



PM Shehbaz to leave for Saudi Arabia tomorrow

Simultaneously Publishing from Islamabad, Sargodha and Karachi

On Al-Quds Day, CM Maryam calls for end to Palestinians' suffering



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has released a message on International Al-Quds Day. In her message, she paid homage to perseverance and determination of the Palestinians facing the persecution by Israel while adding the actions of Zionist Israeli regime are condemnable. She said Israel would not be able to break the will of the Palestinians by oppression as the Qibla Awwal is the holy place for the Muslims worldwide. She said that the international community should immediately bring an end to the ongoing cruelty and brutality by Israel it should play a practical role in implementing the resolutions and agreements of the Security Council. She said, "Peace in the world will remain a dream until the issue of Palestine and Kashmir is not resolved."

PM Shehbaz to personally oversee security of Chinese nationals

Premier directs all security agencies to take all measures to ensure fool-proof security of Chinese citizens



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif decided on Friday that he will review himself the meetings conducted regarding the security situation in the country in general and the security of the Chinese nationals working on different projects across the country in particular every month. Just days after an attack on Chinese engineers in Besham area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the prime minister has directed all the security agencies to take all the measures to ensure fool-proof security of the Chinese citizens present in Pakistan. The premier's direction came during a high-level meeting regarding the law and order situation in the country. The meeting has taken place after six people, including five Chinese engineers, were killed in a suicide attack in Besham, a remote area of K-P province, on

March 26. An explosive-laden vehicle parked on the roadside blew up when the convoy, transporting Chinese engineers to the Dasu hydroelectric project site from Islamabad, passed by. This was the second attack on Chinese workers at the Dasu project. In July 2021, a similar terrorist attack killed 13 people, including nine engineers. In the meeting, PM Shehbaz directed to make a comprehensive plan of action for regular audit of security SOPs. "We will continue the war against the monster of terrorism until it is eradicated from the country," PM Shehbaz said. In addition, the premier directed the ministry of interior to increase cooperation with the provinces for the eradication of terrorism from the country and for bringing further improvement in the provincial anti-terrorism departments.

CJCSC Gen Mirza calls on President Asif Zardari



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Sahr Shamsahd Mirza called upon President Asif Ali Zardari and congratulated the president on assuming office, said a statement on Friday. During the meeting, the two also discussed professional and security issues. Gen Shamsahd provided a briefing to the president on the prevailing security landscape of the country, along with outlining the operational readiness of the armed forces.

"The armed forces are fully equipped and prepared to effectively address both internal and external security challenges," affirmed the CJCSC. In response, the president commended the pivotal role played by the armed forces in safeguarding national borders and contributing to the socio-economic progress of the country. "We are very confident that our security forces will successfully handle both internal and external security challenges," said the president. The meeting also emphasised a unified commitment to eradicate terrorism through coordinated efforts and national collaboration, as per the statement. Earlier this month, on March 7, Gen Shamsahd met newly-elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the CJCSC congratulated the premier on assuming office and expressed good wishes. On February 6, the CJCSC also undertook an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in connection with the 2nd World Defence Show. General Mirza met with His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.

LHC's Justice Najafi becomes latest target of 'toxic letter'

Soon Times Correspondent Lahore

High Court's (LHC) Justice Ali Baqar Najafi became the latest target on Friday of the suspicious 'toxic letters' received by superior members of the judiciary over the last few days. The total number of LHC judges receiving the letter has now reached six. The letter received by Justice Najafi has been handed over to the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD). Two days ago, eight judges, including Chief Justice Anwar Faarooq of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) received letters containing an unknown powder, suspected to be laced with anthrax. The incident, coming just a day after the Supreme Court of Pakistan initiated suo motu proceedings over allegations of the IHC's chief justice and other judges against spy agencies, has heightened fears of intimidation and raised serious concerns about the safety and security of the judiciary. Last week, six judges from the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) regarding alleged interference by intelligence agencies in the court's affairs, shining a spotlight on the delicate balance between judicial independence and external influence. According to judicial sources, staff members of two judges discovered powder upon opening the letters, resulting in burning sensations in their eyes. Immediate action was taken, with affected individuals using sanitiser and washing their hands as a precautionary measure.



By-election campaigns to conclude at midnight on April 19: ECP



ISLAMABAD ISLAMABAD (APP) - The ongoing election campaign for by-elections in 21 national and provincial assemblies of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan will conclude late Friday night (April 19-20), giving voters the opportunity to carefully consider their options before casting their votes for preferred candidates in their respective constituencies. In accordance with election regulations, campaigning will come to an end precisely at midnight falling between the April 19th and 20th. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) advises that candidates who continue engaging in political activities after this deadline will face legal consequences. Additionally, the ECP calls upon the media and the public to work together to uphold a free, fair, and transparent election process.

UK desires to promote ties with Pakistan in various fields

Mohsin Naqvi says Pakistan rendered immense sacrifices in war on terrorism

Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE

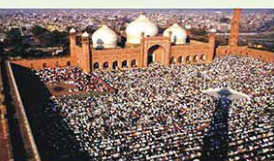
PMI-N supremo Nawaz Sharif on Monday said he had spent more time in exile than as the country's prime minister - a reference to the fact that his governments were dismissed three prematurely and he was sent abroad twice. Again calling for fixing the responsibility and holding them accountable for his removal from office in 2017, Nawaz said the only purpose to get him sentenced through fake cases and a manipulated process

was to install a "selected government" [of PTT's former chairman]. He was addressing a meeting of the PMI-N parliamentary board which interviewed the candidates aspiring for tickets to contest the Feb 8 elections from Sindh for national and provincial assemblies through his party's platform. Those acting against the Constitution must face punishment, Nawaz said about his rivals who not only toppled his governments but also acted in violation of their

respective oath in different capacities. "We have never violated the Constitution and law. We have always followed protected the constitution," he remarked, adding that those believing in the Constitution and law were eliminated to fulfil the nefarious Nawaz said he was an elected prime minister but ousted in 1999 after being declared as a hijacker and for not receiving salary from his son on the basis of Black Law Dictionary which had no room or justification under Pakistan's law.



Juma-tul-Wida being observed with religious zeal



Soon Times Correspondent LAHORE Juma-tul-Wida, the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan, is being observed today across the country with religious reverence. Juma-tul-Wida is celebrated by Muslims across the globe on the last Friday of the holy month of Ramadan. Many Muslim countries including Pakistan are observing it on April 5. The day holds great significance and marks an important event for the followers of Islam. The believers of Islam gather in mosques to offer prayers in large numbers, recite the Holy Quran, do charity and seek blessings and forgiveness from Allah Almighty. Mosques will be echoing with Ramadan's farewell Kalam 'Alvida Alwida hai, Mahe Ramadan tu Hum se Wida Hai'. Faithful recite this Kalam with one voice and tearful eyes as the holy month of Ramadan approaches an end. Millions of people will offer Friday prayers at mosques across the country.

Pakistan Post issues SOPs in wake of judges receiving suspicious letters



Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD

The office of the director general (DG) of Pakistan Post issued a notification on Friday conveying specific instructions regarding mail addressed to judges, diplomats, and other high-profile individuals, days after over a dozen senior judges of the apex and high courts received powder-laced letters. Urging immediate action, the DG asked for the mail to be carefully examined and delivered to the R&I section of the relevant office. Furthermore, the director

general also emphasized the safety of the postal staff handling the mail. "Ensuring the safety and security of the postal operational staff is our prime responsibility," stated the DG in his letter. Postmaster generals were directed to provide masks and gloves to staff members to mitigate potential risks associated with handling hazardous materials. The notice explicitly instructed all postal staff to exercise extreme caution when handling letters and packages brought into the post office. "Any unattended and suspected material should be immediately reported to the supervisor on duty, local administration, and the head of the unit and circle concerned,"

'Pakistan not holding talks with TTP,' reiterates FO

FO says Pakistan has no plans to hold talks with TTP in future. Says Islamabad expects Kabul to take action against terror groups. Recent terror attack on Dasu Dam killed five Chinese engineers.

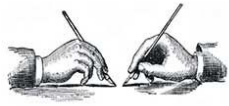
Soon Times Correspondent ISLAMABAD

Pakistan once again said that it was not holding talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), stressing that it neither had any plans to negotiate with the terrorist organisation in future. "I will reiterate what we have said in the past. Pakistan is not holding any talks with the terrorist organisation, the TTP. We have no plans to hold these talks with TTP," said Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch. When asked to respond to the Afghan deputy interior minister's advice that Pakistan and TTP should resolve their issues through dialogue, the spokesperson said that

Islamabad "expects the Afghan authorities to take action against these terror groups and their leadership for the crimes they are committing and terrorist attacks for which they are responsible in Pakistan". The statement comes after a terror attack in Shungla claimed the lives of at least six people including five Chinese engineers, working on the Dasu Dam, last week. Sources had told Geo News that the TTP-affiliated outfits are believed to be involved in the March 26 deadly attack. Baloch further said that several



measures were being considered and being debated regarding the terror attack, adding that Pakistan was in the process of completing various aspects of the investigation into the terrorist attack in Besham. The FO spokesperson highlighted that Pakistan would raise the concern with the Afghan authorities if it finds a clear connection.



ANF recovered drugs worth millions dollars

Anti-Narcotics Force Pakistan recovered 644,334 kg of drugs worth 15,936 million dollars including 190 liters of hydrochloric acid and 600 kg of prohibited powder during 54 operations during the period of 18 September to 24 September 2023. In these operations, 53 suspects, including a woman were arrested. While 23 vehicles used in drug trafficking were also seized. The recovered drugs include 90.8 kg of opium, 45,323 kg of heroin, 497,723 kg of hashish, 10,145 kg of methamphetamine (ice), 26

grams of weed and 317 grams of ecstasy pills (370 pills). ANF Punjab recovered 223,175 kg of drugs during 15 operations and arrested 23 suspects including a woman and seized 8 vehicles. The recovered drugs include 58,400 kg of opium, 9,650 kg of heroin, 154,140 kg of hashish and 985 grams of methamphetamine (ice). ANF Rawalpindi recovered 179,402 kg of drugs during 14 operations and arrested 19 suspects and seized 6 vehicles. The recovered drugs include 26,400 kg of heroin, 30,070 kg of heroin, 116.19 kg of hashish,

6.66 kg of amphetamine (ice), 20 grams of weed and 62 grams of ecstasy pills (100 pills). ANF Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recovered 112,793 kg of drugs during 13 operations and arrested 6 suspects and seized 5 vehicles. The recovered drugs include 6 kg of opium, 603 g of heroin, 105,577 kg of hashish, 500 g of methamphetamine (ice) and 113 g of ecstasy pills (20 pills). ANF Sindh recovered 106,964 kg of narcotics during 8 operations and arrested one suspect and also seized a vehicle. The recovered drugs include

106,816 kg of hashish, 6 grams of weed and 142 grams of ecstasy pills (250 pills). ANF Balochistan recovered 22 kg of drugs, 190 liters of hydrochloric acid and 600 kg of prohibited powder in 4 operations and arrested 4 suspects while also impounding 3 vehicles. The recovered drugs include 5 kg of heroin, 15 kg of hashish and 2 kg of methamphetamine (ice). All the cases have been registered under the Anti-Narcotics Act in the respective police stations and investigation has been started.

Corruption's Grip on Pakistan's Institutions

Sidra Bano

Corruption means doing something wrong or dishonest. It is when a person or a group does something bad that harms the rights and privileges of others. Bribery or embezzlement is common examples of corruption, but it can happen in many ways. Usually, people in positions of power are more likely to be corrupt. Corruption shows selfish and greedy behavior.

In Pakistan, corruption is a big problem and happens in every sector like the government, judiciary, police, health services, education and military. Corruption messes up economic decision-making, discourages investment, hurts competitiveness and weakens a country's economic growth. Despite calls for reform and attempts to fix things, there's not much progress. The government led by Imran Khan promised to eliminate corruption but hasn't been very successful. Corruption is a significant issue in India and among Muslims, especially the educated and intelligent ones. Unfortunately, this group is often selfish and morally and intellectually corrupt. While corruption is common, it's especially bad among this particular class of Muslims. In Pakistan, corruption remains a big problem and is seen as widespread and systemic. Small-scale corruption, like bribery, happens in law enforcement, procurement, and public services. The judiciary is not considered independent and is thought to protect corrupt political practices. Efforts have been made to address these issues, including a National Anti-Corruption Strategy, but political unwillingness and perceived corruption in the judiciary make progress difficult. In 2002, Transparency International (TI)

Pakistan reported that the judiciary was involved in the highest amount of bribery. In 2010, TI Pakistan found that a

majority of people reported experiencing corruption when dealing with the judiciary. Court employees, public prosecutors, witnesses, judges, opponent lawyers and magistrates were all mentioned as being involved in corruption. In 2011, TI Pakistan identified the judiciary and police as the most corrupt institutions in Pakistan. However, the Supreme Court played a positive role in some high-impact corruption cases against government officials. Despite this, there were still allegations of nepotism and corruption in the lower judiciary in 2013. In 2010, TI Pakistan reported that about 23.7% of surveyed people got into educational institutions through non-normal and alternate procedures.

In businesses like these, rich and influential people, including politicians, technocrats, bureaucrats, and businessmen, often take advantage to make profits. This behavior is also a reason for the declining quality of education in public schools. State-owned schools face challenges such as poor management, ineffective governance, and the incompetence of successive governments in the education sector. Other factors contributing to the decline include insufficient funding, elite classes not using their resources for public benefit, and the appointment of under qualified teachers. During Pervez Musharraf's regime, Pakistan received significant investments in higher education, but this support dwindled with Zardari's government after 2008. In 2011, Dr. Syed Abdul Aziz declared education as one of the most r Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer for his invaluable assistance in helping me to write an article. His expertise, guidance and unwavering support throughout the entire process have been instrumental in shaping the article into its final form. His deep knowledge and insightful feedback not only enriched the

content but also improved my overall understanding of the subject matter.

corrupt sectors in Pakistan. Transparency International's 2013 findings identified corruption in education, including embezzlement of government funds, existence of ghost schools only on paper, bribes for confidential material, and poor utilization of funds. Corruption is widespread in the police force, identified as the most corrupt sector in a 2013 survey by Transparency International. The main causes are lack of accountability, low salaries, and bribery to escape charges. Ordinary citizens face challenges reporting police corruption. In 2005, a woman who exposed police corruption was falsely detained and raped. In 2002, 96% of surveyed individuals reported corruption issues with electrical utility officials, mainly related to billing. Some consumers admitted to illegally reducing their utility bills, while others faced inflated bills meant to solicit bribes. The power sector in Pakistan faces challenges like electricity theft, transmission losses, circular debt, and rising electricity costs. A 2002 study revealed that 99% of respondents faced corruption in taxation. About 32% reported paying bribes to lower their tax assessment and nearly 14% received fictitious tax assessments until they paid a bribe. In the last I thank full to Sir Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer for his invaluable assistance in helping me to write an article. His expertise, guidance and unwavering support throughout the entire process have been instrumental in shaping the article into its final form. His deep knowledge and insightful feedback not only enriched the content but also improved my overall understanding of the subject matter.

World Water Week and Water threats in Pakistan



Kazim Laghari

Water is universally known as life. But negligence and ignorant attitude towards this blessing gift of God have been making it acute shortage and contamination. UN held a conference in Stockholm, Sweden, under the theme of World Water Week the previous week. The motto was Seeds of Change: Innovative Solutions for a water-wise world. In March this year, The United Nations general secretary Antonio Guterres also warned at the opening of the global body's first major meeting on water resources that the future of humanity's "lifeline", water, is under threat worldwide. He further said, "We have broken the water cycle, destroyed ecosystems, and contaminated ground waters", at the three-day summit in New York, in which some 6,500 participants were gathered including a dozen heads of state and government.

Given such a grave threat of water depletion by the UN general secretary, the water's unusual use has not been ended. In some areas of the world, though the UN has underlined the world's full of emptiness, people are using intentionally water extraordinarily. For instance, more water has been reportedly wasted lavishly in washing vehicles, and houses without need, industries are also wasting water without recycling, etc. Such a negligent attitude must be stopped to save water for the sake of life.

Coming to Pakistan, the water's resources are in considerable amounts, yet some areas are affected by saltness. Fortunately, the land of the country is blessed with enough water. But the worrying thing is that the water has become contaminated by the lack of attention of the people, and the waste of human beings and animals has been drained into the rivers and sea without recycling. And lack of proper knowledge of using biodiverse and artificial substances for the field to make enough yields has also caused depletion and contamination of the groundwater treasury.

Sadly, where the people have become addicted to bypassing their moral duties and playing dangerously with natural resources, both the federal and provincial government's role is also not appreciable. Despite strict laws and rules given on water management and distribution and

other natural resources, the implementation remains unseen. And the governments their concerned official departments are also seen as lenient to some extent on such grave unlawfulness.

A few years ago, the companies were given contracts in the Sindh province to explore the gas and petrol reservoirs across the province. undoubtedly, it was a timely and better effort by the then governments to boost the country's frail economy and save the country from the heavy burden of importing for the energy sector, but the companies were not properly dictated or they evasively avoided the meeting some basic principles of careful exploring and saving the unearthed sweet water's treasury in the province. They spread the wires network around the place where they got clues about reservoirs, and they blasted bombs for the dig, eventually, after some months nearby areas and villages, which have the only source of potable water unearthed water pumped by handpumps and electrical motors, water coming from handpumps and electrical motors became completely polluted and toxic. Many diseases erupted such as kidney, respiratory, and liver failures.

Sadly, the villages near Taluka Hala, District Mattari, are suffering a lot of problems due to drinking toxic water and are compelled to drink that water because of not available any other source of potable water. Many times they have protested and asked the government's concerned departments but their hue and cry went unaddressed. It is extremely saddening to know that children are suffering bone and kidney diseases from that water as doctors suggested.

Notwithstanding, the digitally rich global world and technologically super, such latest modalities have remained inaccessible for Pakistan specifically for its official departments. Not taking in developed countries but also in developing countries technology has prevailed in most of the official departments, and its expedient usage has made things easier. Many countries are taking advantage of using new technology by recycling the water and making it re-potable. The magical invention of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has caused widespread debates across the world, keeping its disadvantages aside, AI can be a helpful tool for preserving and recycling water in considerable amounts. If it is used in this manner to benefit human beings in various fields such as water preservation, health, agriculture, etc., it will be praised and applied accordingly in a fruitful way.

be praised and applied accordingly in a fruitful way. Regrettably, reporting on such a

high scale of contaminated water being distributed to the masses via water lines, the governments have not even bothered to ask the concerned departments for such ineptitude and incapability. By drinking contaminated and toxic water many diasporas in the country have faced surges in fatal diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, dysentery, hepatitis A, etc. These lethal diseases have been affecting every age of people for a long time, even newly borne babies are not safe from these monsters. Sadly in remote areas of Sindh and Baluchistan province, people have to go far to get water for drinking, in the Thar desert of Sindh masses have to go for several kilometers only to fetch potable water because where they are living there the water is not available, rarely, if rain showers then they have muddy wells for storing rainwater, otherwise they have to follow the same cycle of a long journey for getting water. However, in the recent past, the report allegedly declared that the big cities some population of the country has been drinking contaminated water with a mix-up of feces. What else big fraud be with our innocent masses than this?

Despite a grave warning by the UN general secretary, if the governments especially developing countries do not pay due heed, it will cause a huge crisis in the shape of ill masses and sick nation's coming youth with a lack of immune power and considerable abilities. The already climate-hit and inflation-hit country cannot afford to harvest such an ineligible generation. As water is an integral part of life, life cannot be survived without water and also life cannot be survived productively by drinking contaminated water with multiple harmful germs. This serious monster of water depletion and water contamination must be addressed timely. After all, this research and cautioned warning by the UN general secretary must be taken seriously but governments ought to take stable and strict actions against the water management authorities.

and the theme of World Water Week must be taken on the board. With ensured implementations. The governments must take every stakeholder on the board and carve out a strictly viable strategy that can ensure addressing the water-related problems and provide clean and germ-free potable water to the nation specifically to the remote and affected areas. Moreover, the technology can be helpful to use in the mechanism, as it can be fruitful to save water by recycling the used water. Subsequently, it also can save to flow of waste and sewerage to rivers and seas directly and contaminate the ecosystem of water species.



Pakistan Navy, ANF seize 150kg drugs during joint operation

Soon Times Correspondent
RAWALPINDI
The Pakistan Navy and Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its joint anti-narcotics operation in Shankani Darr coastal area near Gwadar seized 150 kg of ice (drugs).

Pakistan Navy is committed to preventing all illegal activities along the country's maritime boundaries including the coastline, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

It is the third consecutive successful operation against drugs by Pakistan Navy in the last thirty days.



Embassy Of Pakistan Hosts National Day Reception In Ankara

Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD

The Embassy of Pakistan in Ankara hosted a grand reception commemorating the 84th National Day of Pakistan. Turkish Minister for National Defence H.E. Yasar Guler and Turkish Minister for Trade H.E. Prof. Dr. Omer Bolat graced the occasion as chief guests. In his address, Turkish Minister for National Defence H.E. Yasar Guler lauded the exemplary and historic bilateral relations, particularly highlighting the flourishing defense ties and excellent cooperation between the armed forces of both nations. He emphasized that the strategic and comprehensive bilateral relations between Pakistan

and Turkey play a vital role in promoting peace and stability, both regionally and globally. Acknowledging the historical significance of the bilateral relations, Turkish Minister for Trade H.E. Prof. Dr. Omer Bolat underscored the importance of transforming the fraternal ties between Pakistan and Turkey into economically beneficial multifaceted cooperation. He expressed optimism that this friendship would continue to strengthen in the years ahead, based on shared values and mutual interests. Ambassador Dr. Yousaf Junaid, in his remarks, elucidated the historical importance of Pakistan Day, highlighting the pivotal role of the

Pakistan Resolution adopted on 23rd March 1940, for the creation of a separate homeland for Muslims based on Two Nation Theory. He paid tribute to the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and also reaffirmed Pakistan's current leadership's commitment to transforming Pakistan into a bastion of peace, progress, and human dignity. Underlining the deep-rooted Pakistan-Turkiye brotherhood, Ambassador Junaid reiterated that the relationship between the two nations epitomizes sentiments such as a "heart-to-heart connection" and "two countries, one nation." He also expressed gratitude to President Erdogan for his stewardship of the bilateral relationship.

Govt to establish Danish schools in Islamabad, other areas of country: PM

Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said the government will establish new Danish schools in remote areas of Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and other areas of the country including Islamabad where the children will get state-of-the-art free education, boarding, and food facilities. He was talking to the participants of the iftar dinner hosted by him in honour of orphaned children and children with special abilities at the Prime Minister's House on Thursday.

Besides he also announced to establish state-of-the-art hospitals in Islamabad, AJK, GB. The prime minister on the occasion took a keen interest in the children, interacted with them and inquired about their well-being. "I am happy to meet the cute children who came from various institutions including SOS and Hassan Academy," he said adding today



the children were the chief guests while he was their host.

During his interaction with the children, the prime minister said he found them very intelligent and will join different professions in the future and will play a key role in the country's development and prosperity.

He said no doubt, the parents were the biggest blessings, but the Holy Prophet Muhammad PBUH was also born with no father and his mother passed away when he was only six



Mr. Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with office-bearers of Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA) in Karachi on April 5, 2024.

IHC orders removal of PTI lawyer Babar Awan's name from no-fly list

Soon Times Correspondent
ISLAMABAD

In yet another relief for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the Islamabad High Court on Friday directed the interior ministry to remove the name of the former ruling party's lawyer Babar Awan's name from the Exit Control List (ECL). Earlier this week, the IHC had suspended sentence of PTI founder Imran Khan and his spouse, Bushra Bibi, in the Toshakhana case. The government had placed Awan's name on the ECL, over his alleged involvement in the £190 million settlement case. He was the member of the Al-Qadri Trust. During the course of the proceedings, Islamabad High Court Bar President Riasat Ali Azad, Awan's counsel, apprised the court that his client's name was added to the no-fly list due to an inquiry related to the

"When the reference was filed, the

petitioner's name was not mentioned in the list of the accused," he argued.

The lawyer pleaded with the court to remove his client's name from the exit control list as he was named in the reference.

After hearing arguments from both the sides, Justice Suman Rafat Imtiaz ordered the authority concerned to remove Awan's name from the ECL.

In another case, Chief Justice Aamer Farooq-led IHC bench ordered the director general of the interior ministry's immigration and passport department to renew the passport of PTI-backed MNA Makhdoom Zain Hussain Qureshi — son of PTI Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Hearing his plea seeking removal of his name from the no-fly list and renewal of his passport, the IHC sought reply from the ministry until April 29.

Arrest warrants issued for secretary interior Irked by "floating" the court's orders, IHC

warrants for secretary interior ministry for not removing the name of Sami Ibrahim from the no-fly list.

Hearing Ibrahim's petition, the IHC judge expressed his displeasure after the journalist's name was not taken off from the ECL despite court's order and sought a report in this regard from the interior secretary within one hour.

The judge warned that if he fails to submit a satisfactory answer, a contempt of court proceedings would be initiated against him. The public prosecutor apprised the court that the DG passport was on his way to the court.

Meanwhile, the court issued bailable arrest warrants for the secretary interior ministry and ordered the concerned SHO to produce the officer at 2:30pm. In the meantime, the DG reached the court and apprised the judge that the court's order had been implemented.

Woman consumes poison along with five kids

Soon Times Correspondent
TOBA TEK SINGH

A woman along with her five children consumed poison, killing four kids in Toba Tek Singh on Friday.

According to police sources, the couple exchanged words over a domestic issue. The angry woman fed poison to her five children and then swallowed herself.

Police said the victim woman and children were shifted to hospital after the incident

where four children breathed their last while

and a child were getting treatment. The deceased children were identified as 18-year-old Mudecha, 17-year old Santia, 10 year old Iqra and 7 year old AH Hassan.

The police detained the husband of the woman for poisoning his children and the wife.

The husband said he had a brief quarrel with his wife over a domestic issue and had no idea as what have they had eaten in his absence.



Mr. Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with office-bearers of APNS in Karachi on April 5, 2024.

India's foreign exchange reserves rise for sixth week to record high

MUMBAI

India's foreign exchange reserves (INFXR-ECL), opens new tab rose for a sixth straight week to hit a lifetime high of \$645.58 billion as of Mar. 29, data from the central bank showed on Friday. The reserves rose by \$2.95 billion in the reporting week, after having risen by a total of \$26.5 billion in the previous five weeks.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) intervenes in the foreign exchange market to curb excess volatility in the rupee.

Changes in foreign currency assets are caused by the RBI's intervention as well as the appreciation or depreciation of foreign assets held in the reserves.

Foreign exchange reserves also include India's reserve tranche position in the International Monetary Fund.

Despite India's strong growth and inflows into equity and debt markets, the central bank has

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

been absorbing in flows to build reserves.

"It is our prime focus to build a strong umbrella, a strong buffer in the form of a substantial quantum of forex reserves which will help us when the cycle turns or when it rains heavily," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Friday. In the week that the foreign exchange data pertains, the rupee had hit a record low of 83.45 against the dollar, but clocked minor weekly gains.



Islamabad, April 05, 2024: Federal Secretary IPC chaired a meeting for Launching of the E-licencing portal for provision of Online services to users of travel and Hospitality trade in ICT and GB



Amir Mir appointed PCB media consultant as Alia Rashid resigns



LAHORE
Former caretaker minister Amir Mir was appointed on Friday as media consultant of the Pakistan Cricket Board after Alia Rashid quit the post. It is learnt that Director Media and Communication Alia Rashid tendered her resignation earlier in the day. It may be recalled that senior journalist Alia was appointed director in October last. She was the first woman who was appointed to post. According to sources close to Alia, she resigned due to "political interference" in the media department. Amir is a journalist himself and served as information minister in the caretaker set up in the Punjab.

Hungary to help with \$156 mln energy projects in Bosnia's Serb region



SARAJEVO
The Hungarian government agreed on Friday to help finance 140 million euros (\$152 million) of infrastructure and energy projects in Bosnia's autonomous Serb Republic, the region's government said in a statement. The projects agreed by Serb Republic Prime Minister Radovan Viskovic and Hungary's Economy Minister Marton Nagy include a waste management programme and building wind and solar parks, the statement said. Two of the projects were launched by the German government but it shut them down last year, along with two other energy projects, citing as the reason the secessionist aims of the region's nationalist president Milorad Dodik. Hungarian companies Uteq, MVM and Alto will take part in implementing the projects, according to the statement.

Japan's Kishida, ahead of US trip, seeks stronger military ties with Washington and other partners



TOKYO
Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Friday he wants to strengthen military and weapons development cooperation with the United States as well as with other countries such as the Philippines, as he prepares for a visit to the U.S. next week to meet with President Joe Biden. "Defense industry cooperation between Japan and the United States, as well as with like-minded countries, are extremely important," Kishida said in an interview Friday with selected foreign media, including The Associated Press, at the Prime Minister's Office. "Within the Japan-U.S. alliance, I do hope to steadily improve deterrence and response capability," he said. Kishida said Japan hopes to promote security cooperation in areas including defense equipment and technology. "By building multi-layered networks of cooperation, we can further expand and strengthen our deterrence capability," he said. During his April 8-14 trip to the U.S., Kishida will hold talks with Biden at the White House on Wednesday, followed by a trilateral summit with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. the next day. Kishida is the first Japanese leader to visit Washington as a state guest since then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2015, who revised the interpretation



Israel sacks two officers after finding grave errors in strike on aid workers

An armed man had been seen on the roof of one of the trucks and, as the three light vehicles left the hangar

JERUSALEM
An Israeli inquiry into the killing of seven aid workers in an air strike in Gaza this week found serious errors and breaches of procedure by the military, with the result that two officers have been dismissed and senior commanders formally reprimanded. The inquiry found Israeli forces mistakenly believed they were attacking Hamas gunmen when drone strikes hit the three vehicles of the World Central Kitchen aid group late on Monday night, and that standard procedures had been violated. "The strike on the aid vehicles is a grave mistake stemming from a serious failure due to a mistaken identification, errors in decision-making, and an attack contrary to the Standard Operating Procedures," the military said in a statement issued on Friday. The killing of the seven aid workers, who included citizens of Britain, Australia and Poland, a dual U.S. Canadian national and a Palestinian colleague, triggered global outrage this week. U.S. President Joe Biden threatened a shift in U.S. policy towards Israel unless it reduced harm to civilians and aid workers in Gaza, which already depended on aid before the war and has seen hunger spread far and wide since fighting began six months ago. The military said the aid convoy the light vehicles were accompanying had stopped at a hangar where the trucks were unloaded before moving off.

South Africa all-rounder reprimanded for breaching ICC Code of Conduct



(Web Desk) - Proteas all-rounder Marizanne Kapp has been found guilty of breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct during the T20I between South Africa and Sri Lanka in East London. Kapp has been reprimanded for violating Article 2.5 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "using language, actions or gestures which disparage or which could provoke an aggressive reaction from a batter upon his/her dismissal during an International Match." The incident took place in the 13th over of the Sri Lanka innings when Kapp used inappropriate language and gesticulated in the direction of the pavilion after dismissing skipper Chamara Athapaththu. As a result, one demerit point has been added to Kapp's disciplinary record, for whom it was the first offence in a 24-month period. Kapp admitted the offence and accepted the sanction proposed by Shandre Frit of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees and led by umpire Kelvin Klerkin, and fourth umpire Lauren Agenbag, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

Bhatia fires bogey-free 63 to seize lead at PGA Texas Open



WASHINGTON
Akshay Bhatia birdied five of the last seven holes to fire a nine-under par 63 and grab a three-stroke lead in Thursday's darkness-halted opening round of the PGA Texas Open. The 22-year-old American fired a bogey-free round at TPC San Antonio to match his lowest career PGA round, his lowest total in the first 18 holes at any tournament. "Just played really solid," Bhatia said. "This is my third time here. Not many golf courses on the tour have been my third time, so I think (I was) understanding the golf course a lot more. It was just a good day." Justin Lower and Brendon Todd shared second on 66 with fellow Americans Max Homa, Denny McCarthy, Austin Eckroat and Tyson Alexander sharing fourth on 68. World number two Rory McIlroy, in his final tuneup for next week's Masters, opened on 69. Three players were unable to finish the last hole before sunset, the lowest among them American Ryan McComick at 1-under. Bhatia, with five top-17 finishes and four missed cuts in nine starts this season, captured his first PGA title last July at the Barracuda Championship, beating Patrick Rodgers in a playoff. He comes off a season-best finish of 11th at Houston last week. "The last couple weeks is when I started working with Ryan, my psychologist, and that's where it has really paid off, just changing the way I look into the days and my goals for the day." Bhatia, ranked 87th in the world, sank a six-foot birdie putt at the par-5 second, added back-to-back birdies at the fourth and fifth then closed the front nine with a 16-foot birdie putt.

Blinken says Israeli offers to increase flow of aid to Gaza are welcome but may not be sufficient



LEUVEN, Belgium
U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Friday that the measures the Israeli government has announced to expand the flow of aid into Gaza are welcome but may not be enough to meet the Biden administration's demands for dramatic improvements in humanitarian conditions in the territory. Blinken said that opening more border crossings, if fully implemented, has the potential to surge assistance to Palestinians caught in the fighting between

Israel and Hamas. However, the U.S. also wants to see tangible steps to bolster the protection of civilians and aid workers, he said. In addition, he called for a "independent, thorough and fully publicized investigation" into the recent killings of aid workers. Seven employees of the charity World Central Kitchen, including six international volunteers, were killed in multiple Israeli airstrikes on their three-car convoy in Gaza late Monday. The military announced Friday that it dismissed two officers and reprimanded three others for their role in the strikes on the convoy, saying they had mishandled critical information and violated the army's rules of engagement.



Vingegaard suffers broken collarbone after 'terrible' crash in Basque Country

BARCELONA
Two-time Tour de France champion Jonas Vingegaard broke his collarbone and several ribs after a horror mass crash during stage four of the Tour of the Basque Country. "It was a terrible fall but thankfully he is in a stable condition and conscious," his team Visma-lease a Bike reported on X. "Tests in hospital have revealed that he has suffered a broken collarbone and several ribs. He remains under supervision at the hospital," the team added on the social media platform. Belgian ace Remco Evenepoel was another to emerge battered and bruised from the horror accident. "Remco will return to Belgium tomorrow to be operated on a broken collarbone and pass further tests at the hospital at Herentals," his Soudal-Quick Step team announced. His injuries have ruled him out of upcoming one-day classics in the Netherlands and Belgium. Other big names involved in the crash who were taken to hospital were Jay Vine and Steff Cras, while Primož Roglič was also involved and did not finish the stage. "Over the radio we heard that Jonas was involved in a big crash," said Visma sports director Addy Engels. "We immediately saw that it didn't look good when we arrived to him." Despite the gravity of Vingegaard's injuries they came as almost a sense of relief that they were not more serious. Several of the 12 riders involved in the crash fell into a concrete ditch after sliding off on a corner with around 35 kilometers to go in the run from Etxarri Aranzat to Legutio, in northern Spain. The 2022 and 2023 Tour de France winner Vingegaard was taken to an ambulance on a stretcher, while Belgian Evenepoel was walking but his team Soudal Quick Step confirmed he was also going to hospital. "Jonas is conscious and will be examined in the hospital now," Visma said at the scene. "Thank you for your messages. More updates later," they added of their 27-year-old star who won the Basque Tour last year. Last week Visma rider Wout van Aert suffered identical injuries in another bad crash at the Dwars door Vlaanderen one-day race. Roglič, who also abandoned the race, offered a thumbs-up to television cameras while sitting in the Bora-Hansgrohe team car, to show he was not significantly injured. UAE Team Emirates said their Australian rider Vine was also taken to hospital but was conscious and talking, along with Team TotalEnergies rider Cras. The crash happened on the descent from the Alto de Olaeta after a rider in the front of the peloton.

Kosovo will conduct a nationwide census that includes surveying the ethnic Serb minority

PRISTINA, Kosovo
Kosovo's government began Friday its first nationwide census since 2011, which will include surveying the ethnic Serb minority in the north, at a time when tensions with neighboring Serbia are high. The Agency of Statistics is conducting the 12-million euro (\$13 million) census, originally set to take place in 2021 but was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Some 4,400 surveyors will interview residents in person from April 5 until May 17 to cover demographic and socioeconomic indicators that "will take Kosovo a step ahead toward integration into the European Union," according to the agency's website. The Kosovo government, the EU's statistical office, Eurostat, U.N. organizations and the World Bank are funding the census which will tally the number of people residing in the country, family households, their education and employment, as well as the number of locals living abroad. Surveyors will also ask interviewees about damages suffered during the

1998-1999 war and if they have relatives who died or were tortured at the time. Kosovo was a former Serbian province until a 78-day NATO bombing campaign in 1999 ended a war between Serbian government forces and ethnic Albanian separatists in Kosovo and pushed Serbian forces out. Belgrade does not recognize Kosovo's 2008 independence. Hazbije Qeriq, the agency spokesperson, said they hoped for "a positive response from everybody." In 2011 Kosovo had 1.74 million registered residents, of which nearly 1.5%, or about 26,000, are ethnic Serbs.