while at the same time accusing Washington of causing the friction with its support for Taiwan and the Philippines.

"We will not allow anyone to bring geopolitical conflicts or any war, whether hot or cold, into our region," Chinese Defense Minister Dong Jun told the Shangri-La defense forum in Singapore through a translator.

"We will not allow any country or any force to create conflict and chaos in our region," he added. China has been increasingly assertive in

pressing its claim to virtually the entire South China Sea, a key global shipping route, which has led to a growing number of conflicts, most notably with the Philippines, whose ships have been rammed by Chinese vessels and hit with water cannons.

Dong insisted that China's "strategic culture is anchored in universal love and non-aggression," before threatening the Philippines, which has grown rapidly pro-American since the election of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in 2022.

Dong accused the Philippines of deliberately provoking China, "emboldened by outside powers."

"China has recognized great restraint in the face of such infringements and provocations," he said. "But there is a limit to our restraint."

India's Modi eyes election victory, top opponent back behind bars

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: A top opponent of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed on Sunday to keep fighting "dictatorship" before he returned to jail Sunday, following elections widely expected to produce another landslide victory for the Hindu-nationalist leader.

Arvind Kejriwal is among several opposition leaders under criminal investigation, with colleagues describing his arrest the month before the general elections began in April as a "political conspiracy" orchestrated by Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The chief minister of the capital Delhi and a key leader in an alliance formed to compete against Modi, Kejriwal was detained in March over a long-running corruption probe.

Trump campaign claims raising \$53m after conviction

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's campaign said on Friday it had raised nearly \$53 million in online small-dollar donations after he was convicted in his New York hush money trial, boasting that the verdict had galvanized his support "like never before." The record haul was equivalent to more than \$2 million raised per hour, it said.

Senior campaign aides Chris LaCivita and Susie Wiles said in statements that more than a third of the total came from new donors to the campaign and hailed an "outpouring of support from patriots across our country." Calling the Thursday court decision a "sham trial verdict" the advisers reported that the "digital fundraising system was overwhelmed with support".

China probe successfully lands on far side of Moon

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's Chang'e-6 lunar probe successfully landed on Sunday on the far side of the Moon to collect samples, state media reported — the latest leap for Beijing's decades-old space programme.

The Chang'e-6 set down in the immense South Pole-Aitken Basin, one of the largest known impact craters in the solar system, state news agency Xinhua said, citing the China National Space Administration. It marks the first time that samples will be collected from the rarely explored area of the Moon, according to the agency.

The Chang'e-6 is on a

technically complex 53-day mission that began on May 3. On Sunday, it descended from its orbit about 200 kilometres (124 miles) above the Moon to scour the surface for a landing site, Huang Wu, an official at the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, told state broadcaster CCTV.

"The (descent to a lower) orbit carried a few risks, so we needed precise control procedures to put (the probe) onto its preset trajectory," Huang said.

After that, "we had to rapidly reduce the probe's relative speed to the Moon... to zero within 15 minutes, requiring a huge amount of propellant."

Delhi's 'record' 52.9° Celsius temperature was wrong by 3 degrees

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: A record temperature registered this week for the capital New Delhi of 52.9 degrees Celsius was too high by three °C, the Indian government said on Saturday, blaming a weather sensor error.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) had investigated Wednesday's reading by the weather station at Mungeshpur, a densely packed corner of Delhi, and found a 3C sensor error", Earth Sciences Minis-

ter Kiren Rijju said. "Corrective measures are now in place," the minister said, sharing the report about the all-time high reading on social media platform X.

He did not give a corrected figure for Wednesday's temperature.

The IMD said in a statement that the maximum temperature reported by the Mungeshpur weather station "is not correct due to malfunctioning of the sensor".

North Korea vows to stop trash balloons after sending hundreds over border

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea said on Sunday it would stop sending trash-filled balloons across the border into the South, saying the "disturbing" missiles had been an effective countermeasure against propaganda sent by anti-regime activists.

Since Tuesday, the North has sent nearly a thousand balloons carrying bags of rubbish containing everything from cigarette butts to bits of cardboard and plastic, Seoul's military said, warning the public to stay away.

South Korea has called the latest provocation from its nuclear-armed neighbour "irrational" and "low-class" but, unlike the spate of recent ballistic missile launches, the trash campaign does not violate UN sanctions on Kim Jong Un's isolated regime.

Seoul on Sunday warned it would take strong countermeasures unless the North called off the balloon bombardment, saying it runs counter to the armistice agreement that ended the 1950-53 Korean War hostilities.

Late Sunday, the North announced it would stop its campaign, after scattering what it claimed was "15 tons of waste paper" using thousands of "devices" to deliver them.

"We have given the South Koreans a full experience of how disgusting and labour-intensive it is to collect scattered waste paper," it said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

The North said it will now "temporarily suspend" its campaign, saying it had been a "pure countermeasure".



A general view taken with a drone shows the flood-affected area at the Paar river following heavy rainfalls in Gotteshofen near Ingolstadt, Germany.

Karachi echoed with demands to end genocide in Gaza as JI takes out million march

Each and every children of Pakistan support Palestinian resistance against Israel in Gaza but political parties maintain silence, why? asks Naem

Independent Report
KARACHI: Millions of Karachiites marched at Shahrah-e-Faisal, demanding an end to the genocide in Gaza carried out by the Zionist regime of Israel.

People, belonging to all walks of life without any discrimination of cast, creed and colour expressed solidarity with the people of Gaza, here on Sunday. The protesters, carrying placards and banners, chanted slogans against Israel and her supporters.

The million march was taken out in a backdrop when the Zionist regime of Israel has already martyred over 40,000 innocent Palestinians, including women

and children, whereas Israel has been on a killing spree against helpless people in Gaza camps despite the fact that the International Court of Justice has issued a verdict against it.

JI Pakistan Ameer Engr Hafiz Naemur Rehman delivered the keynote address at the million march.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that people and particularly the youth across the world have decided to side with Gaza and even in several Western countries, the youth have been resisting their own states.

He said that the US and west sponsored state

terrorism by Israel have exposed all of them and their dual standards.

He said that the spineless Muslim rulers have provided the courage to Israel for the genocide in Gaza. Despite heavy military might, the Muslim block had failed to deliver a single strong message to Israel, otherwise the Zionist regime would not show the courage to kill innocent children with impunity.

He praised the unity of people in Gaza and said that even children in Gaza have associated themselves with the Quran.

It's an irony that the international terrorist United States has declared

the resistance forces in Palestine as terrorist, he said, adding that the history of the US is evident the she has never been loyal to any state. He quoted Quaid e Azam as saying that Israel was an illicit child of the west. He also recalled that the All India Muslim League had not only passed a resolution for Pakistan but also for Palestine and they repeatedly did so.

He shed light in detail on the role of Pakistan in the Muslim World in the past and recalled that Islamabad's military might and position were used for Muslims in the middle east, in Bosnia and other parts of the world.



KARACHI: Supporters of the religious and political party Jamaat-e-Islami attend a demonstration against Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, to show solidarity with Palestinian people, in the Provincial Capital.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Sheikh photographed with Consul General Jamal Sango and other at annual traditional Turkish breakfast at Turkish Consulate.

Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan says: CASA-1000 to be completed by end of this year 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan, Ulanbek Totuaev, has said that CASA-1000 would be completed by the end of this year, 2024, which would also meet Pakistan's energy needs and also cause regional integration.

Ulanbek Totuaev, told APP here.

The Ambassador hoped that the CASA-1000 projects would be completed in due time and also to meet Pakistan's energy needs and enhance bilateral cooperation in the energy sector. He said, "Massive infrastructural projects will be beneficial for all of its stakeholders by fulfilling energy needs and strengthening regional connectivity."

Kyrgyz envoy said, "Nowadays, the governments of participating

states are actively working on the completion of the project."

Replying to question about the future of the Quadrilateral Traffic and Transit Agreement (ATTA) among Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, he hoped that in the near future the potential of the QTTA would be fully utilized.

The ambassador of Kyrgyzstan said, "The mutual trade potential between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan is up to \$1 billion, which both countries are moving forward in harmony to achieve."

Ministry deploys 300 buses for 24/7 travel of Pakistani pilgrims to Haram Sharif

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has launched a comprehensive 24/7 transportation plan for pilgrims, involving 300 luxury buses to transport them directly from their residences to the Haram Sharif in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. The bus service is available round-the-clock in order to provide Hajj pilgrims with the flexibility to travel at their convenience.

The all time available, bus service aims at alleviating inconvenience of the pilgrims allowing them to focus on their worship and spiritual journey.

Bus stops have been constructed at four entry points surrounding the

Celebrations to mark Pak, Denmark 75yrs of diplomatic relations begin

COPENHAGEN (APP): Thousands of Pakistanis turned up on Saturday (June 1) at Copenhagen Mela to kick-start 75 years of celebrations of Pakistan and Denmark diplomatic relations.

Lord Mayor of Copenhagen, Sophie H Andersen, Denmark's Ambassador in Pakistan Jakob Linulf, Pakistan's Ambassador in Denmark Shoaib Sarwar and Former Member of Danish Parliament Sikandar Siddique cut a cake on the occasion, a statement issued by Pakistan Embassy in Denmark on Sunday.

Pakistan and Denmark established their diplomatic relations in 1949 and there are more than 40,000 Pakistanis living in Denmark which are an important link between the two countries.

PTI founder's social media post deemed 'Digital Terrorism'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The spokesperson for legal affairs Barrister Aqeel Malik on Sunday described a contentious social media post made by PTI founder Imran Khan as "digital terrorism" under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (PICA) Act.

Speaking to a private news channel, he said that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has initiated an investigation into the matter, emphasizing that it will be dealt with according to the law. "A person of such stature, who remains a former prime minister, endorsing such content and facilitating its dissemination through various mediums, including social media, is a farce in terms of digital terrorism," he remarked.

Such statements were made to serve condemned political motives and to spread anarchy, adding, "No one will be allowed to sabotage the peace." He highlighted the evolving nature of terrorism.

To enhance pilgrims experience Salik emphasises devotion, effective communication for Hajj welfare staff

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain has urged the Hajj welfare staff (Moavineen-e-Hujjaj) to perform their responsibilities with devotion as serving the pilgrims is a sacred duty.

He said this on the occasion of orientation sessions held by the Hajj mission for supporting staff in Makkah to make them aware of assisting pilgrims during the Hajj days.

Emphasizing the need for effective communication, the minister suggested that guides fluent in various Pakistani languages should be deployed to assist pilgrims visiting the Haram Sharif for Umrah or prayers.

PML-N, PPP at odds over power-sharing formula in Punjab

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) are at odds over the power-sharing formula in Punjab, sources said on Sunday.

Despite four meetings of the provincial coordination committees of both parties, no progress has been made.

The PPP alleges that PML-N is not showing seriousness regarding the power-sharing formula in Punjab, sources added.

Sources further said

Ashrafi advocates for issuance of structured Fatwa to curb extremism, citing Saudi, Egyptian models

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council (PUC), Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has emphasized the urgent need for fostering dialogue across various societal factions.

Speaking at a recent national seminar on "Countering Violent Extremism", organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) here, he highlighted the ongoing challenges of violent extremism in Pakistan and said that this call for dialogue would reduce misunderstandings and create an environment of mutual respect among different groups, promoting a

more harmonious and resilient community.

Ashrafi further highlighted the importance of implementing Paigham-e-Pakistan, a comprehensive doctrine designed to bridge gaps between different schools of thought and unify religious scholars and leaders in a joint effort to combat extremism across the nation.

"This collaborative strategy is seen as vital for ensuring long-term peace and stability not only in the country but also in the region," he added.

Addressing the misuse of religious decrees, Ashrafi called for the establishment of a mechanism for issuing

Shutter down strike observed in Dukki

DUKKI (INP): A complete shutter down strike observed at Dukki in Balochistan for the second consecutive day on Sunday to protest the murder of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader Maulana Abdul Jabbar badly disrupted routine life.

All political parties and Anjuman-e-Tajirah had given a call for the strike.

The JUI-F leader had been gunned down while resisting a robbery bid at his home yesterday.

The dacoits had also snatched a motorcycle and cash from the deceased.

Addressing a ceremony at Aiwan-e-Iqbal here on Sunday, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan expressed his vision to propel Pakistan's IT industry to a \$25 billion market.

He highlighted the current IT industry's value at \$2.5 billion and, following Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's vision, aims to increase it tenfold.

The address also touched upon the importance of providing ample opportunities for the youth in the IT sector and recognizing sports as an industry to foster growth and development.

Mashhood stresses govt's commitment to empower youths

LAHORE (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, has emphasized initiatives for youth empowerment, highlighting the significance of upcoming budget allocations in fostering public hopes.

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He underscored the need for providing ample opportunities for youth advancement in the IT sector. He hailed Arif Karim as a beacon of progress in the IT field, projecting his vision to guide Pakistan's youth towards IT sector prosperity. He shared his experience in Bangladesh, where institutions and tournaments are named after Arif Karim, showcasing her lasting impact.

Rana Mashhood also discussed the challenges posed by IMF conditions but reassured that the government's focus remains on securing a better future for the youth. He mentioned the establishment of 250 e-employment centers across the country under the Prime Minister's Youth Program and the completion of IT complexes in Islamabad, with plans underway in Karachi.

He said that there are 34 universities in the province, in which more than 25 universities do not have vice chancellors.

He said that the problems of the province can be removed with the cooperation of the federation.

The Governor said that the Peoples Party has worked in the health and education sectors in Sindh is a revolution and they will try to implement Sindh-style development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that the credit of the 18th and 19th amendments goes to the Peoples Party, which gave powers to the provinces.

The founder of PTI back is an unqualified person who has given his social media account to a person who is also unqualified.



MULTAN: Senior politician Javed Hashmi meeting with Chief of JUI Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

PCCI's Asif Tareen appreciates performance of DG Industries despite limited resources

Independent Report
QUETTA: The spokesman of Pishin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and Executive Member of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Muhammad Asif Tareen has appreciated the performance of Director General Industries Anis Tariq Gorgej.

He announced to fully support the DG Industries on the basis of merit.

In his statement issued after meeting with sugar dealers, the spokesman of PCCI said that performance of any institution especially it's success and failure depends on performance and strategy of one's leader.

He also said that the credit of improving the Industries department and activating it goes to the DG being it's leader.

He expressed the hope that the DG Industries would play his active role for resolving the issues being faced by the traders community and increasing the resources and improving economic circumstances by utilizing his capabilities.

He said that DG Industries has activated the department with better strategy and performance.

Govt releases Rs 33.16b for various power sector schemes so far

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has disbursed an amount of over Rs 33.16 billion for various power sector NTDC/PEPCO schemes under the annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) so far in the current fiscal year 2023-24.

According to the official data issued by the Planning Commission, the government had specified a sum of Rs 55.27 billion for various NTDC/PEPCO projects in PSDP 2023-24. Out of the total release amount, the local component stood at Rs 29.639 billion while the foreign aid component was Rs 25.638 billion. A sum of Rs 38.800 billion had been spent on various water-related projects so far.

Under ongoing schemes, an amount of Rs 12,000 million has been allocated for Installation of

2x600 MW coal-fired power project GENCO-1 Jamshoro, Rs 2,536.471 million for interconnection of isolated Makran Network, Rs 1600 million each for 220kV Hairpur Substation, 220kV Swabi Substation, Rs 1200 million for 500kV Allama Iqbal Industrial City for 600 MW Demand of the Special Economic Zone, Rs 1,059 million for replacement of LT Bare conductor with ABC Cable in Peshawar Khyber Circle and Bannu Circle, Rs 1,439 million for 220/132 Kv GIS substation Dhabi, Rs 964 million for electrification works at different valleys of District Chitral and Rs 900 million for 220 kV Quaid-e-Azam Appare and Business Park in the PSDP for FY 2023-24.

Similarly, a sum of Rs 13,800 million has been specified for evacuation of power from Suki Kinari,

Fly Jinnah flight makes emergency landing

KARACHI (INP): A flight of Fly Jinnah Airlines on Sunday made an emergency landing at Karachi airport after developing a technical fault.

According to media reports, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Islamabad-bound flight 670, carrying Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori and 149 other passengers,

made an emergency landing at the Karachi airport, soon after taking off.

The flight was cancelled after the emergency landing, while the sources revealed that the same flight made emergency landings several times due to technical faults. The pilot wisely diverted the plane back to Karachi airport after spotting a technical fault in the flight near Nawabshah. The sources privy to the development said the flight passengers are safe and sound.

Governor KP stresses role of all parties in development of country

LAHORE (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday said that all the political parties should play their role in the stability of the country's economy by showing consensus and unity for the sake of development of the country.

He said this during his visit to the residence of Pakistan Peoples Party senior leader Haji Azizur Rehman Chan Lahore.

Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan was also present on the occasion. They met with the political and social leaders and also discussed the overall situation of the country.

Addressing the press conference at the residence of Azizur Rehman Chan, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that the country is currently going through a difficult situation and we urged all political