

Next mayor will be from PPP
F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Labour and Human Resources Minister, Saeed Ghani, has said that an attempt is being made under a conspiracy to make the recent local government elections in Karachi controversial. Talking to media persons here outside the Election Commission of Pakistan head office on Monday, Ghani said that the PPP had emerged as the single largest party in Karachi.

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Zardari rules out possibility of contesting polls ‘in alliance with PDM’

VEHARI (Agencies): As rumours regarding differences between Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) intensify, former president Asif Ali Zardari — who is also the co-chairman of the party — ruled out the possibility of contesting the next elections for an alliance with the ruling coalition.

Addressing a press conference in Vehari, the party co-chairman made it clear that the PPP would contest the next elections on the “arrow” symbol and not for an alliance with the ruling PDM. “We are not a part of the PDM, but we are their partners in the government,” the PPP stalwart said ahead of the general polls in Punjab — which are scheduled to be held on April 30.

Zardari also ruled out talks with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman

Imran Khan and said that the former prime minister is not a politician. In response to a question about the police’s attempt to arrest the PTI chief and whether he was consulted, Zardari said: “It is the prerogative of the interior minister... why would he consult me?”

PPP Chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had also warned the centre of quitting ministries if the promises made to flood affectees in Sindh about financial assistance are not fulfilled. “The promises to flood victims are needed to be fulfilled otherwise it will be difficult for us to hold our [federal] ministries,” Bilawal said during an event in Karachi.

Expressing his severe concerns and regret, the PPP leader said that the promises made to the flood affectees by the federal government could not be

fulfilled. The flood-hit community is going through a difficult time amid rising inflation in the country, he added. The centre, he further said, should give priority to the flood affectees. “If the federal government or Prime Minister [Shehbaz] made promises, then they need to be fulfilled.

According to the PPP chairman, the ruling party in Sindh would raise the issue in the National Assembly as well as before the prime minister. He also expressed hope that their concerns would be redressed by the federal government.

Meanwhile, Senator Raza Rabbani, a senior PPP leader, underscored similarities between the PDM-led incumbent government and the PTI regime — which the sitting rulers had vehemently opposed. In a press release, the ex-Senate

chairman — whose party is in the ruling alliance — said: “It seems be it the PTI or present governments want azadi [freedom] from Parliament and the Constitution, 1973.”

The country is witnessing its worst economic turmoil, with the rupee at an all-time low, the foreign exchange reserves plunging almost every other week, and to top it off, a new wave of terrorism has also hit Pakistan. In light of ongoing issues, Rabbani has also sought clarifications from the government as, according to him, the rulers keep avoiding parliament.

The senator also said parliament needs to be taken into confidence over the “dragging of the feet by the IMF [International Monetary Fund] on signing the agreement and reluctance of friendly countries, except China, to help sans the IMF”.

ECP officials summoned for KP election date

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali here Monday summoned officials from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to finalise a date for the general election in the province following Supreme Court’s verdict on the polls.

In a letter written to the Election Commission of Pakistan, the Governor has summoned the ECP officials on March 6 or March 7 to finalise a date for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Assembly election. The letter has been written in response to a letter sent by the commission for the announcement of the election date.

The Supreme Court, in a 3-2 verdict last week, has ruled that elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces both of which have been under caretaker governments since the provincial assemblies were dissolved in January last should be held within 90 days. The apex court held that in situations where a governor dissolved a provincial assembly, the constitutional responsibility of fixing a date for the election was to be discharged by the governor.

PM lands in Lahore after Qatar visit F.P. Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif returned home Monday after concluding his two-day visit to Qatar. During his stay in Qatar, the prime minister addressed the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, where he

chalked out Pakistan’s priorities to attain the development goals. The prime minister’s speech at the conference focused on exploring the opportunity to ensure sustainable development in the places where international assistance was needed the most. He also called upon the international community to join hands in tapping the full potential of the least developed nations helping them make progress on the road to prosperity. Shehbaz Sharif also held a meeting with Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Althani and CEO of Qatar Investment Authority Mansoor Ebrahim Al-Mahmoud.

Imran’s security prevents NAB team

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan’s security staff stopped the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) team to enter the residence at Zaman Park on Monday.

According to a report, a two-member special team of NAB reached Zaman Park to serve notice to Imran Khan in the money laundering case. But, the former Prime Minister Imran Khan’s security deployed at the main gate of the residence in Zaman Park, Lahore stopped the team outside and did not allow them to enter the House to serve the notice.

In view of Imran Khan’s security, the team has not been given access to the PTI chairman’s house. After a while, the NAB team left Zaman Park. The sources said after serving the notice, the two-member team of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Lahore left Zaman Park.

The journalists asked the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) members what notice was being served by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to Imran Khan but they did not reply and left the spot. Anyhow, the sources said that the NAB team has served notice regarding the prohibited funding case to Imran Khan.

Pak committed to Doha Plan of Action: PM

Shehbaz Sharif says ‘step of prosperity’ for least developed nations

DOHA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said Pakistan was committed to implementing Doha Programme of Action considering it as an opportunity to accelerate sustainable prosperity in the least developed countries.

Addressing the fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in Qatar’s capital Doha, the prime minister said partnerships of LDCs with developed nations as well as private sector and civil society were significant for global prosperity. PM Sharif emphasized exploring the opportunity to ensure sustainable development in the places where international assistance was needed the most.

He called upon the international community to join hands in tapping the full potential of the LDCs helping them make progress on the road to prosperity. He

said the LDCs needed major investments in health, education and social protection systems, adding that vast resources were required to fully implement Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The prime minister highlighted that many of the LDCs were already in or at risk of debt distress. Left unchecked, he said, economic distress and vaccine inequity would make recoveries longer and more painful than necessary.

He said Pakistan was committed to safe and effective vaccines and allocation of resources for LDCs. He pointed out that it was a matter of great concern that six LDCs had been classified as under extreme burden and added that the needy nations required a system of social protection.

Sharif called the need for reforming unequal finan-

cial architecture to address the special needs of LDCs. He proposed a system of international technology combined with SDGs to provide an easy access to LDCs to develop and bridge their digital divide in order to help them contribute to knowledge-based economy.

The prime minister lauded the Doha Programme of Action 2031 particularly its concrete measures including the online universities, food stock system and investment support centre. He assured that Pakistan would actively support the implementation of the Doha Programme of Action within the framework of south centric cooperation.

He congratulated the Emir of Qatar for immaculate arrangement for the conference after holding the FIFA event, and added that Qatar had further bolstered its standing in the comity of nation.

8 cops, civilian martyred in Bolan suicide attack

BOLAN (Agencies): Nine individuals, including eight policemen and one civilian, were martyred in a suicide attack on a Balochistan Constabulary van in the Dhadar talish of the Kacchi district in Bolan on Monday.

According to Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, the blast occurred at 10am on the Kambri bridge in the area bordering the Sibi and Kacchi districts. He said the police van was returning to Quetta from Dhadar, where the Balochistan Constabulary personnel — a department of the provincial police force that provides security at important events and in sensitive areas, including jails — was posted for duty at a Sibi cultural festival.

“The van collided with a motorcycle which was being driven by a suicide bomber. As a result, nine people were martyred, of which one was a civilian,” Sanaullah said, adding that 13 people were injured in the attack. Three wounded persons, he went on to say, were in critical condition. “We fear the death toll will increase to double digits.”

The minister said no organisation had so far claimed responsibility for the attack. He stated that the injured people had been immediately flown to Quetta via a helicopter and the federal government was closely coordinating with the Balochistan government with regard to the martyred, their compensation and the medical treatment of the wounded.

Sanaullah asserted that law enforcement agencies, including the police and counter-terrorism departments, were working in synergy to eliminate terrorism from the country. “I also want to bring this on record that despite the prevailing economic situation [...] and that austerity measures are being employed everywhere [...] no cut has been made in the resources being provided to law enforcement agencies to maintain peace,” he said. Sanaullah assured that all the promises made in the apex committee, which was attended by all the provincial and federal governments, were being fulfilled on a priority basis. “With the resolute resolve of the nation, we will soon control this new wave of terrorism,” the minister promised.

Earlier, Kachhi Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Mahmood Notezai told media that an emergency had been imposed at hospitals across Quetta. He also said that bomb disposal squads and security personnel had arrived at the blast site and cordoned it off to collect evidence.



BOLAN: Security officials inspecting the site after suicide attack on police truck at Dhadar, the main town of Kacchi district.

Action against Imran sought
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator, Sherry Rehman on Monday demanded that the Court should take strict notice against Imran Khan for obstructing judicial and police proceedings and telling lies. In a series of tweets, the federal minister said PTI Chairman Imran Khan, who spoke about the rule of law, lied to avoid arrest.

Nepra allows addtl surcharge on power bills

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Monday allowed the application of Rs 3.39 per unit additional surcharge to be recovered from the consumers of XWAPDA distribution companies (DISCOs) and K-Electric for March till June 2023.

The additional surcharge of Rs.3.39 per unit shall be reduced to Rs.1 per unit to cover the additional markup charges of Pakistan Holding Limited (PHL) loans, thus the total surcharge shall become Rs. 1.43 per unit for the FY 2023-24, said a notification issued here.

The power regulator allowed the DISCOs to receive additional Rs1.43 per unit from July, 2023 to June 2024. Currently, 43 paisa per unit additional surcharge is being received from the consumers. The total additional surcharge will surge to Rs 3.82 per unit with the addition of Rs 3.39 per unit. The rate for consumers using 300-700 units and commercial consumers has been raised by Rs3.82 per unit.

ECC okays Hajj Policy 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet here on Monday approved Hajj Policy and agreed to provide foreign exchange cover of US\$90 million.

The summary to this effect was presented by Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony before the cabinet committee, the meeting of which was chaired by Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

As per policy Hajj quota allocated to Pakistan for the year 2023 is 179,210, which would be distributed between the government and private hajj schemes at a ratio of 50:50, according to press statement issued by the finance ministry. Out of the government and private hajj schemes, a quota of 50% each would be reserved for sponsorship scheme, it said adding for the year 2023, tentative hajj package for Northern region is PKR 1,175,000/- and for the South Region is PKR 1,165,000/-.

The ECC also approved Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) of RS. 12 billion in favour of Planning Commission for conduct of 7th Population & Housing Census and Rs. 3,244 million in favour of Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety for National Poverty Graduation Programme (NPGP). The ECC deferred a summary presented by Ministry of National Food Security & Research on Urea Fertilizer requirement for year 2023 with direction to incorporate the recommendations of committee framed by ECC on gas distribution plan headed by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi.



DOHA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing UN Least Developed Countries Conference in Qatar.

Imran using children, women as shield to avoid arrest

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Monday that ‘a foreign-funded agent, a Toshakhana gifts thief’ was acting like a jackal and hiding behind women and children to avoid arrest for his crimes.

Addressing the media persons here, she said when the police contingent left, the cowardly Imran Khan came out and started bragging and abusing the institutions. Castigating, Imran Khan, she said this person had held the law and constitution of Pakistan as a hostage.

The minister observed that despite all his actions, he was being treated by the justice system leniently. She said it was clear to everyone that the louder, he would scream, the sooner he would get relief. Marriyum Aurangzeb said Imran was aware that if he would attack, bully and threaten the Judiciary, he would get bail.

Criticizing Imran for his constant refusal to appear in courts, she said this person did not appear in courts because he knew that he was a foreign agent and

involved in theft of the Toshakhana gifts. She said that Imran Khan was responsible for the swindling of national exchequer and pushed the country towards inflation. The minister said that Imran was fully aware that the day he would appear in court, he would be arrested as he had committed crimes.

“When the police comes to arrest him, he starts screaming and takes shelter behind women and children using them as human shield,” she added. She said that it was like an example of a person who confessed to his theft but dared the law to arrest him.

She said that the entire system was at his mercy, and no one could arrest him and the courts could not summon him. She said that it was strange that a person used derogatory language against the national institutions but he got relief very quickly. Marriyum opined that Imran Khan was aware that he would get bail and relief if he would ridicule and abuse the judiciary.

The minister challenged him that if he had not committed any crime, he should appear in courts and face



the law of the land. Taking a dig at Imran she said “Samjhauta Express” was ready for departure at Zaman Park but no one was ready to board it, rather she said it was not Samjhauta Express but he was begging for NRO which the foreign agent needed to escape accountability.

“The foreign-funded agent needs an NRO to escape punishment for the crimes he had committed”, she maintained. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Imran should have thought about this before stealing watches and committing robberies at Toshakhana and getting prohibited foreign-funding and involving in money laundering through his employees.

Court upholds Imran’s arrest warrants

ISLAMABAD (INP): An Islamabad district and sessions court on Monday upheld the non-bailable arrest warrants for PTI Chairman Imran Khan it issued last week in the Toshakhana reference over his persistent absences in the case hearings.

Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal announced the verdict reserved earlier in the day after hearing the arguments on an application filed by the PTI chief seeking the cancellation of his warrants. The same court had last week issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Imran after he decided not to turn up before the court while attending hearings of three other cases — prohibited funding, terrorism, and attempted murder filed against him in other local courts located in proximity. On Sunday, an Islamabad police team was

sent to Lahore to arrest Imran with the court summons. However, it returned empty-handed after the PTI chief evaded the arrest. Subsequently, Imran petitioned the Islamabad sessions court arguing that the withdrawal of warrants would enable him “a fair opportunity to appear and defend himself” in the case.

Imran is accused of concealing, in his assets declarations, details of the gifts he retained from the Toshakhana — a repository where presents handed to government officials from foreign officials are kept. Officials are legally allowed to retain gifts provided they pay a pre-assessed amount, typically a fraction of the value of the gift. PTI lawyers Qaisar Imam, Ali Bukhari, and Barrister Gohar appeared on behalf of the party head in

the hearing.

At the outset of the hearing, Bukhari told the court that his client wanted to be given a way to appear in court. He said the PTI chief had always implemented court orders, adding that the police could not detain him if he wished to appear before the court. “You could have approached the Islamabad High Court for the cancellation of arrest warrants,” the judge asked the PTI counsel.

The lawyer responded that the legal team wanted to approach the sessions court for the cancellation of warrants. Separately, Imran has also approached the Lahore High Court (LHC) for bail in three different cases pertaining to the Toshakhana reference, vandalism at the Islamabad judicial complex and violence outside the IHC.



Robber killed, another arrested

KARACHI (APP): An alleged robber was killed, another arrested in injured condition while two of their accomplices managed to escape during an exchange of firing with Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police.

According to a spokesman for Rangers on Monday, four robbers snatched a cash of Rs. 1.795m from an owner of a cooking oil agency at Nishan-e-Haider Chowk, Orangi Town no. 5.

Upon receiving the information, the Rangers and Police party reached the spot. When the accused noticed law enforcement agencies approaching, they opened firing on Rangers and Police.

In return firing by the agencies, an accused was killed while another was arrested injured. Two of their other accomplices fled from the scene. Snatched cash, 3 pistols, 4 magazines and 41 rounds were recovered from the killed and injured accused. A team had been constituted to arrest the escaped accused.

Three youth die in hit-and-run

KARACHI (INP): Three young motorcyclists were killed in a hit-and-run accident in the Landhi area.

An Edhi Foundation spokesperson said that three young men, aged between 17 and 20, were riding on a motorbike when a fast-moving truck hit them near Murtaza Chowrangi. They suffered critical injuries and were taken to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre where doctors pronounced them dead.

Later, the bodies were shifted to the Edhi morgue where one of them was identified as Imran Khan, 18. Meanwhile, in another traffic accident, a man was killed while two others, including a woman, were injured on Superhighway (Motorway-9).

The Edhi Foundation spokesperson said that the accident occurred near gate-2 of New Subzi Mandi. The deceased was identified as Nafees Rauf, 28. The injured female was identified as Warisha Pervez, 22, while the injured man could not be identified. The dead and injured were shifted to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital.

Punjab Culture Day to be observed on March 14

RAWALPINDI (INP): In light of the orders of the Punjab government, Punjab Culture day will be celebrated in Rawalpindi on March 14.

According to the Deputy Commissioner's office spokesman, the district administration has organized various programmes highlighting Punjabi culture. In this regard, educational institutions will organise a walk to promote Punjabi culture while Punjabi traditional food stalls, tableaux and various programs will also be held in educational institutions.

He said that banners would also be displayed across the city. At the same time, an awareness campaign will be conducted through social media regarding the celebration of Punjab Culture day.

Governor confers awards on minority women leaders

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that minority women leaders have been playing a positive role in the development of the country since the establishment of Pakistan.

Addressing 'Women Leadership Conference' at the Governor's House here on Monday, he said women play a pivotal role in the development of societies, adding that protection of women rights is joint responsibility of all segments of society. The conference was held in connection with International Women Day 2023. Former Provincial Minister for Human Rights Ijaz Alam Augustine, Mehnaz Ijaz, Dr. Rubina Feroze Bhatti, Deputy Head of Mission DHM Hungarian Embassy Tivadar Takacs and Political Officer of the US embassy Kevin Chen were present on the occasion.

Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said it is a matter of pride that the women are well represented in every field of life in the country today. He said strict laws have been made in the country to prevent violence against women. He said that there are severe punishments for harassing women while the Fair Representation of Women Act is also there to protect rights of women.

He said various measures, including allocation of quota in government jobs,

have been taken to empower women and ensure their fair representation in every sector.

The Governor Punjab further said Women Ombudsman Department in Punjab is doing excellent job to protect rights of women. Later, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman presented meritorious shields to women leaders and other personalities associated with minorities for their outstanding services in the social sector. Among the recipients of the shields were Mehnaz Ijaz, Rumana Bashir and Sister Zaif, besides General Secretary Faces Pakistan Barsila June, former Provincial Minister for Human Rights Ijaz Alam and Deputy Secretary Hungarian Embassy.

Governor Punjab hails Saraiki culture: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that Punjab is the land of various cultures which add to its beauty and cultural heritage.

In a message on the eve of Saraiki Culture Day here on Monday, he said celebrating regional culture day not only gives awareness about the different cultures of the region, but also promotes brotherhood and unity. The Governor Punjab said Saraiki culture and Saraiki language have a unique contribution in the fertile culture of Punjab.

Minister reviews medical facilities of public sector hospitals

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Javed Akram on Monday reviewed the medical facilities provided to patients in the government teaching hospitals across Punjab.

He was chairing a meeting at Department of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education (SH&ME) here. SH&ME Secretary Dr Ahmed Javed Qazi, Special Secretary Shoaib Khan Jadoon, Additional Secretary Admin Muhammad Ashraf and Deputy Secretary Admin Muhammad Abu Bakr attended the meeting. The minister said that interim government was making efforts to improve the health facilities for people, adding that indiscriminate

actions were being taken against the quacks and those who extort money from innocent people do not deserve any discount.

"We want to digitize the government hospitals of Punjab", he said. Chest pain and heart failure clinics would also be established in the government teaching hospitals of Punjab, he added.

He said that medical experts from all over the world would participate in the three-day international conference which would be held by the Pakistan Society of Internal Medicine from March 10 to 12.

"In Punjab Institute of Cardiology, we are going to build a state of the art preventive cardiology department", he added.

1000 faculty members trained under HEC-British-Council project

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) in collaboration with the British Council has successfully completed a one-year-long Research Capacity Building Programme to train the full spectrum of research professionals. An 'Outcome Dissemination Ceremony' of this series of training programs was held at HEC's Secretariat in Islamabad to mark its successful completion.

The ceremony was attended by the Chairman HEC, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed and distinguished guests, including the Head of Education, British Council Pakistan, Sarah Pervez, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research of Coventry University UK, Prof. Richard Dashwood, Prof. Elena Gaura, HEC Advisor, Global Engagement Division, Awais Ahmad and Director General R & ID Hazrat Bilal.

Under this programme, more than 1000 faculty members have been trained in research skills like Research proposal development, project management, research support mechanism, embedding impact pathways into research and application of international best practices in the peer review process.

Across the research streams, some 71 ORIC professionals, 391 Researchers, 330 Principal Investigators and 237 reviewers have received this training in 23 workshops held across Pakistan.

Chairman HEC, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, said, the 'Outcome Dissemination Ceremony' is a testament to the success of the program and the commitment of the HEC and its partners to promoting research excellence in Pakistan.

He said for the last 20 years, HEC has done a lot of work in the research arena despite many financial challenges.

HEC with the help of the government of Pakistan is committed to giving exposure to the researchers and making sure that continued investment is ensured for the higher education sector.

The progress evident from many indicators besides research publication show continuous improvement. More than thirty thousand publications are published every year by Pakistani researchers.

He urged the programme trainees to become master trainers for other researchers so that they progress to excellent professional researchers and conduct solution-oriented and impactful research.

He said HEC would announce rapid research programmes to address social problems, this call will focus on addressing dominant social, economic, and agricultural problems in Pakistan.

He concluded that this is high time to pay back to society through innovation and impactful research.

Awais Ahmad, in his welcoming remarks, said, "this is the first of its kind holistic intervention by the HEC under the umbrella of PAK-UK Education Gateway. It is encouraging to note that under this project, in the short time span of one year (starting from Feb 2022) more than 1000 principal investigators, research and commercialization support service providers at ORICs and our grant reviewers have been trained. The ceremony also included presentations from Dr. Elena Gaura to give insights to the audience. She shared that co-creation has been the heart and soul of this programme. Trainees were fully engaged and actively participated and created solutions for the challenges that they are facing as researchers.



LAHORE: KP Caretaker Minister Labour and Excise Haji Manzoor Afridi inspecting food for participants of Tablighi ijtimah at Raiwind Hujra.

Caretaker CM visits Quaid-e-Azam's mausoleum

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi visited the mausoleum of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, in Karachi on Monday.

He laid flowers at Quaid-e-Azam's grave and recited Fateha.

Mohsin Naqvi prayed for the stability, safety, and prosperity of the country and wrote his impressions in the visitors' book, said a handout issued here.

While paying tribute to the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Mohsin Naqvi presented him with great words of admiration and said that the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had made the dream of a free country a reality for the Muslims of the subcontinent. The establishment of a peaceful society based on tolerance, patience, and discipline was the dream of the founder of Pakistan, he added. Mohsin Naqvi said that by following the sayings of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan can be saved from all crises and by adopting the principles of the founding father, a prosperous state can be established in a true sense.

Caretaker CM meets Sindh Governor: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi on Monday met with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House Karachi and discussed matters of mutual interest.

Both strongly condemned the terrorism incident in Quetta.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi emphasized the importance of the sacrifices made by law enforcement agencies, stating that everyone had a

role to play in ensuring lasting peace in the country. He also called for unity and inter-provincial harmony, urging all stakeholders to put their differences aside and work together for the greater good.

Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori echoed this sentiment, stating that the people were united and that terrorists would never succeed in their nefarious designs. He commended the sacrifices made by law enforcement agencies and stressed the need for increased cooperation between the two provinces in various sectors.

Tessori also suggested that the exchange of delegations would benefit both Sindh and Punjab.

CM condoles loss of lives:

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has expressed a deep sense of sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of Balochistan Constabulary personnel in an explosion and extended heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families.

He also prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured, adding that he pays tribute to the personnel who attained the highest rank of martyrdom in the line of duty. "Terrorists are a burden on the land and we will eradicate them with the power of unity," he concluded.

CM takes notice of rape-cum-murder of child: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has sought a report from RPO DG Khan about rape-cum-murder of a child in Muzaffargarh and directed that strict action be taken against the arrested suspects in accordance with the law.

Provision of justice be ensured to the bereaved family, he added and noted that the perpetrators do not

deserve any leniency.

He also extended sympathies to the bereaved family and assured them of the provision of justice.

In the meantime, the police have registered a case and arrested two suspects.

CM greets Saraiki people: Punjab, known for its rich cultural diversity, proudly boasts the Saraiki culture as one of its most beautiful and unique.

On the occasion of Saraiki Culture Day, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi extended his warmest greetings to the Saraiki people. He highlighted the Ajrak, an emblematic symbol of Saraiki culture, representing a distinct identity, and the sweet melody of the Saraiki language that truly captivates the heart.

The chief minister further praised the people of the Saraiki areas, commending their kind, loving and caring nature, and recognizing their bravery and hard work as the core values of their culture.

He also acknowledged the immense contribution of the region's intellectuals and poets, who are an asset to Punjab and Pakistan.

Celebrating regional culture days, the chief minister emphasized, serves as a reminder of the customs and traditions of different regions, fostering awareness and sensitivity towards cultural diversity. The provincial government continues to promote harmony, brotherhood, and tolerance in society by celebrating days of regional cultures. The celebration of Saraiki Culture Day is an excellent example of the government's efforts to acknowledge and honor the vibrant regional cultures of Punjab, he concluded.

‘Safai Nisf Eman’ drive begins

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Waste Management Company on Monday launched 'Safai Nisf Eman', a zero waste drive in the city as per the direction of Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

According to LWMC sources, the campaign was formally inaugurated at Liberty Roundabout.

In this regard, the LWMC issued a 15-day working plan under which special cleanliness arrangements would be made across the city and all the 274 UCs of the city would be made zero waste.

Talking on the occasion, Caretaker Minister for LG & CD Ibrahim Hassan Murad said the government had taken an initiative to ensure "Zero Waste" across the city to improve and maintain the city aesthetics. In order to ensure exemplary cleanliness conditions, door-to-door waste collection would be executed followed by cleaning parks, historical places, play grounds, graveyards, commercial markets and bus terminals, he added.

LWMC CEO Babar Sahib Din briefed the minister on the 15-day

zero waste campaign and stated that during the drive, special cleanliness activities, besides routine waste collection activities would be ensured.

Special focus of zero waste drive is on 450 open plot clearance, open heaps clearance, scrapping of 70-80 km roads on daily basis, gully grating cleanliness, sweeping, washing and liming of entry and exit points, and sprinkling on roads.

Operations teams, cleaning staff and fleet would remain active in the field to facilitate the citizens.

World Wildlife Day observed at UVAS

LAHORE (APP): Department of Wildlife and Ecology of the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Lahore in collaboration with WWF-Pakistan observed World Wildlife Day titled 'Partnerships for wildlife conservation' here on Monday. Various activities including an awareness walk, seminar, wildlife photography competition and informative lectures were arranged to create awareness about fauna and flora among students and the general public.

Dean Faculty of Animal Production & Technology Prof Dr Saima led the walk while Chairman Department of Wildlife and Ecology Dr Arshad Javid, Senior Manager Wildlife Conservation WWF-Pakistan, Hamera Ayesha, Manager Geographical Information System (GIS) WWF-Pakistan, Usman Akram and a large number of professionals, faculty members and students participated. In the seminar guest speakers delivered their lectures on the topics of use of geo-spatial technologies in wildlife mapping and assessment and wildlife our assets and common responsibility-partnerships for wildlife conservation at Akram Complex.

PML-N believes in supremacy of law: Azma

LAHORE (APP): Spokesperson Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Punjab chapter Azma Bukhari on Monday said the PML-N always presented itself for accountability as it believed in the supremacy of law and the constitution.

Talking to the media here at Model Town, she said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf which always found giving statements over 'rule of law' but its chief had been escaping the courts in various cases registered against him.

She said the PTI chief should appear before the courts in cases including Toshakhana as nobody was above the law.

Azma Bukhari said the PTI chief was habitual of targeting national institutions and uttering derogatory remarks for personal gains. He (Imran) had a track record of escaping the courts, whereas, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif always presented himself for accountability and appeared before the courts. She said Nawaz Sharif was disqualified for just having an 'Iqama'.

To a question, she said the PML-N was ever ready for elections and would win the elections. However, it was responsibility of the Election Commission to conduct elections in a free, fair and transparent manner, she added.

Sindh govt initiates farmers support project

KARACHI (INP): Sindh government has initiated the farmers support project and fulfilled its promises, government spokesperson Muratza Wahab has said.

"Farmers being provided cash for purchase of wheat seed," Wahab said. "Agriculture cash being issued to farmers by the Sindh government," provincial adviser said in a statement. "We are standing with the people in their time of hardship," he said. "The government is building two million houses affected in

floods," he said. "Cash amount being provided for construction of houses," Muratza Wahab said.

He said the country facing political, economic and social problems. Intolerance has reached to an extent where people avoid to talk," Wahab said.

"There is no debate over the challenges faced by the country and problems of common man but Imran Khan's escape and his bail being discussed," PPP leader said. "If he is more important than 220 million

people of the country? he questioned. He said, Imran Khan is working on the agenda of harming the country for his personal gain and to grab the power. "Sindh government is serving the people, while he is working to inflict harm to the people," he alleged.

"We have cultivated record wheat crop this year despite floods," he said. "We have a vision of constructive development, while Imran Khan walking on the path of destruction," he said.



LAHORE: Construction workers are busy in road construction near Liberty Chowk.



WB, ADB to continue support projects in KP

PESHAWAR (INP): The representatives from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Monday expressed their commitment to supporting the projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and ensuring their successful completion.

This resolve was expressed in a joint review meeting held here to assess the progress of foreign-funded projects and pipeline projects in the region.

The meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Kazim Niazi, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs Division, and Ikramullah Khan, Additional Chief Secretary of the province. Secretaries

of line departments were also present.

During the meeting, various activities under the ongoing projects were reviewed, and the overall progress and status of the pipeline projects were discussed. The attendees were instructed to expedite the ongoing projects and improve the execution process of the committed pipeline projects.

The meeting provided an opportunity to evaluate the status of the projects and identify areas where progress could be accelerated. It also served as a platform to discuss challenges faced during the implemen-

tation of these projects and ways to address them.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government reiterated its commitment to completing the projects within the agreed timelines and delivering the desired outcomes.

The government also thanked the international partners for their continued support in achieving the development goals of the region. The meeting ended with a resolve to work together and overcome any challenges to ensure the timely completion of the projects and their effective implementation for the benefit of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing a gathering at opening ceremony of Ajmal Mall & Residency project.

UOP killing case: Court grants remand to murderer

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Judicial Magistrate Peshawar Muhammad Tayyab has granted two-day remand to police of alleged murderer who killed security supervisor within University of Peshawar (UOP), on Monday.

According to prosecution, the murderer Masood has allegedly killed University of Peshawar (UOP)'s security supervisor Saqlin Bangash while serving as Security Guard in private company.

The prosecution requested for police remand for further interrogation and investigation of Security Guard and alleged murderer Masood while the court has granted the remand for two-days.

Advisor instructs for staff attendance

PESHAWAR (APP): on departmental affairs of the Population Welfare Department.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Population Welfare Ali Asghar and DG Population Welfare.

In the meeting, Advisor for Population Welfare Syed Jarar Hussain Bukhari was given a briefing on departmental affairs.

Speaking on this occasion, Syed Jarar Hussain Bukhari said that corruption and negligence in duties will not be tolerated in the department.

Attendance of subordinates and field staff should be ensured and strict departmental action should be taken against habitually absent staff so that they become an example for others.

Measures will be taken to increase the capacity of the field staff and will increase the number of seats in the training institutes in future.

He further said that the more people will graduate from these training institutes, the more people will benefit.

DC assures cooperation

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Shah Fahad here on Monday visited Molvi G Children Hospital and assured full cooperation in resolving the problems confronted by the administration of the hospital.

Police arrest 8 suspects

PESHAWAR (APP): Pishtakhara police here on Monday arrested eight suspects involved in street crimes and recovered hashish and ice-drug from their possession.

According to a press statement issued by Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Mohammad Ejaz Khan, the arrested identified as Faisal, Farman, Zubair, Shaukat, Jehangir, Kamil, Abdul Salam, and Shah Zeb belonging to different areas of the city.

Police also recovered five-kilogram of hashish and 0.5 kg, 5 kg of ice-drug besides a Kalashnikov from the arrested.

The cases were registered at Pishtakhara Police Station and further investigation was underway.

CM expresses grief over demise of Qavi Khan

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Monday expressed grief and sorrow of the demise of veteran Pakistani actor Qavi Khan. He was 80.

In a condolence message, the Caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan expressed sympathies with the bereaved family members.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.

Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan said that the service of late Qavi Khan in the field of art and performance.

Managers of nine filling stations held for least gauge

PESHAWAR (APP): District administration Peshawar arrested the managers of 9 filling stations for least gauge of petrol on Monday.

District administration Peshawar is regularly monitoring the provision and gauge of petrol pumps at the district.

In this connection, on the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar Shah Fahad, the officers of district administration conducted raids on filling stations at City Circular Road, Gulbahar, Charsadda Road and G.T. Road and arrested the managers of 9 filling stations for least gauge.

The Deputy Commissioner Peshawar has directed all officers of the district administration to inspect filling stations within the areas of their jurisdiction and in case of least gauge take action against their management.

Police bust two deadly gangs of street crimes

PESHAWAR (APP): Capital City Police in a breakthrough against street-crimes have busted two deadly gangs of robbers and mobile snatchers, police on Monday.

The five arrested members of the deadly gangs of mobile snatchers and robbers also include Afghan nationals, which were involved in depriving the people of cash, precious mobile phone sets and motorcycles at gun points. They were also wanted by police in murders and attempted murders of resisting robberies and snatching.

Capital City Police have recovered 8 snatched motorcycles, 14 precious mobile phone sets and a cash amount of Rs.40,000 from their possession.

The members of the gang were busted during a joint operation carried out under the supervision of SHO Bhana Mari and SHO Agha Mir Jani along with their teams. The police have also recovered weapons used in street crimes.

According to DSP (Suburb) Mukhtiar Ali Khan the accused have confessed to various crimes during initial investigations and have also revealed names of their accomplices. He said that special teams have been constituted for their arrest.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Azam Khan chairing a meeting of Agriculture and Livestock Departments.

E-Procurement System to increase accountability: CS

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Imdadullah Bosal launched Khyber Pakhtunkhwa e-procurement system (KPePS) on pilot basis, in a ceremony held here at Civil Secretariat on Monday.

Administrative secretaries, US Consul General Peshawar, Mission Head USAID, Managing Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA), MD Khyber Pakhtunkhwa IT Board and other relevant officials attended the event.

E-procurement system is being introduced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by KPPRA, in collaboration with USAID.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary said that the e-procurement system will usher in a new era of transparency, quality, efficiency and accountability in government procurement and contract awarding processes.

MD KPPRA briefed the forum about salient features of the system saying that flaws in the existing system have been rectified which would ensure transparency and data security, besides fulfilling many long-standing demands of the contractor community.

MD KPPRA acknowledged support of government departments and the contractor community in developing the e-procurement system.

The Chief Secretary appreciated the technical and financial support of KPPRA, USAID, and Pakistan Capacity Development Services for the said system and hoped that they would also continue to extend cooperation in future.

Meanwhile, the Chief Secretary presided over a meeting of the provincial census coordination committee to review progress made on the ongoing seventh housing and population census.

The Chief Secretary emphasized the importance of better coordination among stakeholders to ensure successful execution of the enumeration process. The meeting was apprised that for facilitation of public closing date for self-enumeration was extended till March 10, 2023.

Minister under scores need for capacity building of department

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information and Public Relations Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel on Monday said that in the context of the current situation responsibilities of the department have increased manifold to cope with the demands of modern media and capacity building of Information department.

After taking charge of the department, he was talking to the officers of the department in the office of Information Secretary Arshad Khan. On this occasion, Special Assistant to the Caretaker Chief Minister Pir Syed Haroon Shah was also present.

Secretary Information and Public Relations Department Arshad Khan gave a detailed briefing to the provincial minister regarding the activities of the department.

The caretaker provincial minister said that the caretaker government would utilize all resources to make the information department more active and vibrant to deal with the challenges faced by it.

Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel directed the officers of the department to perform their duties with honesty and dedication and play their role to promote the culture of tolerance in the province.

He said that in the present era the world is facing a big challenge in the use of media, especially social media, for which the Department of Information has to play its role.

The minister assured that the issues facing the department and DGIPR would be taken up with quarters concerned. He said that he will maintain equal contact with the media and seek the support of the media in solving the problems faced by the province.



PESHAWAR: KP Caretaker Minister for Law and Education Irshad Qaisar visiting Achieve & Libraries.

Manzoor recommends Qavi for more awards

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Labour, Excise and Narcotics Control Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi on Monday while describing the death of the son of Peshawar and legendary actor Qavi Khan as a national tragedy and recommended him for more national awards.

He said that Qavi especially respected Ulema wholeheartedly and "I'm witness to it".

In a condolence message, Haji Manzoor Afridi paid rich tributes to Qavi Khan for creating highly lessons oriented plays at the national level and admitted that he shaped the best of our youth and gave them glimpse of a better future through it.

By dint of outstanding dramas, Qavi Khan emerged as a beloved actor across the subcontinent, he maintained.

Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi said that the government and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will not forget this talent and will always value him.

He also strongly recommended conferring more national awards on Qavi Khan posthumously.

Mayor urges police to treat people in better manner

PESHAWAR (APP): City Mayor Peshawar, Haji Zubair Ali has urged police personnel to serve the general public as their servants in real sense and treat them in a better manner.

He expressed these views while talking to Station House Officer (SHO) Police Station Mir Jani Shah and other police personnel during his visit to the station here on Monday.

Besides, SP City Peshawar the local elected representatives also accompanied the City Mayor.

During the visit, the City Mayor inspected various sections of the police station and reviewed progress on ongoing development schemes. The City Mayor also announced the renovation and beautification of the police station from his funds and directed the engineer of the Capital Metropolitan to prepare an estimate of its cost.

He said that steps are being taken for the facilitation of the general public in all police stations and added that it is also the duty of the police to serve the people in a better manner.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Transport Shahid Khan Khattak visiting BRT station.

Radio Pakistan Peshawar's services lauded

PESHAWAR (APP): The Radio Pakistan Peshawar's invaluable services that touched people's hearts since its establishment on March 6, 1935, have been highly praised by the speakers on completion of its 88th transmission anniversary celebrated with great enthusiasm here on Monday.

In this connection, an impressive function was held at Radio Pakistan Peshawar attended by Chief Minister's special assistant for revenue, Syed Haroon Shah was chief guest. Besides others, the program was attended by the Station Director, Radio Pakistan Peshawar, Syeda Iffat Jabbar, former chairman International Relations Department, University of Peshawar, Professor Dr Adnan Sarwar Khan, senior broadcaster and academician Professor Dr Abaseen

Yousafzai, serving and retired officers, artists, musicians, compares and poets in substantial numbers.

Being the oldest radio station of the subcontinent, Radio Pakistan Peshawar had started its transmission on March 6, 1935 from a room at secretariat here after great educationist Abdul Qayyum Khan had requested Radio's inventor Guglielmo Marconi to establish a small radio transmitter at Peshawar. Marconi also donated a few radio sets for the station that were later distributed among people. Aslam Khan Khattak was first the station director of Radio Pakistan Peshawar.

Later, the station was shifted to a broadcasting house at Peshawar on July 16, 1942. Radio Pakistan Peshawar station has a unique distinction of announcing independence of Pakistan on midnight of August 13-14 by eminent broadcasters Aftab Ahmad in Urdu and Abdullah Jan Magmom in Pashto languages. The national song of the renowned Urdu Poet Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi's Pakistan Bananey Walay Pakistan Mubarak Ho' (Congratulation to the creator of Pakistan for creating Pakistan) was the first national song sung by noted signer Peshawar Khan after creation of Pakistan from this historic radio station. Later, it was shifted to its existing four storey building having the facility of six studios and 350-seats auditorium.

In her welcome address, Syeda Iffat Jabbar, who is the first female station director and controller of Radio Pakistan Peshawar said it was the oldest radio station of the subcontinent, which has been providing quality education, informa-

tion and entertainment programs to its hundreds of thousands listeners at their doorsteps.

She said Radio Pakistan Peshawar has a unique station from where eminent poets and writers including Ahmad Faraz, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, Khair Ghaznavi, Abbasi Yousafzai, renowned Pashto singers and musicians, Khyal Muhammad, Mashooq Sultan, Ahmad Khan, Shakeela Naz, Hidayatullah, Sardar Ali Takkar, Rafiq Shinwari, drama, film and stage artists, Agha Talash, Firdus Jamal and others have started their professional careers. Through its famous 'Hindara' program, it effectively highlighted Pakistan's principled stand before the world after migration of millions of Afghan refugees following the USSR invasion in Afghanistan.



In brief

Aman Jirga to hold protest F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: Aman Jirga to observe protest against drug dealers and producers at Jalala on 17th March to pave way forward against international and local mafia for securing upcoming generation from this menace, on Monday. This was announced by Aman Jirga president Syed Kamal Shah while presiding several meetings in which Takhtbhai president Khalid Khan, secretary Shams-ul-Qayum, Qaisar Khan, Abid Sultan, Asad Ali and Shamsher Khan were present and addressed the participants. The participants stressed that drugs had destroyed social fabric of Pakhtun society which has created several problems in the livelihood and customs. They argued that competent authorities had turned blind eyes towards drug-dealers while it is high time for civil society to mobilize against such menace. Aman Jirga president Syed Kamal Shah claimed that in 17 years of struggles various social evils including kidnapping and car-lifting have been decreased while hopeful that public mobilization would also be threat for drug-mafia both at aboard and at home.

Provision basic facilities sought F.P. Report

KALAYA: The tribesmen of Baizot demanded provision of fundamental rights like education, health facility and clean drinking water as well as argued construction of roads to communication of local populace. This was demanded by Haji Abdullah, Noor Abdul Hassan, Aqib Ahmad Khan, Shah Jahan, Muhammad Shakeel, Muhammad Usama, Habib Noor, Sahil Noor and Raz Muhammad while talking to media personnel. They argued that Chuna Baizot is remote area of Lower Orakzai while the residents are deprived from fundamental facilities of education, health and infrastructure of roads. The tribesmen claimed that residents facing extreme hardship during shifting of patients for advanced treatment to urban center due to lack road infrastructure.

DPO review security F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: District Police Officer (DPO) Kurram, Mohammad Imran has directed police personnel to keep anti-social elements under strict surveillance and take action against them under an effective procedure. He issued these directives to police personnel during his visit to far-flung and sensitive police check posts in Central Kurram on Monday. During the visit, the DPO reviewed security arrangements around the check posts and issued directives to personnel deployed there. He also directed police to monitor the movement of all suspects and further urged them to all keep in view their own protection and use bullet proof jackets and helmets for the sake of their own security. The DPO has also met with Wing Commander 111 Wing Colonel Saad Siraj and discussed security and other issues with him in detail. Similarly, the DPO also visited the under construction Police Station Central Kurram (Sewak) and inspected its various parts, reviewed progress on construction work. Besides, directing timely completion of the remaining work, he has also urged for the use of best and quality material in it.



SHANGLA: A view of dilapidated Bani Alpuri bridge an eye opener for authorities concerned, needs attention to avoid any untoward incident. - F.P. photo

Police busts alleged dacoit gang in Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Police arrested main suspect of the two-member bandit gang who robbed four truck drivers carrying marble stones at gunpoint, the pistol, motorcycle and goods used in the incident. 40 thousand rupees stolen, 06 mobile phones were recovered, the police teams are actively working to arrest the other accomplice of the arrested accused, on Monday.

According to details, which were carrying marble stones from Palodhere area to Mardan in the trucks, two motorcyclists stopped us with weapons drawn near and snatched cash and

mobile phones from the four drivers at the point of their guns and escaped in Chora police station. As soon as the information of the report was received by the district headquarters, the district police chief Najib-ur-Rahman, under the supervision of DSP Rural Circle Fazal Sher Khan and under the leadership of SHO Wilayat Shah Khan, along with the Chora Police Sulaiman Shah Khan investigation officer team in the incident.

Elements involved orders have been issued for the arrest, Chora police team using professional strategy and modern scientific means arrested the

accused Lal Syed son of Gul Badshah Resident Naranji District Swabi.

Regarding this case, DSP Rural Circle Fazal Sher Khan along with SHO Chora Wilayat Shah gave a press briefing and added that the arrested accused confessed to the crime during the interrogation and on his identification the stolen goods amounting to 40 thousand rupees, 06 pieces. Mobile phones, 30-bore pistol and motorcycle used in the crime were recovered, while the name of the other co-conspirator has also been revealed, and police teams have been formed to arrest him, which is expected soon.

Capacity Building training for public servant held

Saqib Mushtaq

BAHAWALPUR: A two-day training workshop conducted in Multan regarding "Capacity Building of Employees of various attached departments of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting" to ensure better performance, on Monday

Government of Pakistan under the Institutional Reforms has initiated various programs to improve and increase the efficiency of institutions and to ensure capacity building of employees. In this regard, special attention is being paid to conduct training programs especially for the lower and mid-level employees of various attached departments of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in which they can be made aware of the concept of good governance in the modern era.

In this context, a two-day training program for the employees working in the Multan offices of Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV), Associated Press of Pakistan (APP), Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) and Press Information Department (PID) under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting started today in the auditorium of Radio Pakistan.

The employees were given training in various topics including good governance, use of modern media, the features of the Constitution of Pakistan and the skills to deal with the challenges of the current changing circumstances.

On this occasion, Director General Information Service Academy (ISA), Saeed Ahmed Sheikh while addressing the participants, said that such training programs are indispensable to

ensure the best performance and efficiency of employees. He urged that employees working in different organizations should participate wholeheartedly in such training programs. The government is spending a lot of money on such programs to increase the capacity of government employees, he added.

On this occasion, Associate Professor Syed Hasan Raza from Baha-uddin Zakariya University gave a lecture to the participants on the "Role of modern media in providing better public services". Participants of the training highly appreciated the initiative of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. These measures will not only increase the efficiency and capabilities of the employees, but they will also be able to perform their duties with more interest and diligence.

Clean & Green drive kicks-off to ensure hygiene environment

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

H A F I Z A B A D : Commissioner Gujranwala Division Naveed Haidar Sharazi said that 'Safai Nasif Eman Ha' campaign would also be launched besides Tree Plantation Campaign while district administration and other concerned departments be focus on elimination of encroachment, to improve cleanliness and to renovate public places during the campaign.

While addressing a meeting of district heads of different departments at district complex Hafizabad, the Commissioner directed the officers to deliver special lectures to students in educational institution for promoting tree plantation and special campaign also be

lunched to create awareness among people about importance of tree plantation and cleanliness so that our urban and rural areas could be made Clean and Green.

The performance of government departments and pace of work on development schemes was reviewed in the meeting. RPO Gujranwala Haider Ashraf, DC Umar Farooq Warraich and DPO Dr. Fahad Ahmad also present in the meeting. Commissioner directed the officers to start anti-kite flying campaign also for containing this deadly game.

The meeting was informed that 63 kite sellers and kite players were arrested in the district and cases were registered with different police stations whereas crack down on kite sellers

and flyers was underway in the district. DC Umar Farooq Warraich gave briefing about pace on ongoing development projects being completed with the cost of more than 24 billion in the district including construction of road from Kot Sarwar Motorway Interchange to Gujranwala, construction of new DHQ hospital and University of Hafizabad.

He told the Commissioner that Sports Gala was arranged in educational institution of the district for promoting healthy activities and providing recreational opportunities to youth whereas district administration would also be hold Jashan-i-Baharan and Sports Gala in next week.



HYDERABAD: Activists of Insaaf Lawyers Forum holding a protest in favour of their demands.

Solar panels distributed in Tirah Valley

F.P. Report

BARA: To improve the quality of life of Tirah people, Security Forces distributed Solar Panels and Electric Equipment. On 1st day of distribution 73 beneficiaries are provided Solar Panel Sets comprising Solar Plate (200W) LED Bulbs, Pedestal Fan, Power Inverter and Rechargeable Battery. The solar panels and electric equipment are aimed at providing reliable and sustainable access to electricity to the beneficiaries, which will enable them to improve their standard of living.

Security forces believes that access to electricity is essential for the socio-economic development of any community, and therefore, they have taken this initiative to provide solar panels and electric equipment to the people in Tirah Valley. The event was attended by the locals elders and other guests.

The beneficiaries expressed their gratitude and said that the solar panels and electric equipment would greatly improve their quality of life, especially during power outages. Security forces will continue the distribution of solar panels and electric equipment to more beneficiaries in Tirah Valley in the coming days, and hopes to bring a positive change in the lives of the people living in the area.

PkMAP Buner chapter elects new cabinet

F.P. Report

BUNER: Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) elected new cabinet member including Riaz Khan Yousafzai as secretary and Kamran Khan as Senior Mouaveen Secretary and eleven others as Mouaveens of Buner chapter, on Monday.

The thirteen members cabinet chose unanimously by the member in a close session was held in village Bhai Kalay. The PMAP provincial president Khurshrd Lalal Gi general secretary Ashraf Hoti Advocate the secretary information Mehboob Ayoub Advocate and Swat committee member Sardarul Mulk attended.

The provincial president administered oath to new cabinet office bearers in Pushto language. The provincial president Khurshrd Lalal Gi general secretary Ashraf Hoti Advocate the secretary information Mehboob Ayoub Advocate the Swat committee member Sardarul Mulk and the newly elected district secretary addressed.

The speakers highlighted party manifesto with clear cut stand of democracy in the country and rights of Pukhtoon over their resources and respect. The speakers claimed party is fast growing under the leadership of Khushal Khan Kakar and Mukhtar Yousafzai and vowed it would be organized at district level so as to spread party narrative at doors of every Pukhtoon to motivate and mobilize them for becoming member of PMAP for protection their due rights and to live with progress prosperity and peace.

Ulema: Seminaries safeguard country's ideological boundaries

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Religious scholars at a function said that seminaries are the leading institutions in the country which are safeguarding the ideological and geographical boundaries. The Madrasa Qasim ul Uloom Charmango in Jandol arranged the function for its graduating students here the other day.

A total of 128 male and female graduates were awarded certificates on completing Nazira i Quran, Hizf ul Quran and Tajved ul Quran courses on the occasion. The function was also attended by seminaries' students, teachers, parents and area elders. Prominent Naat reciters Israr Mayar and Maulana Taj Akbar presented naat and got applause from the audience.

The gathering was addressed by former senator Maulana Abdul Rashid, Timergara tehsil chairman Mufti Irfanul Din, head of the seminary Maulana Hussain Shah, Maulana Fazal Azeem and others. They said the religious sem-

inaries were playing their active role to counter negative propaganda against the religion.

The speakers said that this year more than 500,000 male and female students graduated from various seminaries in the country. They said the seminaries were providing free education and housing facilities to their students without any support from the government. They asked the students to ensure positive use of modern media for research purposes. Special prayers were offered for the safety, integrity and stability of the Muslim Ummah and Pakistan at the end.

Pharmacy students: Students of pharmacy-B have demanded the authorities of Pharmacy Council Islamabad to declare results of the pharmacy-B without any further delay. Talking to local journalists at Timergara the students led by Asadullah from Khall said that thousands of pharmacy-B students had taken the examination on Sep 19, 2022 but the results were yet to be declared.

They said the delay in result declaration had spread unrest among the students. They pointed out that the council declared the results within three to four months but this time the results were not declared despite the passage of five and a half months. They demanded that the concerned authorities take notice of the matter and ensure the result declaration soon.

Bridge foundations: Local residents of Timergara have demanded the district administration and high ups of the National Highways Authority to take notice of Balambat Timergara main bridge as its foundations had been weakened due to flash floods in August last year. They said the bridge columns from the Timergara side posed serious threats as the flash floods had washed away sands and gravel around them. The residents also demanded construction of safety walls near the bridge columns so that the bridge could be protected from collapse.

'Da Haq Awaz' rehabilitates drug-addicts

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Vice Chairman Provincial Anti-Narcotics Organization "Da Haq Awaz" Abdul Aziz has said that narcotics a national mess that needs special attention. So, it was high time that each and every one should come forward and play its role for eradication of this menace from the society, he added.

This he said while addressing the rehabilitation ceremony of drugs addicts at Da Haq Awaz Treatment Center Kohat the other day. The ceremony was also addressed by the

Project Director Da Haq Awaz Salman Khan, District Social Welfare Officer Amjad Afridi, Chairman Kawan e Amal Salim Altaf Advocate, Senior Vice Chairman National Peace Council Shakil Bangash and Sub Inspector ANF Muhammad Haroon and attended by Center In-charge Sheraz Khan, parents of addicts and people from different walks of life in large number.

Vice Chairman Aziz said Da Haq Awaz was playing active role in rehabilitation of drug addicts in the entire province and so

far hundreds of people had been made useful citizens of the society. He in this connection appreciated the effective role of social welfare department, Anti Narcotics Force and different welfare organizations. He asked the people to focus on their children and kept them away from the menace of drugs and help the social and welfare organizations in this regard.

The speakers in their speeches eulogized the role of Da Haq Awaz in rehabilitation of drug addicts and assured all out support for its noble cause.



HYDERABAD: Teachers holding a protest rally for acceptance of their demands.

Parents' teachers coord must for quality education

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Former special assistant to the chief minister on education and prominent educationist Muhammad Rahim Haqqani has said the role of private educational institutions cannot be ignored in promotion of quality education. He was addressing a prize distribution function at a local private school in Talash as chief guest here on Monday. The function was also addressed by the school director Muhsin Ali, Principal Mukhtiar Ahmad, former tehsil nazim Riaz Muhamad, former deputy district education officer Haji Ali Haidar and others. A prominent poet Muneer Khan Buniri presented his poetry regarding education, peace and Pukhtun culture.

Haqqani said the private institutions played a vital role in the education sector. He said that it was difficult for the governments to provide education to all children due to its limited resources. He said the private schools and colleges lessened the government burden. He said that strong coordination among parents, teachers and students was necessary for quality education. He asked the parents to keep regular contacts with the institutions for a better and bright future for their children. The position holder students were awarded

with shields, medals and cash prizes on the occasion.

Meanwhile the board of intermediate and secondary education (BISE) Malakand's assistant secretary Fida Jan while addressing a separate prize distribution ceremony at Hajiabad in Chakdara asked the parents to keep regular checks on their children's attitude and company. He said that students' character building was the collective responsibility of parents and teachers. He said that most of the students today were misled by social media and it was the responsibility of their parents to keep a vigilant eye on their activities. The regional head of the Association For Academic Quality Majid Ali, Principal Muhammad Ayaz, Haji Muhammad Saeed, orthopedic surgeon Dr Bilal Ahmad and former district health officer Dr Muhammad Rehman were also present. The guests distributed shields and trophies among the position holder students on the occasion.

Road accident: A primary school's student Kashif 12 was killed while 5 others including two passersby were injured when a car went out of the driver's control near the government primary school Odigram in the jurisdiction of Balambat police station here on Monday, residents and police said. They said

the driver Mansoor Ali lost control over the wheel and hit the roadside's students. As a result the students Kashif 12, Hasnain 13, Ubaidullah 13 along with Sadiqur Rehman of Lajbok, driver Mansoor Ali of Koto and Muhibullah 29 got injured.

Police arrest 2 drug peddlers

ATTOCK (INP): District Attack police on Monday nabbed two drug peddlers and recovered hashish worth of rupees lacs from their possession with the jurisdiction of police station Hazro and Attock Khurd here on Monday.

Police said, on a tip off drug supplier identified as Manzoor Khan son of Ghani Khan hailing from Mardan was intercepted on the charge of possessing hashish of 1400 grams near Phalail Market Hazro. Meanwhile, Attock Khurd police arrested a drug pusher Mohammad Ramzan after chasing him and recovered hashish of 1200 grams from his possession. Later on, cases under section 9-C of Control of Narcotics Substance Act, 1997. They were also produced before the court of judicial magistrate for seeking their physical remand to complete the other legal formalities required for completion of the police challan.



UK to unveil new law to stop Channel migrants today

LONDON (Reuters): A new law to crack down on migrants arriving in Britain in small boats from Europe across the English Channel will be unveiled, with a senior minister saying "enough is enough", the Sun newspaper reported. The British government has been promising to step up action to tackle the issue after the numbers making the perilous crossing soared to more than 45,000 last year.

The paper reported the proposed new legislation will mean that all those who arrive on small boats will have their asylum claims ruled inadmissible, and will be removed to a 'safe third country' as soon as possible. "Enough is enough. The British people want this solved," Home Secretary (interior minister) Suella Braverman told the paper. "They are sick of tough talk and inadequate action. We must stop the boats."

The number of migrants arriving on the English coast has more than doubled in the last two years and tackling the issue was one of five key priorities outlined in January by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, whose party is languishing in polls, under pressure from his own lawmakers to find a solution. Last year, former Prime Minister Boris Johnson agreed a deal to send tens of thousands of migrants, many having made the journey from Afghanistan, Syria or



other countries suffering war, more than 4,000 miles away (6,400 km) to Rwanda.

But the first planned deportation flight was blocked in June by a last-minute injunction granted by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), and the strategy's lawfulness was subsequently challenged at London's High Court. London's High Court subsequently ruled it lawful in December, but opponents are seeking to appeal that verdict. It is expected

the legal battle will end up in the UK Supreme Court and so may not be resolved for months. The policy has been denounced by human rights groups and even reportedly by King Charles.

Last November, Sunak agreed a deal with France to step up efforts to address illegal immigration, and he is due to travel to Paris this week for a bilateral meeting when the issue is set to be a major topic of discussion.

SK announces plan to resolve row over Japan forced labour

SEOUL (Agencies): South Korea's government has announced a plan to resolve a long-running dispute on compensating people who were forced to work in Japanese factories and mines during World War II. Monday's plan, which was met with immediate protests in South Korea but hailed as "historic" by the United States, comes as South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol seeks to mend ties with Japan amid North Korea's growing nuclear and missiles programmes.

Unveiling the plan, South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin said the former workers, most of whom are now in their 90s, will be compensated through a public foundation funded by private-sector companies rather than by the Japanese firms involved in the forced labour. The South Korean government had first raised the proposal in January, sparking a backlash from victims and their families because it did not include contributions from Japanese companies, including those ordered by South Korean courts to pay reparations, such as Nippon Steel and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

About a dozen protesters demonstrated as Park made the announcement. "It's a complete victory by Japan, which has said it cannot pay a single yen on the forced labour issue," Lim Jae-sung, a lawyer for several victims, said in a Facebook post, citing initial media reports of the deal. The main opposition Democratic Party meanwhile denounced the plan as "submissive diplomacy".

"It's a day of shame," An Ho-young, a spokesperson for the party, said in a statement. "Japanese companies embroiled in war crimes received indulgence without even budging, and the Japanese government managed to remove a trouble by having the grace to repeat past statements." The issue of forced labour, as well as that of the enslavement of South Korean women in Japanese military brothels, has bedevilled South Korea-Japan ties for decades. Japan, which occupied the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945, insists all claims relating to the colonial era were resolved in a bilateral treaty signed in 1965 that normalised ties between the two neighbours. Under the treaty, South Korea - then ruled by the autocratic President Park Chung-hee - received a package of \$300m in economic aid and some \$500m in loans from Japan.

The agreement set off mass protests nationwide, prompting the government to declare martial law. But grievances continued to fester, and in 1995, then-Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama issued a statement acknowledging the suffering caused by Japan's "colonial rule and aggression" and made a "profound apology", specifically to the women forced into sexual slavery, who are euphemistically known as "comfort women".

Serbian nationalists hold march

BELGRADE (Reuters): Hundreds of Serb nationalists and Orthodox Christians marched in Belgrade to protest against a Western plan aimed at mending ties between Serbia and its former province Kosovo. Many Serbs view Kosovo, home to the Serbian Orthodox faith's main churches and monasteries, as the heartland of the Serb nation.

Serbian nationalists who also want closer ties with Russia, Serbia's longtime ally, criticise President Aleksandar Vucic for his role in talks over a Western-backed deal with Kosovo. On Feb. 27, Vucic and Kosovo's Prime Minister Albin Kurti tentatively agreed to the deal about normalisation of relations, but did not sign it. "The people of Serbia which soiled this land with blood will not give away Serbian Kosovo, because Kosovo is sacred," said Zorica Mojsic from Belgrade as he walked with other marchers. The Serbian Orthodox Church organised its own prayers for Kosovo, set to last until Easter, but did not endorse the march and its clergy did not participate.

Syria mission worth the risk: Top US general

NORTHEAST SYRIA (Reuters): The nearly eight-year-old US deployment to Syria to combat Islamic State is still worth the risk, the top US military officer said, after a rare, unannounced visit to a dusty base in the country's northeast to meet US troops. Army General Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, flew to Syria to assess efforts to prevent a resurgence of the militant group and review safeguards for American forces against attacks, including from drones flown by Iran-backed militia.

While Islamic State is a shadow of the group that ruled over a third of Syria and Iraq in a Caliphate declared in 2014, hundreds of fighters are still camped in desolate areas where neither the US-led coalition nor the Syrian army, with support from Russia and Iranian-backed militias, exert full control. Thousands of other Islamic State fighters are in detention facilities guarded by Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, America's key ally in the country. American officials say that Islamic State could still regenerate into a major threat.

But the mission, which former President Donald Trump nearly ended in 2018 before softening his withdrawal plans, is remnant of the larger global war against terrorism that had included once the war in Afghanistan and a far larger US military deployment to Iraq. Asked by reporters traveling with him if he believed the Syria deployment of roughly 900 US troops to Syria was worth the risk, Milley tied the mission to the security of the United States and its allies, saying: "If you think that that's important, then the answer is 'Yes.'" "I happen to think that's important," Milley said.

"So I think that an enduring defeat of ISIS and continuing to support our friends and allies in the region ... I think those are important tasks that can be done." The mission carries risk. Four US troops were wounded during a helicopter raid last month when an Islamic State leader triggered an explosion. Last month, the US military shot down an Iranian-made drone in Syria that was attempting to conduct reconnaissance on a patrol base in north-

eastern Syria. Three drones targeted a US base in January in Syria's Al-Tanf region. The US military said two of the drones were shot down while the remaining drone hit the compound, injuring two members of the Syrian Free Army forces.

US officials believe drone and rocket attacks are being directed by Iran-backed militia, a reminder of the complex geopolitics of Syria where Syrian President Bashar al-Assad counts on support from Iran and Russia and sees US troops as occupiers. America's NATO ally Turkey has also threatened a broad offensive in Syria that would threaten the US military's Syrian Kurdish partners, who Ankara views as terrorists. US Army Major General Matthew McFarlane, who commands the US-led coalition against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, described attacks against US forces as a "distraction from our main mission."

McFarlane cited progress against Islamic State, including through the reduction in the numbers of internally displaced people at refugee camps -- a pool of vulnerable people who could be recruited by Islamic State. The al-Hol camp houses around more than 50,000 people, including Syrians, Iraqis and other nationals who fled the conflict, and McFarlane estimated around 600 babies were born there every year. Lieutenant Kamal Alsawafy from the Michigan National Guard is one of the US soldiers in Syria helping provide security for Iraqis leaving al-Hol to be repatriated back to Iraq in protected convoys.

The son of Iraqi refugees who emigrated to the United States, Alsawafy said helping Iraqi refugees brings him joy and described watching people at al-Hol cheering as Iraqis departed the camps for better lives back in Iraq. "It's a good feeling," Alsawafy said. McFarlane said he believed there would come a time when US partners in Syria could manage on their own. But there is no publicly known target date to complete that transition. "Over time, I do envision us transitioning when the conditions are met, where our partners can independently have a sustainable capacity and capability to keep ISIS in check," he said.

‘China proffers peaceful reunification’

BEIJING/TAIPEI (Reuters): Chinese Premier Li Keqiang pledged "peaceful reunification" with Taiwan as well as resolute steps to oppose Taiwan independence, with Taipei responding that Beijing should respect the Taiwanese people's commitment to democracy and freedom. China, which claims democratic Taiwan as its own territory, has increased its military activity near the island over the past three years, responding to what it calls "collusion" between Taipei and Washington, Taiwan's main international backer and arms supplier.

In August, China staged war games around Taiwan in response to a visit to Taipei by then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. Speaking at the opening of the annual meeting of the Chinese parliament, Li said Beijing stands by the "one China" principle, which states that Taiwan is part of China, though did not directly threaten military action. The government

should implement our party's policy for "resolving the Taiwan question" and "take resolute steps to oppose Taiwan independence and promote reunification", he told the roughly 3,000 delegates at Beijing's enormous Great Hall of the People.

"We should promote the peaceful development of cross-Straits relations and advance the process of China's peaceful reunification." Most Taiwanese people have shown no interest in being ruled by autocratic China, which has never renounced the use of force to bring the island under its control.

Li, in separate comments on defence, said the armed forces should boost combat preparedness, though did not mention Taiwan within that context. Taiwan's China-policy making Mainland Affairs Council responded to what it called Li's "reaffirmation" of China's Taiwan policy by saying Beijing should face up to the reality that the two

sides of the Taiwan Strait are "not subordinate to each other".

China should "respect the Taiwanese people's commitment to the core concepts of holding fast to the sovereignty, democracy and freedom of the Republic of China", it said, using Taiwan's formal name. China should deal with cross-strait affairs pragmatically in a rational, equal and mutually respectful manner, so as to create conditions for healthy interactions, it added. Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen has repeatedly offered talks with China, which have been rebuffed as Beijing believes her to be a separatist.

Taiwan's government strongly disputes Beijing's sovereignty claims, and says only the island's 23 million people can decide their future. Taiwan holds presidential and parliamentary elections in early 2024 and tensions with China are likely to dominate campaigning.

Death toll rises to 13

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Agencies): Almost half a million Americans from Kentucky to Michigan were in the dark after a massive front dumped heavy snow across much of the nation's northern tier and slammed parts of the South with powerful thunderstorms and tornadoes. At least 13 deaths were reported from the storm, which began by dumping several feet of snow in California's mountains and pushing east, AccuWeather said.

Five deaths were confirmed in Kentucky as wind gusts surpassing 70 mph downed trees and power lines and damaged homes and other buildings, Gov. Andy Beshear said. Power crews in Louisville and around the state labored after high-speed wind storm turned off the lights for hundreds of thousands of Kentucky residents. The system spawned straight-line winds, possible tornadoes and powerful thunderstorms in parts of the South. More than 173,500 homes and businesses were without power in Kentucky, according to the tracking website poweroutage.us. About 71,400 were dark in Michigan and some 30,000 in Tennessee. California's mountains are expected to get more snow

Monday, and the state's drought recovery already has been "phenomenal" this winter, weatherbug.com reports. The average water equivalent in the snowpack in California's mountains range from 40 to 46 inches - almost double the average for early March, the website says. For the first time in years, less than half the state's land area is in moderate drought or worse.

"The real estate covered in the moderate to exceptional drought has dropped 50%, from 99.48% in early December to 49.13% in the latest report," weatherbug reported. Heavy rainfall amounts up to 4.5 inches produced widespread flash flooding with numerous road closures. Soggy ground from excessive rainfall likely contributed to some trees being more susceptible to being blown over, the National Weather Service said.

"The damage from this event is as widespread as any natural disaster I have ever seen in Kentucky co-op history," said Chris Perry, president of Kentucky Electric Cooperatives. Beshear and Louisville Gas & Electric spokesperson Liz Pratt each described efforts to restore power as a "multi-day" process. Pratt said

LG&E would prioritize restoring power to essential locations such as hospitals and nursing homes but would work to turn the lights back on across the city as quickly as possible. She said the outages were the worst since an ice storm in 2009. Beshear said he would visit McCracken County, 200 miles southwest of Louisville, to speak with families and survey some of the damage.

"Just like every other challenge we've been through, we'll do this together," Beshear said on Twitter. "And we will be there until every structure and life is rebuilt." Driving conditions across the Northeast were hazardous as dozens of cars, trucks and tractor-trailers slid off roads, authorities said. #Thundersnow was trending on Twitter as many areas experienced thunder and lightning during the snowstorm. The weather event, caused when a mass of cold air forms on top of warm air, is rare because the upward convection motion of air that helps produce thunderstorms is uncommon in winter. Parts of the Northeast already saddled with up to a foot of snow could experience another dose Monday as a new storm tracks eastward, forecasters warned.

‘West Bank violence threatened stability’

AMMAN (Reuters): Jordan's King Abdullah told US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin a surge in West Bank violence threatened regional stability and asked for assistance to fight a growing drug war along its borders with Syria blamed on Iranian-backed militias, Jordanian officials said. Austin arrived in Jordan earlier at the start of a Mid take him to Israel and Egypt in a show of support for its main regional allies against the growing threat posed by Iran, US officials said.

He wrote on Twitter before his departure that he would meet key leaders and "reaffirm the US commitment to regional stability and advancing the shared interests of our allies and partners." King Abdullah, whose country hosted the first Israeli-Palestinian meeting in Aqaba last week with the participation of top US and Egyptian officials, said efforts must be accelerated to bring about a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace deal based on a two-state solution. "There is a need for calm and to reduce escalation in Palestinian territories and stop any unilateral steps that undermined stability and abort chances of attaining peace," a palace statement said after the talks between the king and Austin. In Israel, Austin will also raise concerns about the violence in the West Bank that has alarmed Jordan and Arab leaders and discuss diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions ahead of Muslim and Jewish religious holidays, US officials said.

The US Defense Department said ahead of the visit that discussions would focus on the growing threat Iran poses to regional stability, and on advancing multilateral security cooperation with integrated air and missile defenses. Central to discussion will be the "full constellation of Iran-associated threats..." a senior defense official was quoted as saying on the Pentagon's official site ahead of the visit. "Those threats include Iran's arming, training and funding of violent proxy groups, aggression at sea, cyber threats, its ballistic missile program and drone attacks," he added.

The king discussed with Austin Jordan's concerns over the growing entrenchment of Iranian-backed militias in southern Syria whom officials say have stepped up drug-smuggling operations through its borders to reach markets in the Gulf, a Jordanian official told Reuters. Amman wants more US military aid to bolster security on the border, where Washington has since the more than decade-long conflict began given around \$1 billion to establish border posts, Jordanian officials say. Jordan has a roughly 375 km-long border with Syria.

Fire blazes through Rohingya refugee camp

DHAKA (Agencies): A massive fire raced through a crammed refugee camp for Rohingya people in southern Bangladesh, leaving thousands homeless, a fire official and the United Nations said. Thousands of people lost their homes as the fire, which broke out, burned down or damaged at least 2,000 huts, officials from the Balukhali fire department told Al Jazeera.

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respond to 1.2 million people," he added.

The UN refugee agency's Regina De La Portilla told Al Jazeera that most shelters in the camp are made with bamboo and tarpaulin. "The materials we use in the camps are all temporary that can catch fire, and it spreads quickly due to the congested nature of the camps," she said. Firefighters, assisted by local volunteers, were able to get the blaze under control, but Portilla said a third of the camp's population had lost their homes and belongings and that the UN was providing mental healthcare services.

"We have deployed 90 community health workers [also refugees], who have been trained to provide first aid and psychological support, and if somebody needs further support they are referred to health services to deal with this type of mental trauma," she said. It

is not clear what the affected refugees will do for shelter. More than one million Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar over several decades, including about 740,000 who crossed the border starting in August 2017, when the Myanmar military launched a brutal crackdown.

Conditions in Myanmar have worsened since a military takeover in 2021, and attempts to send them back have failed. Last year, the United States said the oppression of the Rohingya in Myanmar amounts to genocide after US authorities confirmed accounts of mass atrocities against civilians by the military in a systematic campaign against the ethnic minority. The mostly Muslim Rohingya face widespread discrimination in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, where most are denied citizenship and many other rights.

Estonia elections: Kallas secures big win

TALLINN (Agencies): Voters in Estonia have elected a new parliament with almost complete results suggesting a big win for the centre-right Reform Party of Prime Minister Kaja Kallas, one of Europe's most outspoken supporters of Ukraine. With 99 percent of ballots counted, Kallas's liberal group was at 31.6 percent, followed by the far-right eurosceptic EKRE party at 16.1 percent, reflecting concerns among some voters over the rising cost of living in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The Centre Party, traditionally favoured by Estonia's sizable ethnic-Russian minority, was at 14.7 percent.

"This result, which is not final yet, will give us a strong mandate to put together a good government," the 45-year-old

Kallas told her party colleagues and jubilant supporters at a hotel in the Baltic nation's capital, Tallinn. Preliminary results suggested six parties passed the 5 percent threshold of support needed to enter the 101-seat parliament, or Riigikogu, including newcomer Eesti 200, a liberal centrist party. Voter turnout was 63.7 percent, little changed from the previous election. Estonia, a country of 1.3 million people on Russia's northwestern border, has been one of Kyiv's most vocal supporters since Moscow invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Its military assistance to Ukraine amounts to more than one percent of gross domestic product (GDP) - the biggest contribution of any country relative to the size of its economy.

Kallas said any govern-

ment she formed would keep calling for pressure on Russia. "We ... have to invest in our security, our aggressive neighbour has not vanished and will not vanish, so we have to work with that", she told reporters. Reform is a centre-right liberal party that appeals to business owners and young professionals.

It has promised to raise military spending to at least three percent of GDP and ease taxes on business. It also wants to pass a law approving same-sex civil partnerships. The latest results will give the Reform Party 37 seats in the legislature, and Kallas will need junior partners to form a coalition with a comfortable majority to govern. Estonia broke away from the Soviet Union in 1991 and is a member of NATO and the European Union.

China Premier Li Keqiang bows out as Xi loyalists take reins

BEIJING (AP): After a decade in Chinese President Xi Jinping's shadow, Li Keqiang is taking his final bow as the country's premier, marking a shift away from the skilled technocrats who have helped steer the world's second-biggest economy in favor of officials known mainly for their unquestioned loyalty to China's most powerful leader in recent history.

After exiting the ruling Communist Party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee in October - despite being below retirement age - Li's last major task was delivering the state of the nation address to the rubber-stamp parliament on Monday. The report sought to reassure citizens of the resiliency of the Chinese economy, but contained little that was new. Once seen as a potential top leader, Li was

increasingly sidelined as Xi accumulated ever-greater powers and elevated the military and security services in aid of the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Li's lack of visibility sometimes made it difficult to remember he was technically ranked No. 2 in party.

Li "was a premier largely kept out of the limelight by order of the boss," said Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies and a longtime observer of Chinese politics. In an era where personal loyalty trumps all, the fact that Li wasn't seen purely as a Xi loyalist may end up being "the main reason why he will be remembered fondly," Tsang said. For most of his career, Li was known as a cautious, capable, and highly intelligent bureaucrat who rose

through, and was bound by, a consensus-oriented Communist Party that reflexively stifles dissent.

As governor and then party secretary of the densely populated agricultural province of Henan in the 1990s, Li squelched reporting on an AIDS outbreak tied to illegal blood-buying rings that pooled plasma and re injected it into donors after removing the blood products, allegedly with the collusion of local officials. While Li was not in office when the scandal broke, his administration worked to quiet it up, prevented victims from seeking redress and harassed private citizens working on behalf of orphans and others affected. But Li also cut a modestly different profile, an English speaker from a generation of politicians schooled during a time of greater openness to liberal Western ideas.

The Frontier Post**JALIL AFRIDI***Managing Editor*

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Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fjkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

If PEMRA rules can pacify combative politics?

RECENTLY, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has banned broadcasting 'live and recorded' speeches and press conferences of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan on all satellite TV channels with immediate effect. According to the Electronic Media Regulatory Watchdog, Chairman PTI is continuously leveling baseless allegations and spreading hate speech/statements against state institutions and their leadership which is not only prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order but is likely to disturb peace and tranquility in the society. The watchdog defended itself by saying that its action was in line with Article 19 of the Constitution of Pakistan and a judgment of the apex Court passed in Suo Moto Case, furthermore, Section 27(a) of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 as amended by PEMRA (Amendment) Act 2007 also warrant a ban on Khan's hateful speech against the government institutions, public office holders and opponents over mainstream media. In another action, PEMRA suspended the license of ARY News for violating instructions regarding airing Imran Khan's speech issued earlier in the day.

The political environment of the country is at the boiling point due to hate speech, war-mongering and baseless propaganda of combatant political groups in the country. The civic disagreement had been shaped into a personal rivalry, and legal battle while both groups take shelter from their political influence to cancel their misdeeds and unnerve courts and adjudicators. Meanwhile, the politics of clash and malevolence badly hurt the nation in the past. This combative politics seriously undermined freedom of expression, and the right to peaceful assembly and reduced the space for positive criticism by the opponent, media, and civil society, while providing the government an opportunity to manipulate the situation in its favor in the name of public interest.

Historically, the use of administrative authority and media regulations against opponents is not a new phenomenon in Pakistan. Earlier, the PTI government banned speeches of PML-N Supremo Nawaz Sharif by using the same laws, and now the coalition government repaid the PTI with the same coin. Apparently, targeting opponents and media outlets through administrative laws in the current day hybrid world is not only a violation of civil liberties but also a counter-productive and failed strategy. Presently, social media is an all times facility to address and liaison with the party workers and the public, while the government will only earn ignominy and the ban will ultimately be reversed by the court in the coming days.

Surprisingly, after a long tussle with his opponents throughout the government and after his ouster from power, the former Prime Minister and PTI Chief has recently expressed his readiness to set the course for a dialogue and joint work with its political opponents, which is delayed but an encouraging and immensely needed step at this time. The state of Pakistan is embattled with multiple issues such as historic inflation, the energy crisis, the scourge of terrorism, and acute economic and financial depletion, while the unceasing political tussle remained at the forefront of making up for those upheavals. Currently, Pakistan needs national unity, Political and economic stability which could not be realized without dialogue and consensus on a charter of democracy across the political spectrum. As early as our leaders grasp this fact, and initiate a positive momentum, the bulk of the issues will resolve accordingly.

RECENTLY, newly elected far-right Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that his government would legalize 10 unauthorized West Bank settlements to boost settlers' morale, strengthen their hold on the area and consolidate illegal occupation of the Jewish state over the Arab land.

Over the past few decades, the Jewish state helped facilitated the construction of over 250 illegal settlements in a very well-planned manner at strategically chosen locations in the west bank that Jewish communities bifurcate the Palestinian land in a way that the dream of a free and sovereign Palestinian state could be stalled forever. According to the reports, more than 700,000 Israeli Jews are currently residing in illegal outposts in West Bank and Jerusalem, while the Israeli government was planning to relocate thousands of others to the disputed territory from within Israel and several other countries in the world.

Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem during the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 and shortly started the construction Jews settlements in a bid to consolidate its control and bring a demograph-

ic change to the area to ultimately assimilate the occupied regions into Israel's mainland or at least to create a buffer zone around its territory to engage Palestinians' resistance movement without risking its growth and security. As the illegal settlements in the occupied territory are on the rise, poor Palestinians routinely faced home and property demolitions at the hands of occupying forces over mere charges of their involvement in violence against Israeli troops despite the fact Israeli regime has blocked construction permits for Palestinians for many years.

Brutal settlers' colonialism is the worst crime that commonly attracts an uproar against the Jewish occupier regime at the United Nations and its executive arm UN Security Council, however, Israel's western allies particularly the United States actively neutralize anti-Israel moves at the UN by using veto power and tactful manipulation of UN's legal and procedural frameworks in the defense of world's foremost illegal state in the universe. Over the years, Israeli leaders repeatedly promised the global community to dismantle the rogue outposts, however, Israel temporarily evacuated

only two settlements while constructing multiple others in the West Bank in the past year.

The tension in occupied territory witnessed a sharp upsurge after the far-right Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu gained power after the recent election because Netanyahu-led far-right coalition intends to implement Tel Aviv long awaited projects regarding Jews relocation and settlements over Arab land. According to the Media, sixty-three Palestinian including armed freedom fighters and innocent civilians were killed in 2023 so far.

After the recent attack on the Nave Yaakov Settlement in recent past, the Israeli government has ramped up its inhumane atrocities against Palestinians and enforced several punitive measures which include the demolition of homes and properties, suspension of home construction permits for Palestinians, movement restriction, punishment on illegal construction, collective punishment to the heirs of Palestinian freedom fighters involved in attacks against Israelis. In addition to that, the Israeli government has tabled a law in the Knesset (Israel's unicameral Parliament) to revoke the

Muhammad Asad

citizenship or permanent residency of those involved in acts of terrorism against Israeli interests or its citizens.

Historically, the Palestine issue is one of the longstanding unsolved disputes on the agenda of the UN Security Council (UNSC) over the past seven and a half decades. Multiple resolutions had been adopted by the UNSC, and the UN General Assembly to address the issue or matters relating to or that emerged as a result of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, however, the two-state solution remained the most popular and widely recognized formula which provides a solid and equally beneficial solution for both competitors.

Historically, the two-state solution was first surfaced by the global body through a resolution in 1974, while putting forward the idea of two independent states Palestine and Israel side by side with secure and recognized borders of the pre-1967 position along with a permanent resolution of the refugee problem, the scheme categorically called for the East Jerusalem to be the capital of Palestine.

As the two-state solution

offers a viable solution to the Palestine issue, thus it rapidly received global acknowledgment while Palestinian leadership and Arab leaders backed this formula during the Arab Summit in Fez in 1982.

As a matter of fact, Israel has always opposed the two-state theory and perceived it as a unilateral attempt of the Palestinian leadership to get global recognition for the Palestinian state. Israel did not agree to an UN-sponsored two-state solution to the Palestine dispute and conceived a plan of demographic change to stall the formation of a free and independent Muslim state in its backyard. Recently, during his speech to the 77th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, the former Israeli Prime Minister, Yair Lapid admitted the two-state solution as a workable plan, but the incumbent hardcore Israeli Prime Minister is a staunch opponent of the two-state solution so far.

Nearly half a century, after the proposal was put forth by the UN Security Council and backed by the Arabs, the Jewish state has significantly altered the Arabs-Jew population ratio in the occupied Palestinian territories through its ongoing

Settlers' Colonialism in the past decades. As Israeli leaders have completed their homework to fail the global plan regarding the Palestine dispute, the Arab leaders must have their appreciation of the latest situation in the region. Currently, Israeli has forged diplomatic, trade, and economic ties with a majority of Arab nations, and Tel Aviv is rapidly integrating itself into the broader Middle East region. In fact, Israeli leaders are using Mutt and Jeff technique to further divide and disintegrate Arabs over the Palestinian cause and permanently draw out the issue from the global forum by using the two-state solution in the shape of a more fragile, geographically scattered, and economically weak Palestinian authority that entirely depends on Israel for its survival.

The Israeli plan is not vague, but the Arabs are not aware of the true designs of their friend-like foes. A US shuttle diplomacy is continuously evolving in the Middle East region to settle down the Palestine issue on the basis of the UN-sponsored two-state solution but it would be according to the needs and desires of Israel.

The writer is a journalist, military veteran, and former Diplomat. He can be reached at @Asad_FP.

Why Ukraine is wary of the Russian opposition

Anton Shekhovtsov

RUSSIA'S full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year reignited a longstanding debate about the place the Russian opposition occupies in the context of Russian aggression in the post-Soviet space. Russian opposition activists and some observers have contended that Russian expansionism can stop only through regime change and democratisation, ostensibly led by the Russian opposition.

Ukrainians, and many of their supporters from post-Soviet countries that have experienced Russian imperialism firsthand, tend to disagree. They do not see the Russian opposition - and more specifically its most prominent leader today, Alexey Navalny - as future guarantors of peace.

To explain why, I would first like to relay an exchange I had with members of Navalny's movement, or "Navalists" as they are called in Russian, back in 2015. It happened at a closed event at a British think tank in which a Ukrainian colleague of mine spoke about the transformation of cultural values in Ukraine after the 2014 revolution and the beginning of the Russian aggression. Among the attendees were two Russians, who were touring Britain as representatives of Navalny's movement. After the talk was done, my colleague and I had a chance to have a brief chat with them.

As one might expect, we questioned them about the remarks Navalny made on Russia's illegal annexation of Ukraine's Crimea in March 2014. In an interview with Echo of Moscow radio station in October 2014, Navalny admitted that the peninsula had been seized through "outrageous violations of all international norms",

and yet asserted that it would "remain part of Russia" and would "never become part of Ukraine in the foreseeable future". His statement was not simply an assessment of the developments around Crimea. When pressed on whether he would return Crimea to Ukraine were he to become Russia's president, Navalny wrapped his "No" in an odd rhetorical question: "What? Is Crimea a sandwich or something that you can take and give back?" It was clear that his political position on Crimea was that it should "remain part of Russia". It is important to point out that our conversation with the two Navalists took place less than half a year after the assassination of prominent Russian opposition politician Boris Nemtsov near the Kremlin. The murder of Nemtsov, who vocally opposed Russia's aggression against Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, allowed Navalny to emerge as the main Russian opposition leader still attempting to do politics in Russia.

The other major opponent of President Vladimir Putin's regime, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, lived in exile in London and was not directly involved in Russian politics. Hence, it was not unreasonable to imagine at that time that any regime change in Russia, if it were to happen, would be led by Navalny. That is why we wanted to know what Ukraine should expect from "the wonderful Russia of the future", as Navalny likes to call post-Putin Russia. The Navalists responded that under a democratically elected government, Moscow would keep Crimea despite the fact that the annexation was illegal. That is because

their policies would have to reflect the will of the Russian people and the overwhelming majority of Russians wanted Crimea to be within Russian borders.

But there was more to it. We contended that the West would never recognize the annexation of Crimea and that the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity would not only improve relations between Russia and the West but would also help repair relations between Russia and Ukraine. The Navalists' response was that "the wonderful Russia of the future" would find ways to smooth relations with the West without rectifying the injustice done to Ukraine. Ukraine, in other words, might be an immediate victim of Putin's regime, and yet - even when he is gone - it would remain a victim of Russian colonialism because the latter was popular not only among regime supporters but also among "Russian democrats". As Volodymyr Vynnychenko, one of the central figures of the Ukrainian national liberation movement in 1917-1919, insightfully noted a century ago, "Russian democracy ends where the Ukrainian question begins". As Navalny became the face of the Russian opposition to Putin - a face increasingly recognised as such not only in Russia but also in the West - Ukrainians grew wary. At that time, the West backed democratisation and modernisation in Ukraine and offered some support for the country's struggle against Russian aggression. "But what would become of that if Navalny were to come to power in Russia?" we asked ourselves.

As Navalny definitely

enjoyed, at the very least, moral support from Western leaders, his rise to power in Russia could conceivably lead to a reset in Western-Russian relations, leaving Ukraine out in the cold. Many feared that Ukraine would no longer matter to Western leaders if they had someone nicer than Putin to talk to. And there was already a precedent. In August 2008, Russia - then under the leadership of Dmitry Medvedev - invaded Georgia and occupied the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The West brokered a peace agreement which was not only highly unfavourable to Georgia but was also not honoured by Russia. And yet, half a year later, the Obama administration offered Medvedev - who, at that time, appeared more progressive than Putin - a "reset" in an attempt to improve relations between the US and Russia. This move which was generally welcomed by West European governments essentially meant "wiping the slate clean" and, thus, implied that Russia's occupation of Georgian regions would not be contested.

Navalny, as Ukrainians and liberal Russians remember well, vehemently supported the Russian invasion of Georgia in 2008 and even used derogatory, dehumanising terms to refer to the Georgian people. Several years later, he would apologise for the terms he used, but never for his support of the Russian war on Georgia. Navalny was nominally against the Russian aggression in Ukraine, but his "anti-war" position was underpinned by economic, rather than moral, considerations: "Russia can ill afford waging the war". That position

expectedly did not entail any empathy towards the Ukrainian people - something that was also reflected in his use of ethnic slurs against them. He saw the Russian people as victims of injustice under Putin's regime, not the Ukrainians. In his view, no wrong had been committed against Ukraine that was worth righting.

In the following years, as the Russian aggression in Ukraine turned into a frozen conflict, Navalny and his team focused on exposing the corruption of Putin's regime through a series of high-profile investigations. Ahead of the 2018 presidential elections, these sensational revelations started to annoy the Kremlin in the most serious manner. Navalny and his followers were subjected to regular physical attacks and short-term arrests. The Kremlin had clearly come to believe that his political movement posed a threat to the regime and decided to destroy it. It seemed to make sense for Ukrainians to offer support for Navalny's movement, at least tactical if not strategic, as it could potentially destabilise Putin's regime and subvert its war machine. But the troubles of Navalny and his followers did not resonate with Ukrainians, as his past remarks, as well as the Navalists' arrogance and disdain, offered little hope that "the wonderful Russia of the future" would have any respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Even after the Russian authorities poisoned Navalny with a nerve agent and later imprisoned him on politically-motivated charges, few Ukrainians softened their stances. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, followed by the massive crackdown on the remnants of anti-Putin opposition in Russia, dra-

matically changed the views on Ukraine many Russian critics of the Putin regime held, including Navalny's team. As the majority of Navalists were forced to seek refuge in the West, where many influential figures adopted a "Ukraine First" policy in communicating with self-identified "Russian democrats", the Navalists could no longer afford to publicly express their disdain for Ukraine because they risked losing all Western sympathy towards their movement.

In late February 2023, Navalny's team published a 15-point manifesto that sought to clear much of the controversy around their views of Ukraine. Importantly, the manifesto acknowledged the internationally recognised borders of Ukraine, implying the need for the restoration of Ukraine's sovereignty over Crimea and all other currently occupied Ukrainian territories.

The document also insisted on withdrawing all Russian troops from Ukraine, offering reparations, investigating war crimes in cooperation with international institutions, and ultimately letting Ukraine live and develop as Ukrainians want. For many Ukrainians, however, this change of heart is well past its due date. In today's Ukraine, very few believe that the Russian aggression can be stopped by anti-Putin activism, even one that is unambiguously pro-Ukrainian.

In this war, Ukrainians rely on their own fighting spirit and Western support. What happens to Russia after its much-anticipated military defeat in Ukraine is not of much concern. This may appear shortsighted, but the war is understandably a more pressing issue.

Aljazeeraa

First Franco-British leaders' summit is a good augury

Andrew Hammond

FRENCH-UK relations were often in the "deep freeze" during the prime ministerships of Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, yet this Friday (March 10) will see the first bilateral summit between London and Paris for five years. Theresa May was the last UK prime minister that French President Emmanuel Macron met for such a summit, yet even then there was little personal rapport between the two leaders. Predictably, this did little to break the substantive impasse in the UK's then-EU exit negotiations in 2018.

However, it appears that the latest resident of 10 Downing Street, Rishi Sunak, does have significantly warmer ties with Macron. Both assumed their nation's highest public office at a very early age, having had prior jobs as finance ministers, and before that having earned

fortunes in the financial services industry. So Sunak hopes, in this relatively auspicious context, that he can forge a much better relationship with the still-young French president, creating a new era of "entente cordiale." This may be furthered by the state visit of King Charles to France later this month.

The omens for an upturn in ties also appear particularly bright after the agreement over the Northern Ireland protocol last Monday between London, Brussels and the EU 27. If signed off by legislators, this would remove a huge block to UK relations with Europe. Specific issues that will be on the agenda at Friday's summit include deepening bilateral cooperation in areas such as climate and energy, the economy, migration and wider shared foreign policy and security goals such as Ukraine. There is potential upside in many of these issues for a stronger rela-

tionship.

Positive as this all is, however, bilateral ties remain challenging in numerous areas in the post-Brexit era. During those long Brexit divorce negotiations, France had perhaps the most headline stance on the UK's exit from the EU. This reflected the complex, contradictory relationship that Paris has long had with London in the context of EU affairs. The ardently pro-Brussels Macron, who believes Brexit to be an act of political vandalism to the continent, was frequently accused by UK ministers of holding up progress in negotiations.

Macron's Brexit positioning, including his robust stance on precluding future UK access to the single market, was reinforced by broader French plans to pitch Paris as a competing financial center to London. That began in earnest under the presidency of Francois

Hollande which saw former Finance Minister Michel Sapin and Hollande's Brexit Special Envoy Christian Noyer, former Bank of France governor, begin openly promoting Paris with key financial firms after the June 2016 referendum.

This has continued under Macron as he hailed the decision to relocate the European Banking Agency to Paris from London as "recognition of France's attractiveness and European commitment." French officials still hope that the EBA's relocation will help to bring many thousands more UK banking jobs to the French capital, which is competing post-Brexit with other financial centers, including Frankfurt, for such employment.

Macron also said that he might seek, post-Brexit, to renegotiate the 2003 Les Touquet migration agree-

ment. This allows the UK to operate border controls in France and has kept thousands of migrants - heading for Britain - on the French side of the channel. What France's position on Brexit underlines is how each EU state has distinctive political, economic and social interests that informs their stance on the UK's exit. Thus, while the EU 27 were in general remarkably unified in their negotiations with London, the positions of the individual countries did vary according to factors such as trade and wider economic ties and patterns of migration with the UK, domestic election pressures, and levels of euroskeptic support within their populaces.

The divergent, and complex positions of EU states thus range from the UK's fellow non-eurozone member, Sweden, whose political and economic interests are broadly aligned with UK positions, to countries that have more complicated

postures, including France. While the position of Paris has now moderated, especially in the wake of the new Irish protocol deal, the two nations remain misaligned in several key areas, including fishing rights and migration across the Channel in small boats. This lack of alignment in certain areas will not be helped by the fact that neither leader is in a particularly strong domestic political position. Sunak's government is not popularly elected, while Macron's party lacks an absolute majority in the French legislature.

Taken together, this underlines the likely limits to trying to reconfigure bilateral relations in the short term. While the diplomatic "mood music" is upbeat between the two young leaders, the distinctive post-Brexit interests of each state will make renewing relations complex and challenging.

Arab News

Justice delayed is justice denied

PAKISTAN was founded so that Muslims can follow Islam and Prophet's teachings without any interruption. We Pakistani think we will be questioned for our deen on the day of judgment but not the injustice we are doing to people on this Earth.Humanity is superior to every religion. Every religion spread the same message 'Humanity and Justice'.

But unfortunately in this country, both humanity and justice are not found. In this country which is declared as an Islamic State, we see no one in power following the rules of Islam. Whether its judiciary or military. Islam forbid us to attack women, children, or disabled people in a war. But in this country, people favour Taliban. Taliban a group of Muslim terrorists who do everything against the teaching of Islam.

A few days ago Javed Akhtar the famous and senior celebrity of India visited Pakistan and said, "I am from Mumbai and all of us witnessed the attack on the city. The attackers weren't from Norway, or from Egypt. They are still present in your country, so you should not be offended if an Indian complains about this." Javed Akhtar is absolutely right. After the murder of Shaheed Bhutto, this country became heaven for Taliban. From the beginning, PPP is against Taliban. Talibans have attacked holy places Mosques, Imam Bargah, educational institutes.

We've to accept this. Pakistan has always given refugee to Talibans.Pakistan's judicial system is a hypocrite. When Pakistan was getting independence Muhammad

Ali Jinnah said , Subcontinent is a two nation theory. Well. We are still living in a Two Nation Theory. In this country, justice is strict for PPP and lenient for other political parties. Judicial system favour militants and their puppets where-as PPP from the beginning is a criminal in front of the law. Is this truly the Islamic State? USA, UK, Canada, and every non Muslim countries have better laws than this country. They generally follow the concept of Islam that is equality.

Pakistan's judicial has some issues with PPP and its leaders. Whether it was ZA Bhutto or Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto or President Asif Ali Zardari, they all are criminals in front of them. Whereas, Imran Niazi, a man who always broke the laws, Nawaz Sharif who abused Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and spread fake and insensitive images of her in public, MQM who always murdered Sindhi people, or any army officer who committed any crime yet he is not in media or wanted list just because he is an army officer. When ZA Bhutto was alive, he was accused of a murder and he was murdered by judicial system.

It was a judicial murder, yet no one cared enough a man who is actually the messiah of this country is hanged in Rawalpindi jail without any crime.Whether Pakistani believe in this or not but in actual he gave the real freedom to this country. Muhammad Ali Jinnah was the founder of Pakistan but ZA Bhutto is the founder of democracy, freedom of speech,

freedom of religion, he made Pakistan a nuclear power, and many more. . After his shahadat, his daughter took the responsibility of this country and she was blamed many times, spend many years in jail, witnessed the deaths of her two beloved brothers, she stood against violence, she was brave and classy lady. She never asked for revenge. Mohtarma always talked in favour of democracy and against dictatorship. She said, 'Every dictator uses religion as a prop to keep himself in power'.

That's the truth . Every dictator used religion for his favour. Gen Zia imposed his handmade Islamic rules, Gen Musharraf following the footsteps of Zia, favoured Taliban and gave them refugee at Lal Masjid, and Imran Khan , well. He still uses religion to manipulate people and he call this 'Islamic Touch'. A few days back, a PTI woman used Imran's portrait as a Hindu God. Where is the justice now? Why are they letting Muslim people to mock Non Muslims religions? Whereas, when an innocent Non-Muslim is accused of fake blasphemy case, he is murdered brutally. I hope, Pakistan still remember Priyantha Kumar who was murdered brutally by Muslim people over fake blasphemy charges.When it comes to political parties, justice system is hypocrite towards them. For years President Asif Ali Zardari was kept in jail, tortured and was released after 14 years.When Imran Niazi was ruining this nation, he showed his hatred towards President Asif Ali

Zardari.

His sister, Faryal Talpur was arrested a day before Eid. I still remember that night we were at Super Market, Islamabad and my father got a call from office he was asked to reach Media Office as soon as possible, Adi Faryal is arrested. Imran showed no mercy to anyone and now when he is accused of many cases, judges are giving him every right to choose a day, date, time to present at the court. Imran Khan Niazi, a man who always supported rapists, murderers, criminals and still he is getting bail over and over again. He promised Riyasat-e-Madina , he promised an Islamic state, well, this is not an Islamic state. His puppets spent two days in jail and were crying to go home. Learn from ZA Bhutto, Beghum Nusrat Bhutto, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, President Asif Ali Zardari, and Faryal Talpur how to be strong and brave. Bhutto and Zardari gave their lives to this nation, this country owes them a lot. They gave no justice to Shaheed ZA Bhutto.

It has been 15 years when Shaheed Mohtarma was murdered, 15 years has passed, still there is no justice for her? Still her murders are living a peaceful life. President Asif Ali Zardari was extremely ill and yet he was called to Supreme Court from Karachi Hospital for hearing, whereas, Imran Niazi, a criminal, he is asked whether he can appear in court or not?A country can never be in a good state if its justice system is weak. Our justice system is ruined. Judges have ruined Pakistan. We no longer find justice in this country.



Russia’s second, silent war against its human capital

At the end of last year, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the government to draw up a package of measures to increase Russia's birth rates and life expectancy. He also expressed bewilderment at the falling birth rates in a number of regions.

Just a few days later, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu proposed upping the age from which Russian men are required to perform their military service from 18 to 21 and increasing the upper age limit for conscription from 27 to 30. These proposals mean young men would be called up after earning their college degrees, and trained specialists would be pulled out of the job market to have their skills voided by military service.

There is a major discrepancy between these two objectives. If men go to war or emigrate en masse instead of fathering children, where will the children come from? The effect on the labor market will also be severe: conscription at such a productive age leeches the labor force out of an economy that is already expected to lose 3-4 million people aged 20-40 between 2020 and 2030 due to demographic trends. The working population is also losing those who have already left or will leave the country in response to the intense militarization of life, not to mention those who are mobilized, killed, or maimed in combat if the so-called "special operation" continues.

Combined, this will create a significant labor force deficit and a plethora of demographic problems, further exacerbating the negative dynamics in birth rates that have been observed in Russia since 2017. The decrease in the working-age population will become chronic, and the "preservation of the people" that Putin has spoken about for many years will not be achieved.

Some of the objective reasons for Russia's demographic problems reflect historical dynamics: the number of women of childbearing age is falling, and the average age at which women are having children is rising steadily among urban, well-educated populations.

There are also short- and medium-term factors with potentially long-term consequences. The Covid-19 pandemic and the "special military operation" have created extreme uncertainty about the future. This has predictably changed family planning: some people are deciding not to have children at all, while others are postponing having them until a time of greater psychological and financial stability. Nor does the militarization of life in Russia encourage people to add to their families, except for those who consider it their duty to supply the motherland with cannon fodder for

Andrei Kolesnikov

future wars.

A year of military service for the 300,000 men mobilized into the army in September and October 2022 will mean 25,000 fewer births, estimates Mikhail Denisenko, director of the Institute of Demography at Moscow's Higher School of Economics. That isn't a huge number, but it could rise significantly as a result of emigration, the long-term decline in birth rates, and the potential expansion of the mobilization age. Russian legislators are also pitching in to increase the birth rate. Worried about the reduced production of future soldiers for their imaginary empire, lawmakers - supported by the clergy - are mulling a partial ban on abortion. Yet Russia has, for the most part, completed the "third demographic transition," in which the majority of the population gains the ability to regulate birth rates. Abortions are no longer widespread in the country.

We are witnessing a phenomenon Russia has faced many times: wave after wave of war and repression is draining away human resources. The best way to promote higher birth rates is to create the conditions for a stable, peaceful, and safe life - which means keeping young men safe from the clutches of the military. Until 2022, Russia was considered a market economy with mid-level incomes, though those incomes were not distributed evenly, which fueled a trend that worries education economics experts: young people whose families cannot afford to put them through college have started rejecting higher education in favor of secondary vocational training, which allows them to enter the labor market sooner.

The proposal to change the conscription age to 21, which was likely approved by the Kremlin, will be a double whammy for the labor market and the economy: highly qualified college graduates unable to enter the labor market will instead end up in the military and lose their qualifications, while young men with vocational degrees who are already in the labor market will be torn from the economy midway through honing their skills. It would be a mistake to think that this wouldn't affect the qualitative and quantitative indicators of Russian GDP, household income, and quality of human capital. Essentially, there is a second war underway at home: a war against the quality of Russia's human capital. And the militarization of the country creates all of the conditions to reduce this quality for the longest of terms. Although Russia will not see large-scale unemployment, this is only the case because the economy will face a deficit of both high-skilled and low-skilled

labor.

Putin has encouraged the armed forces not to be shy about requesting more financing, and this also impacts the quality of human capital. Spending on the military and security is "unproductive expenditure," meaning that it does not improve quality of life. It is anti-human in all senses. Meanwhile, the proportion of productive expenditure (above all, education and healthcare) is stagnant at best and cannot compete with the unproductive expenditure that is prioritized in a military-police state. Furthermore, it's difficult to assess the real scale of spending on the military and defense (including the state's defense from its own citizens) as about 23% of the 2023 budget is classified.

Another trend, according to Tatyana Klyachko, director of the Center for Continuing Education Economics of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, is that the average number of years Russia's employed population spends in education is stagnant at best, and falling in some fields. This also reflects the fact that young people want to enter the labor market and start making money as soon as possible. The value of a good education is declining. For the state today, quickly assembling and disassembling a Kalashnikov rifle is a far more important skill.

Authoritarian regimes want to get rid of high-quality and globally competitive education. The "special military operation" has only accelerated the political purges at Russian educational establishments. We have yet to find out how many young people with science and technology degrees have left Russia (including those who fear being persecuted for espionage or treason if working with covert innovations). However, even the near-sighted state has noticed that the number of high school students planning to take the Unified State Exam in physics and information sciences has fallen. A high-quality, modern education produces modern, thinking people, and thinking people aren't prepared to go and fight for false ideals. Educated individuals are independent individuals, including economically. A militarized state does not need independent people. It needs people who diligently obey orders.

One of the main problems of Russian society today is that the generation of 70-year-old Russian leaders is deciding how young people will live and what they will die for. This is not a responsible strategy that will contribute to the healthy development of the country, and it certainly does nothing toward the "preservation of the population."

The Moscow Times

Sunak isn’t halting migrant boats or chasing traffickers

Diane Taylor

THE government cannot be accused of under-promising when it comes to ending the practice of refugees crossing the Channel in dinghies. Ever since former home secretary Sajid Javid declared a "major incident" in the Channel in December 2018 - a year when just a few hundred people attempted to cross - the government has been promising solutions.

The latest plan, from Rishi Sunak and the current home secretary, Suella Braverman, is a new law to stop people who enter the UK on small boats from claiming asylum. "Make no mistake," said the prime minister, "if you come here illegally, you will not be able to stay." Ministers seem to have considered everything, from wave machines and Border Force staff on jet skis, to pushing back dinghies trying to cross the Channel. Successive agreements between the UK and France have promised to tackle the crossings once and for all. In November 2022, a £63m deal was signed between the two countries, which politicians promised would be a gamechanger. And of course there is the jewel in the crossings deterrent crown: the Rwanda deal.

This was announced in April 2022; yet last year saw a record 45,756 people crossing, so evidence that the policy has acted as a deterrent seems scant. A high court ruling that found the policy to be lawful is now being challenged in the court of appeal, so no flights

will take off imminently. And even if flights are greenlighted further down the line, there is no indication that Rwanda has the capacity to take in the tens of thousands of people arriving in small boats each year that the government is eager to get rid of. Each government announcement on small boats promises more than the one before. But each one is dogged by a rise in crossings.

Sunak's latest fix is no exception. The new law, provisionally called the illegal migration bill, is expected to try to make asylum claims inadmissible from those who travel to the UK on small boats. It would involve a duty being placed on the home secretary to remove "as soon as reasonably practicable", to Rwanda or a "safe third country", anyone who arrives that way. Those who do arrive will also be prevented from claiming asylum while in the UK, with further plans to ban them from returning once removed. The government believes it will be able to apply a "rights brake" in the legislation to circumvent European convention on human rights regulations. But no details of how this might work have yet been made public. Instead, Braverman told the Sun on Sunday that "The British people want this solved ... They are sick of tough talk and inadequate action."

But this latest announcement only raises more questions about how that action will be delivered.

The current seven immigration removal centres, with space for just a few thousand people, will be unable to hold the tens of thousands it seems the government now wants to detain. Where are they actually going to put them? Two more centres are due to come on stream, but they are unlikely to be able to pick up all of the slack. Detaining asylum seekers who are victims of torture and trafficking and who may be actively suicidal is not impossible, but it could be fraught with difficulties. While the high court ruling about Rwanda found the policy itself to be lawful, it overturned the government's decisions to send the individuals who brought a legal challenge because the Home Office had failed to consider their cases properly. Locking people up and bundling them on to planes isn't quite as legally straightforward as it sounds in a Sunday newspaper headline. Sunak's plan to make claims inadmissible is another great soundbite, but figures so far are not promising.

A little-publicised House of Commons research briefing published on 14 February found that between January 2021 and September 2022, while 20,600 asylum cases were considered for an inadmissibility decision, just 83 of them were declared inadmissible - and just 21 people were removed from the UK. The reason why more of those 20,600 were not declared inadmissible was because they

qualify to have their claims considered in the UK under international law - not the controversial Human Rights Act, but by the Geneva conventions, which most countries of the world are signatories to.

France, with 112,860 asylum applications last year and Germany, with 164,925 - many more than the UK's 74,751 - have taken a different approach. They have focused on clearing their respective backlogs. This is something the UK Home Office has also pledged to do, but despite the recruitment of extra caseworkers the promises have not yet filtered through to the statistics. In 2022 there was a record backlog of 160,919 cases.

Of those decisions that were made in 2022, 75% were granted refugee status or humanitarian protection, with around 50% of those who appealed after an initial refusal succeeding. A rolling programme of increasingly fantastical promises from the UK government to sort out small boat crossings has so far failed to deliver. And there is little evidence from polling that the electorate believe the government is doing a good job on this. Instead of chasing eye-catching headlines, the urgent focus should be on clearing the backlog and allowing refugees to move forward with their lives and contribute to our society. In the meantime, there is a huge chasm between the endless tough talk and what is actually deliverable, and the government's sums simply don't add up.

House prices are crumbling

John Harris

FROM leaked messages suggesting that Matt Hancock thought his job as health secretary was to "frighten the pants" off the public to Boris Johnson's latest Trumpian contortions, our current political pantomime shows no signs of letting up. But underneath it all, something much more era-defining seems to be afoot: the British public's two secular gods are taking a battering. The NHS is not in quite the mess it was a couple of months ago, but its deep problems grind on. Meanwhile, a slightly more overlooked story is becoming hard to ignore: a crisis in our national faith in property ownership, and the decline of that strange British belief that in any normal universe, house prices will only go up.

Figures released last week showed UK house prices were falling at the fastest annual rate since 2012, with warnings from the financial sector that "economic headwinds look set to remain relatively strong" and property owners reportedly having to cut their asking prices by an average of £14,000. To state the blindingly obvious, high interest rates are sucking demand out of the market by restricting access to mortgages. Houses and flats, therefore, sit unsold, and hundreds of thousands of people remain stranded in the purgatory between wanting - or, as politicians say, "aspiring" - to own a home, and being able to do so.

There is also a mind-boggling housing story rooted in the mad politics of the Conservative party. Late last year, as Tory backbenchers reached new heights of anxiety about losing their seats, the government was hit by the huge rebellion over local house-building targets, which became advisory rather than mandatory. The result is not exactly surprising: the Home Builders Federation is now predicting that rates of construction in England could soon

fall to a low unseen since the second world war. Basic economics would suggest that this might send prices back up and make home ownership even more unattainable, but its impact threatens to be even more fundamental than that: as one Labour politician told me last week, one of the most absurd features of modern Britain is that "we're not building houses in a housing crisis".

The average British home now costs about nine times average earnings: one estimate I recently read reckoned that the last time UK houses were this expensive was in 1876. Three years ago, Legal & General found that 56% of first-time buyers aged under 35 needed a "financial gift" from their parents to buy a flat or house. Even if prices slowly fall, the old Tory vision of the property-owning democracy seems to have shrunk into a rigid oligarchy, built on very familiar foundations of class, age and wealth. There is, needless to say, no escape route into social housing. There are reckoned to be about 1.2m households on local waiting lists in England. Late last year, the Observer discovered that, thanks to post-2010 austerity, 40 local authority areas - including Peterborough, Luton, the Isle of Wight and parts of Greater Manchester - had neither built nor acquired any new social housing between 2016 and 2021. Across England, between 2021 and 2022, 21,600 social homes were either sold or demolished, but only 7,500 were built.

And so to the category of housing that seems to completely crystallise our problems. The private rented sector is what it has always been, only more so: a repository for people held back from either home ownership or social housing, where lives are often damaged by the rawest kind of business practices. Here, the arrival of compara-

tively punitive mortgage rates is pushing buy-to-let landlords to sell up and get out, which is forcing rents up even further. In Greater London, average advertised rent is just over 16% higher than it was a year ago; in Manchester, the figure is 20.5%. Studio flats - which older readers will know as bedsits - are unprecedentedly popular, and the fact that tenants have even less bargaining power is reflected in that very British sense of life as a private renter being all about broken heating, damp and the constant threat of eviction.

Where to find hope? There are signs that Labour has at least the beginnings of an answer. Lisa Nandy insists that she will be the first housing minister in decades to ensure that social housing provides for more people than the private rented sector; her mantra, she says, will be "council housing, council housing, council housing". In the midst of impossible local authority budgets, she and her colleagues believe one quick solution to the housing crisis could lie in relationships between councils and pension funds. The idea would be for the funds to buy up discarded private rented property and then lease it back to local housing departments to renovate and convert into social homes. More thoroughgoing plans for building new social housing seem to be on the way, along with a new private renters' charter.

The foreground of Labour policy, however, is all about home ownership. Not unreasonably, Keir Starmer sees buying a house as "the bedrock of security and aspiration", and often makes glowing references to the pebble-dashed semi in which he grew up. Given the chance, he will apparently lead a government set on pursuing a 70% target for home ownership, up from England's current figure of 64%. There is talk of a new mortgage guarantee scheme; the

party's first actions in government will include "helping first-time buyers on to the housing ladder and building more affordable homes by reforming planning rules". Labour, we are told, "is the party of home ownership in Britain today".

This is hardly outrageous: it is the kind of thing that politicians think they need to say to get elected. But I wonder if the gravity of the crisis we are faced with makes it sound increasingly hollow. One of the most basic human needs - for a secure and dependable home - is now way beyond the reach of millions of people, including many we might once have thought of as affluent. And even if access to the bank of Mum and Dad means you can just about afford to buy, isn't the current reality of shored-up interest rates and declining property prices a reminder of what that may well entail? Chasing security now means being at the mercy of its complete opposite: the hurly burly of financial markets, and fears of negative equity and repossession.

Recent(ish) history suggests there might be an alternative: council housing with lifelong, secure tenancies. Fifty or so years ago, thanks to investment by both Labour and Conservative governments, about a third of us lived in homes like that. This was not seen as proof of an over-powerful state, or people's failure to stand on their own two feet: it was just a mundane and reassuring reality, and the foundation of millions of lives. If we are now a stropky little island, full of a sense that precious things have been taken away from us, the deliberate decline of this way of living seems to me to be one of the key reasons. It is out there, waiting to be revived: if it was presented to the people currently locked out of the fading dream of property ownership, it might look like the basis of a very modern utopia.

The Guardian

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Pakistan Stock Exchange gains 97 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday witnessed a bullish trend, gaining 97.33 points, a positive change of 0.24 percent, closing at 41,434.33 points against 41,337.00 points the previous day.

A total of 221,551,717 shares valuing Rs 7.252 billion were traded during the day as compared to 194,817,148 shares valuing Rs 7.768 billion last day.

As many as 334 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 206 of them recorded gains and 111 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 17 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 42,073,975 shares at Rs.1.31 per share; Telecard Limited with

18,068,500 shares at Rs.6.93 per share, and TPL Properties with 10,637,502 shares at Rs.14.70 per share.

Pak Services witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.117.00 per share price, closing at Rs.2,310.00, whereas the runner-up was Bata (Pak) with an Rs.50.00 rise in its per share price to Rs.1,750.00.

Rafhan Maize witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.499.99 per share closing at Rs.8,000.01; followed by Nestle Pakistan with Rs.133.97 decline to close at Rs.5,266.03.

Rupee gains 55 paisas against dollar

The Pakistan rupee recovered 55 paisa against the dollar in the interbank trading on Monday and closed at Rs 277.91 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.46.

According to the Forex

Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 276.2 and Rs 279 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 16 paisa and closed at Rs 295.53 against the last day's closing of Rs 295.37, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 2.04, whereas an increase of 62 paisa was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 334.34 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 333.72.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 15 paisa each to close at Rs 75.66 and Rs 74.05 respectively.

Gold prices dip by Rs 2,000 to Rs 198,000 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 2,000 and was sold at Rs198,000 on Monday against its sale at Rs 200,000 the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,715 to Rs169,753 from Rs171,468 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold decreased to Rs155,607 from Rs157,179 respectively.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained unchanged at Rs 2,140 and 1,834.70 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$8 to \$1,849, the association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing a meeting on Pakistan's assistance to Turkey & Syria earthquake victims and remodeling of NDMA.

Stocks largely gain as rate hike hopes offset muted China outlook

LONDON (AFP/APP): Major stock markets mostly rose on Monday, with Paris briefly reaching a fresh record, as traders reacted to indications the Federal Reserve could soon end a policy of hiking interest rates.

The Paris CAC 40 went back above 7,400 points, having breached the level for the first time last month. That came amid a record-high for London's FTSE 100 also in February as investors bet on the eurozone and Britain swerving recession this year.

However, lingering fears about high interest rates aimed at cooling elevated inflation have dampened equities in recent sessions.

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell is set to discuss monetary policy before the House and Senate committees on Tuesday, proceedings that will be scrutinised by investors seeking rate outlook clues.

That comes ahead of US payroll data on Friday and the Bank of Japan's two-day policy meeting from Thursday, which will be the last for governor Haruhiko Kuroda. China's outgoing Premier Li Keqiang on Sunday said the country's economy would expand "around five percent" this year, slightly below what analysts had predicted.

The world's second-largest economy grew three percent last year, missing its target of around 5.5 percent under the impact of Covid-19 containment policies and a property crisis.

"China set itself one of the lowest gross domestic product targets in many years, hinting to investors that the big reopening boom may not be as positive for the global economy as hoped," noted Neil Wilson, chief market analyst at Fimalto trading group.

‘Pakistan should adopt Chinese water purification system’

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan-China Joint Chambers of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Moazzam Ghurki said on Monday that Pakistan should adopt Chinese model of water purification to control waterborne diseases due to the devastating flood in 2022.

These diseases were causing a loss of up to US\$1.3 billion every year, and the unclean water was the biggest source of gastrointestinal infections.

Chairing a meeting here at PCJCCI Secretariat, he said that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss Chinese water management system and purification technology so that Pakistan could benefit from the Chinese experience. The replication of this system could overcome water dis-

eases in Pakistan, particularly in backward cities of Sindh and Balochistan that were not getting access to clean water.

Ghurki suggested, "We should install water filtration plants based on solar power permanently and manual mechanism based on the area needs and population capacity to handle the equipment. The solar based filter could purify 1,500 litres of floodwater per hour.

However, the manual filter as compared to the solar based only had a PLP wheel and a handle attached to it for drawing water into the filters whereas the rest of the technology was the same."

PCJCCI Senior Vice President Fang Yulong said that China's global freshwater sources were merely

six per cent whereas they had to provide clean drinking water to 20 per cent of the world's population. However, with years of research and exploration, China had devised a water purification system that not only enabled it to meet its water needs but also provided people with medically approved healthy water.

Vice President Hamza Khalid said that the water crisis was a global issue and now China wanted to benefit the world, since Pakistan faced such a crisis particularly in Sindh and Northern Punjab it was important to introduce such plants to Pakistan.

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI, appreciated the opportunities and agreed that the country was in dire need of such a system.

KMB announces new President/CEO

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Khushhali Microfinance Bank is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Aameer Karachiwalla as its new President/CEO.

Mr. Karachiwalla brings with him over 30 years of experience in the financial industry, having held leadership positions in both banking and microfinance institutions.

Mr. Karachiwalla is joining Khushhali Microfinance Bank at a crucial time, as the bank looks to expand its presence in the microfinance sector and improve its offerings to underserved communities.

His extensive knowledge of the industry and his commitment to social impact will be invaluable in achieving these goals.

"We are thrilled to welcome Mr. Karachiwalla to Khushhali Microfinance Bank," said the bank's Board of Directors.

"His vision, leadership, and experience will be instrumental in guiding the bank towards sustained growth and impact. We are confident that under his leadership, Khushhali Microfinance Bank will continue to play a critical role in promoting financial inclusion and empowerment in Pakistan."

Karachiwalla expressed

his enthusiasm for the role, stating, "I am honored to lead Khushhali Microfinance Bank and to work towards expanding access to financial services for underserved communities in Pakistan. I look forward to working closely with the team to build on the bank's strong foundation and to deliver innovative, responsible, and impactful financial solutions."

Khushhali Microfinance Bank is a leading microfinance institution in Pakistan, providing financial services to micro and small entrepreneurs, farmers, and low-income households.

Bank of Punjab hosts Asian Development Bank's delegation

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Bank of Punjab hosted a roundtable between a delegation of key officials of ADB and business & industry leaders including Bank's customers and senior management.

The high powered ADB delegation, who are on a week-long visit to Pakistan, was headed by Mr. Takahiro Yasui - Executive Director for Japan and Dean of Board, Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Mr. Takahiro's delegation comprised of Mr. Weihua Liu - Executive Director for China, Mr. Sangmin Ryu - Executive Director for Korea, Mr. Noor Ahmed - Executive Director for Pakistan, Mr. Shunsuke Sakugawa - Director's Advisor for Japan, Mr. Ronald San Juan - Director's Advisor for Japan, Mr. Yong Ye - ADB's Country Director for Pakistan, Mr. Yusuke Sekiguchi - JFPR Fund Manager & Mr. Asad Aleem - ADB's Deputy Country Director for Pakistan

The roundtable lunch, held on March 3rd, 2023, was attended by leading business figures, including Mr. Yawar Ali, Mr. Shahid Hussain, Ms. Roshaneh Zafar, Mr. Kabeer Naqvi, Ms. Maheen Rahman, Mr. Ghazanfar Abbas Jilani, Mr. Anees Khawaja, Mr. Rashid Bajwa, Mr. Farooq Nasim, Mr. Tariq Saigol as well as the key management of The Bank of Punjab.

The get together provid-



ed an opportunity for the delegation from the ADB to meet with top businessmen and the Bank of Punjab management and discuss the state of the economy and potential collaborations & partnerships in private sector. The meeting also aimed to explore ways to strengthen cooperation between the Bank of Punjab and the ADB, especially in the areas of infrastructure financing, trade finance, and microfinance.

Mr. Yasui expressed his appreciation for the resilience of Pakistan's economy and pointed out how important it was for Pakistan that the impetus for reforming the economy be driven internally and organically.

He also stated how ADB would be willing to guide and engage with key stakeholders while making these structural changes in the economy. Mr. Noor Ahmed, Executive Director Pakistan

for ADB highlighted various challenges facing Pakistan's economy right now and mentioned how even small incremental changes could make a big difference specially with reference to labor productivity, women work force participation & agriculture. Zafar Masud (President & CEO - The Bank of Punjab), while recapping the discussion highlighted the importance of agriculture in Pakistan's economy and explained how it contributes directly & indirectly towards the GDP to the extent of 46%.

He then explained the need to reform the energy sector, particularly in alternative energy & transmission & distribution, and how ADB could assist Pakistan in both Agriculture & Energy along with capacity building for privatization & running of State owned enterprises.

He also underlined how

this capacity building could further be extended to increase skills and productivity, especially for women.

He also referred to the requirement for credit enhancement & capital adequacy structures in infrastructure development and microfinance sector. He also reiterated the importance of regional trade for the future sustainable economic growth and the role ADB can play in this space.

He hoped that ADB becomes involved more with the private sector as well, as its role could be crucial in facilitating financial inclusion through a comprehensive framework alongside the banking sector.

Zafar finally thanked the business leaders for their participation and expressed his gratitude to the delegation from the ADB for their visit and hoped that the meeting would lead to most beneficial outcomes for the country.

FFC flood relief rehabilitation efforts, welfare projects

MD&CEO FFC visits Goth Machhi, Mirpur Mathelo



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company (FFC) is always at the forefront to assist the community in humanitarian

disaster, Corona outbreak and flood relief efforts. The Company has extensively provided succor to flood victims as part of its CSR program.

MD&CEO Fauji Fertilizer Company, Mr. Sarfraz Ahmed Rehman visited Mirpur Mathelo and Goth Machhi to hand over recently constructed houses

to flood affectees as part of Flood Relief Rehabilitation drive. Affectees lauded the spellbinding contributions of FFC and appreciated their concerted efforts towards community uplift.

MD&CEO also inaugurated Girls Section of Sona Public School & College, Mirpur Mathelo, with a vision to provide better education facilities in the area. He also inaugurated a RO plant at a cost of Rs. 3.5 million for the underprivileged community at Basti Varand. He proudly shared that FFC has always preferred investing in the community and has therefore spent huge amounts to enhance health, education and sport facilities in the rural areas of Goth Machhi and Mirpur Mathelo.

PIEDMC to assist ICCI in establishment of Industrial Estate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under the instructions of the Punjab Government, a delegation of Punjab Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (PIEDMC) led by Umar Saeed, General Manager (Coordination) Monday visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

They discussed and assured their assistance for ICCI in the establishment of a new industrial estate in the region, said a press release.

The delegation comprised of Ali Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Saleem and Tajdar Javed.

Faad Waheed, Acting President ICCI briefed the delegation about the importance of a new industrial estate in the region and gave them an overview of ICCI efforts in this regard.

He said that ICCI has been making efforts for a new industrial estate since 2008 to boost industrialization and promote investment, as there is no further space in the region to set up new industries while

Pakistan cannot achieve national growth without industrial growth.

He said that ICCI has already held meetings with the Ministry of Planning, CDA, RDA, and Punjab Government for this project. Land was identified at Hakla Interchange on Rawalpindi Ring Road, but due to the re-alignment of RRR, no further progress could be made.

He said that ICCI needs

at least 5000-6000 acres of land for an industrial estate to meet future needs of industrialization and urged the PIEDMC to help in identifying suitable land near twin cities.

Zikria A. Zia, President Islamabad Industrial Association gave a comprehensive presentation on the project to the delegation and identified various sites near the twin cities including Fateh Jhang area for the

industrial estate.

They hoped that PIEDMC would help ICCI in early materialization of this project.

Umar Saeed, General Manager (Coord), PIEDMC assured that they would provide all possible assistance and support to ICCI for the establishment of an industrial estate.

He said that PIEDMC has good experience in developing industrial estates and would identify various sites for ICCI that should have easy access to the twin cities.

He said that ICCI should nominate a focal person to work with PIEDMC for this project. Both sides discussed close coordination to turn the dream of the industrial estate into a reality.

Tokyo shares close higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks closed higher on Monday, tracking Wall Street rallies that were helped partly by a slide in Treasury bond yields.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index gained 1.11 percent, or 310.31 points, to end at 28,237.78, while the broader Topix index climbed 0.84 percent, or 16.97 points, to 2,036.49.

"The Tokyo market was higher following gains of all three major US indexes (last week), mainly in high-tech stocks," Iwai Cosmo Securities said in a note.

Traders are awaiting US payroll data on Friday and the Bank of Japan's two-day policy meeting from Thursday, which will be the last for governor Haruhiko Kuroda.

The dollar fetched 135.82 yen in Asian trade, almost unchanged from the level seen in New York late Friday.

In Tokyo trading, SoftBank Group soared 2.73 percent to 5,708 yen while chip-linked Tokyo Electron jumped 3.11 percent to 48,600 yen.

Sony Group gained 2.55 percent to 11,840 yen while Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing firmed 1.61 percent to 28,655 yen.

Court Notice

In the Court of Samina Sehar Civil Judge ix Bannu. Suit No. 136/1 Institution No. 9/9/2022. Muzafar khan VS Aman Ullah. 3 shah nawaz 4 moliyaz pasran mahawaz 1/4 fazal niaz 1/5 sultan ayaz pasran Aman ullah 29 Asmat son of Muhammad Naseeb sakna kamal khel mama khel district miryan Bannu Present Dubai. Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed under Order 5, Rule 20 CPC that if the said defendant will / shall not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8am on 8/3/2023, the proceedings will be taken ex-parte. No arguments of any nature shall be entertained thereafter. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Kostyuk wins first WTA title

AUSTIN (Agencies): Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk won her first WTA title at the ATX Open and refused to shake the hand of her Russian opponent, Varvara Gracheva. Kostyuk, 20, beat 22-year-old Gracheva 6-3 7-5 in Austin, Texas. She dedicated her victory to her country and "all the people who are following and dying" following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year. "Being in the position that I am in right now, it is extremely special to win this title," Kostyuk said. She has been outspoken about Russia's invasion of Ukraine and previously refused to shake the hand of Belarusian Victoria Azarenka at the US Open. Belarus has been a key ally of Russia in the war against Ukraine.

Wapda wins Championship

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Wapda has won the 18th National Women's Swimming Championship 2023 with 12 gold, three silver and four bronze medals, securing 300 points. Army remained runners-up with five gold, eight silver and five bronze medals, while Sindh stood third in the championship with two gold, eight silver and nine bronze medals. Jehanara Nabi of Wapda bagged five individual gold medals with one new national record and was declared best swimmer of the championship. The three-day championship concluded in Lahore. Details of the gold medals are as under: 500 Meter Butterfly: Bisma Khan of Army; 200 Meter Breaststroke: Mishaal Aisha of Wapda; 400 Meter Individual Medley: Bisma Khan of Army; 100 Meter Freestyle: Jehanara Nabi of Wapda; 200 Meter Backstroke: Fatima Lotia of Army; 4 x 100 Meter Medley Relay: Team Wapda; 800 Meter Freestyle: Jehanara Nabi of Wapda; 100 Meter Backstroke: Miraal Haque of Sindh; 50 Meter Breaststroke: Mishaal Aisha Hyat of Wapda; 200 Meter Freestyle: Jehanara Nabi of Wapda; 100 Meter Butterfly: Mishaal Aisha Hyat Ayub of Wapda; 50 Meter Freestyle: Bisma Khan of Army; 4 x 200 Meter Freestyle Relay: Team Wapda; 400 Meter Freestyle: Jehanara Nabi of Wapda; 50 Meter Backstroke: Bisma Khan of Army; 200 Meter Butterfly: Miraal Haque of Sindh; 100 Meter Breaststroke: Mishaal Aisha Hyat Ayub of Wapda; 200 Meter Individual Medley: Jehanara Nabi of Wapda; 4 x 100 Meter Freestyle Relay: Team Wapda.

Markram named as new T20 captain

CAPE TOWN (Agencies): Aiden Markram has been named the new captain of South Africa's T20 International side with former skipper Temba Bavuma axed from the squad to face the West Indies in three matches later this month. Bavuma will instead concentrate on his role as test and one day international skipper, with Wednesday's second five-day game against the touring Caribbean side to be followed by three ODIs between March 16-21. Fast bowlers Anrich Nortje and Kagiso Rabada have been rested for those matches but will return for the T20 games that will be played from March 25-28.

Guptill 56-ball 86* all but eliminates Karachi Kings from playoffs race

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): For the second time this season, Karachi Kings were on the cusp of victory against Quetta Gladiators, only to watch as Martin Guptill wrenched it violently out of their hands. On February 18, it was a century in the first innings. Today, an unbeaten 56-ball 86 saw Guptill shepherd his side as wickets fell at the other end before cranking through the gears in the final four overs to all but eliminate Kings while keeping the Gladiators' faint hopes of making it to the playoffs alive.

For the first 15 overs of the chase, it was painfully evident why Gladiators find themselves at the wrong end of the points table. There was little by way of intent of quality chasing a below par total against an overwhelming Karachi bowling attack. Mohammad Nawaz, promoted to No. 3 after Omaid Yousaf fell early, only managed a scratchy 15 before Mohammad Musa dismissed him. Ifikhar Ahmed contin-

ued to struggle with form, trapped in front by Tabraiz Shamsi; the review had a smaller chance of success than a lottery ticket. Shamsi followed it up by dismissing Najibullah Zadran while James Fuller sent back Umar Akmal cheaply, reducing Quetta to 63 for 5 inside ten overs.

Guptill was around at the other end, but there was little to serve as a harbinger of what would follow in the final five overs. Aside from that hundred against Karachi, runs at the PSL haven't really come for him, a continuation of a trend that has seen him lose form over the last year or so. He had shuffled along to 41 off 40, but the moment he walloped Mohammad Amir for a six in the 16th over, things appeared to fall into place.

But the coup de grace was the 17th over, where a hapless Fuller was brutalised for 24 runs in an over, two sixes and three fours changing the course of the game. Musa copped plenty of punishment

in the over that followed with another six and four, and Amir leaked 11 in his over to leave eight off the 20th.

Sarfraz Ahmed, who had watched passively from the other end, was run out in a mix-up, but by now, it was too late for Kings. Dwaine Pretorius came in and slapped two boundaries in three balls to seal the win, ensuring Gladiators continue to have hopes of an unlikely final four berth.

Earlier, Gladiators had begun well as Naseem Shah removed Kings' platinum pick Matthew Wade off the first ball. Much of the top order failed to have much of an impact, with Tayyab Tahir and Qasim Akram falling to Aimal Khan, before a sluggish innings from Shoaib Malik ground any Kings momentum to a halt. Any momentum that existed was thanks largely to a lone hand from Adam Rossington, whose 69 formed the spine of the innings, enabling his side to set up for a big finish at the death.



KARACHI: Adam Rossington was the topscorer for Karachi Kings.

All-round Shakib gives Bangladesh consolation win over England

CHITTAGONG (Agencies): Shakib Al Hasan put in a fine all-round performance as Bangladesh pulled off a consolation 50-run win in the third one-day international against England in Chittagong on Monday.

Shakib top-scored with 75 to guide Bangladesh to 246 and then claimed 4-35 to help the home side bowl out England for 196 in 43.1 overs, ending the series with a 2-1 defeat.

This was England's last scheduled ODI until September 8 and gave the defending champions useful practice on tricky South Asian pitches ahead of the ODI World Cup in India later this year. Ebadot Hossain and Taijul Islam played their part in the win with two wickets each and Mushfiqur Rahim and Najmul Hossain Shanto chipped in with 70 and 53 runs respectively with the bat.

Jason Roy and Phil Salt got the England reply off to a cracking start as they added 54 for the opening stand. But Bangladesh struck back with three wickets falling in the space of eight balls to have England on the ropes at 55-3. Player-of-the-match Shakib broke the partnership, with Salt going for 35, before bowling out Roy for 19 in his next over.

In between Shakib's two wickets, Ebadot dismissed Dawid Malan for a duck. James Vince and Sam Curran staged a recovery with a 49-run stand for the fourth wicket before they were removed by Shakib and Mehidy Hasan Miraz respectively.

Bangladesh took full control of the game once Taijul had skipper Jos Buttler out leg-before for 26. Taijul also bowled Adil Rashid before Shakib returned for his final spell to dismiss debutant Rehan Ahmed.

Mehidy took a low catch at mid-wicket as Shakib reached 300 ODI wickets, the first Bangladeshi to do so. Shakib thought he had his fifth five-wicket haul in ODIs after Jofra Archer was given out lbw but the decision was reversed on review.

Mustafizur Rahman ended the fight of Chris Woakes, who made 34, in the next over to end the contest. Archer earlier picked up 3-35, Adil Rashid 2-21 and Curran 2-51 as England bowled out Bangladesh, who opted to bat first after winning the toss, in 48.5 overs. Curran struck early, handing opener Liton Das a duck in the very first over before he dismissed Tamim Iqbal for 11. Najmul and Mushfiqur shared a 98-run part-

nership for the third wicket to steady Bangladesh's innings before the former was run out by Buttler. Rashid bowled Mushfiqur and Archer ended Shakib's 71-ball innings in the penultimate over, wrapping up Bangladesh's innings from the next ball.

England handed an ODI debut to 18-year-old leg-spinner Rehan, who finished with a modest 1-62. "We desperately wanted to win this game but we're still delighted to win the series. We were happy with the score they posted but Bangladesh fought back hard with the ball," said Buttler.

"We got exactly what we wanted from this series. We wanted to play on wickets like these and it was great to challenge ourselves. It'll serve as great preparation for the World Cup."

Player of the match Shakib said Bangladesh could also take some optimism of the way they performed in the three-match series. "We've been very good at home in the last five to seven years. Unfortunately we lost this series but I think we showed a lot of character today so we can take credit from it," he said. The two teams will now play a three-match T20 international series, with the first match scheduled for March 9 in Chittagong.

Polo C'ship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup 2023 commences today

LAHORE (APP): The Century 99 National Open Polo Championship for Quaid-e-Azam Gold Cup 2023 will roll into action tomorrow (Tuesday) here at the historic grounds of Lahore Polo Club.

The 60-year-old prestigious National Open Polo trophy was unveiled by President of Lahore Polo Club Umar Sadiq along with Executive Committee members Agha Murtaza Ali Khan, Shah Qubilai Alam, Feroze Gulzar, Agha Najeer Raza and directors of sponsors Century Ventures Pvt Ayaz Lakhani, Kamran Afzal, Waseem Mazhar and Nazia Waseem.

Umar Sadiq said that the National Open Polo Championship is a historic tournament of Lahore Polo Club, which is known as the biggest tournament of the country and every year, the world's top polo players come to the club to partici-

pate in this prestigious highest-goal tournament of Pakistan and amuse the spectators with their excellent mallet and pony skills, making the matched more enthralling and interesting.

The Lahore Polo Club president expressed special gratitude to Century Ventures for sponsoring polo, the game of kings and knights. "Total eight teams are taking part in the tournament, which are divided into two pools. Pool A includes Remounts, Master Paints/Newage Cables, HN Polo and FG Polo while Pool B comprises DS Polo, BN Polo, Diamond Paints and Master Paints," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Waseem Mazhar, Director Century Ventures, said: "Polo is the biggest sport in the region, and it is a great pleasure to support the sport of kings.

We have great attach-

ment with Lahore Polo Club since long, which has now turned into a strong bond, and we are keen to continue this support in future as well." Director Ayaz Lakhani, while sharing his views, thanked the management of Lahore Polo Club for providing an opportunity to Century Ventures to sponsor the game of polo and this 60-year-old tournament. "Polo is a lifestyle game, and it is witnessed and enjoyed by a good number of lively Lahoris at Lahore Polo Club. We will continue to support polo in future," Lahore Polo Club executive committee member Agha Murtaza Ali Khan said: "Both pools will play cross-pools for two weeks after which the top two teams from each pool will qualify for the semifinals. In all, 20 enthralling matches will be played throughout the tournament.

"Both official umpires John Fisher and Chris Hyde have come from England to supervise the tournament. Players from Argentina, Spain and England are participating in this event of Pakistan Polo Association (PPA) and each team includes two foreign players and one foreign female player," he added.

Tomorrow (Tuesday), the first match will be played between Master Paints/Newage Cables and Master Paints at 1:30 pm at Ground No 1 while Remounts will take on Diamond Paints at 3:30 pm at Aibak Ground. On Wednesday (March 8), FG Polo will compete BN Polo at 1:30 pm at Ground No 1 while HN Polo will vie against DS Polo at 3:30 pm at Aibak Ground. Similarly, the competition will continue for two weeks, and the final will take place on March 19, 2023.



RAWALPINDI: The two captains pose with the prestigious trophy for the Women's League exhibition matches.

Volleyball Talent Hunt Program continues across country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Under the auspices of Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP) Volleyball Talent Hunt Trials of both men and women are continued across the country with participation of a number of young sports enthusiasts from different educational institutions.

The Volleyball competition is being arranged in collaboration with the Higher education Commission (HEC) as a part of PMYP flagship project of "Talent Hunt Youth Sports League".

According to an official of PMYP, volleyball trials have already been successfully completed in various parts of the country including Federal capital, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Lasbela, Karachi, Lahore,

Hazara, Bahawalpur and Faisalabad, which would soon be followed by trials in remaining locations of the country.

Volleyball Talent Hunt Trials provides a great opportunity for youth to participate in the trials to showcase their talent in different sports.

This will, he continued, help youth to explore their hidden talent and ultimately represent the country on an international level.

Talent Hunt Youth Sports League is a flagship project of PMYP aiming at finding talent in 12 different sports including Badminton, Boxing, cricket, Football, Handball, Hockey, Judo, Squash, Table Tennis, and Volleyball for men and women whereas

Weightlifting and Wrestling for men only.

The trials are being held in 25 different locations in five different regions including Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan.

The purpose of the said sports activities is to engage the youth of Pakistan in healthy physical activities through sports according to the vision of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, as it is believed that sports can play a critical role in transforming the youth into self-confident, organized, and capable workforce that can bring positive social change and economic well-being in the country.

Salah sets new record as Liverpool thrashes Man Utd 7-0

ANFIELD (Agencies): Liverpool were given a glorious glimpse of a bright future on a historic Sunday at Anfield as Manchester United were ruthlessly crushed 7-0 to match their heaviest ever competitive defeat.

Roberto Firmino came off the bench to inflict the final wound on a beleaguered United, who had lost just once in their previous 22 games.

But in the week it was reported the Brazilian will leave Liverpool at the end of the season, the Reds new-look front three finally clicked as Cody Gakpo, Darwin Nunez and Mohamed Salah all scored twice.

The triumvirate of Salah, Firmino and the now departed Sadio Mane took Liverpool back to the top of English and European football under coach Jurgen Klopp. In a desperately disappointing season with Liverpool still sitting only fifth in the Premier League, the signings of Nunez and Gakpo for a combined £100 million (\$121 million) have been questioned.

But both enjoyed by a distance the best day of their Liverpool careers to prove the doubters wrong. "We showed tonight what we could be, what we can be and what we have to be from now on," said Klopp. "We don't talk about the scoreline, we just talk about the performance."

The fact that both players were once linked with United will sting even more for the Red Devils with a centre-forward a priority this summer if the progress they have made under Erik ten Hag is not to stall next season. Gakpo was seen as an obvious target given Ten Hag has not been slow to shop in his homeland with the signings of Antony, Lisandro Martinez and Tyrell Malacia.

But Liverpool are beginning to reap the rewards of jumping ahead of the competition to sign the Dutch forward from PSV Eindhoven in January following an impressive World Cup.

Gakpo produced two stunning finishes, firstly with power and then finesse to beat David de Gea to take the game away from United either side of half-time. The 23-year-old doubled his tally for Liverpool in one afternoon, but his four goals have come in his last six games.

Nunez's erratic form in front of goal was a contributing factor to Liverpool's slow start to the season. But the Uruguayan showed the aerial prowess he possesses to bring a different dimension to Klopp's attack with two headers that took his tally for the season to 13. "Nobody doubts Darwin's impact once he settles," said Klopp. "He is a real force of nature."

- Salah sets new record -

The constant between Liverpool's past and present remains Salah, who set another record to inflate his status as a club legend.

The Egyptian crashed in a volley off the underside of the crossbar and then pounced with a simple tap in for the sixth to become the Reds' all-time top goalscorer in the Premier League with 129. "Mo Salah achieved something really special. We should not forget that. He's a very special player and a special boy," added Klopp.

"We appreciate him now but in the future when we look back, people will realise just how special." For much of the season Klopp has struggled to find the answers to how a team that came so close to an unprecedented quadruple last season could fall so hard and so fast.

Barring a remarkable fightback from a 5-2 first leg deficit against Real Madrid in the Champions League last 16, there will not be a trophy to celebrate at the end of the campaign. But Liverpool will now forever have one day by which to remember 2022/23. And it could be even more significant in the seasons to come if this was the day a new fearsome front three finally came together.



In brief

IRSA releases 96,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 96,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 56,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1447.13 feet and was 49.13 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 21,400 cusecs while outflow as 55,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1105.60 feet, which was 55.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 18,900 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 62,000, 39,800, 34,100 and 10,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 8,100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

CTP provide 24/7 licensing services

RAWALPINDI (APP): The City Traffic Police (CTP) on the directives of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Traffic were utilizing all available resources to provide 24/7 licensing services to citizens. City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Tamoor Khan during a surprise visit to the Driving License Branch of CTP Headquarters here on Monday informed that CTP had introduced a 24-hour driving license service to facilitate the citizens. Special arrangements were made at CTP headquarters to provide round the clock driving license facilities to the public. He said that CTP were also making efforts for the provision of other related services and facilities to the public. Arrangements were finalized to provide 24/7 driving licensing facility to the students, businessmen, public and private sector employees and others. He informed that tests for the driving licenses were also being conducted at CTP headquarters on Sunday and two incharges and 15 Traffic Wardens were also deployed at different centers for second shift.

ICT admin arrested 29

ISLAMABAD (APP): The District Administration of Islamabad held a crackdown against the kite flying activity and apprehended 29 accused violators, while First Information Report (FIR) was also lodged against the offenders. During the raids, the teams confiscated the kites, flying strings (Maanjha), metallic wire and nylon cord, said the press release. The administration under Section 144 of CrPC has prohibited the owners and occupants of houses, shops, hospitals, and buildings from flying kites on their rooftops. Moreover, manufacturing or selling kites, flying strings (Maanjha), metallic wire and nylon cord which endangers human life was also banned in the territory. Meanwhile, to ensure a ban on the activity, the Assistant Commissioner Secretariat raided the Bara Kahu area and booked seven kite flyers while FIR was filed against the accused offenders. In addition to that AC Nilore arrested six violators and seized the kite-flying material. AC City has also raided Kohisar along with Abpara residential and commercial areas and arrested five offenders while AC industrial also arrested five individuals involved in barred activities.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan addressing a press conference at PTV Headquarters.

Sherry, German minister discuss climate change cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman and Minister of State at the German Foreign Office Dr Tobias Lindner on Monday discussed possible areas of cooperation between Pakistan and Germany in the fields of renewable energy, climate adaptation, and mitigation.

During the meeting held at the Ministry of Climate Change, the two ministers also exchanged views on the importance of international collaboration in addressing the global challenge of climate change.

German Ambassador Alfred Grannas was also present in the meeting, a news release said.

Sherry Rehman highlighted Pakistan's vulnerability to

the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events such as forest fires and heatwaves, and the melting of glaciers in the north of Pakistan. She expressed her appreciation for Germany's assistance to Pakistan in tackling climate change, particularly on the recently launched Strengthening Climate Adaptation and Resilience (SAR) project in partnership with GIZ and MoCC, and the inclusion of Pakistan as one of the Pathfinder countries for the Global Shield against Climate Risk.

The meeting concluded with a joint commitment to further strengthen the partnership between Pakistan and Germany in addressing the challenges of climate change and to work towards a sustainable future

for all. Sherry Rehman also met Professor Jean Pascal Van Ypersele, the candidate for the post of Chair of the inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), accompanied by Ambassador of Belgium Charles Delogne.

They discussed the current climate crisis and how the IPCC could better serve the needs of those most affected by climate change.

The visiting dignitaries expressed their condolences on the loss of life and property in the catastrophic floods that devastated Pakistan in 2022 and affected 33 million people. Professor Ypersele expressed his commitment to making the IPCC more inclusive and responsive to the needs of communities most impacted by climate change.

Islamabad Taste festival concludes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Taste, the capital's signature food festival with its Spring edition, concluded here late Sunday at F-9 park after attracting crowds of families and visitors. To support the culinary and music industry, the festival was presented by the Imarat Group of Companies. The event featured over 80 eateries, a music arena, various artist performances and amusement activities, with the aim to give people a break from their usual daily routine and spend time in quality recreational activities.

According to the organisers, the signature food festival, been held since 2019 nationwide, was supporting the culinary and music industry of Pakistan. Islamabad Taste Fest was back with Spring Edition on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of March featuring eateries, music madness and a festive celebration of hospitality and the culinary industry. During the festival, musical performances, live performances/concerts of trending and popular musicians/singers, including Young Stunners, Farhan Saeed, Rdb Manj, Nehal Naseem, Raamis, Shamon Ismail, Waqar Ehsin, Falak Shabbir mesmerised the attendees from the twin cities.

"Such events are an opportunity to introduce new tastes and enjoy the authentic traditional tastes in a cultural and festive environment as we get crowds of food lovers during this festival while musical performances add more colour to the festivities of live food," said a stall holder in the festival.

Lok Virsa to mark Intl Women Day on March 8

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) and National Heritage and Culture Division will hold day-long celebrations here on March 8 to mark International Women's Day.

The event "Tribute to Women Artisans and Folk Artists" focuses on promoting Pakistan's indigenous folk heritage and highlighting contributions of Pakistan's eminent master artisans and folk artists in the development of the society, said the organisers. Major features of the event include an exhibition of women artisans at work and a live folk music show to pay tribute to the legendary women artists.

Tarar reiterates call for former judges to avoid politics

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Interior, Attaullah Tarar emphasized that former judges should stay out of politics and let the politicians handle the political affairs of the country.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, he said that false cases were registered against the government of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz in past.

He cited that the undue delays in judicial orders during the tenure of Imran Khan had prolonged various projects

that ultimately lead to increased costs.

Furthermore, Tarar said that Imran Khan had received undue facilitation to disqualify the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

He said that Imran Khan was using all possible means to clear himself of the cases against him.

Tarar also expressed disappointment about the delays in the important public interest project of the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI) and other important projects.

Senate subcommittee for addressing PBC employees, pensioners' issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate Sub-committee on Information and Broadcasting Monday underlined the need for addressing issues faced by the employees and pensioners of the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

The committee met here with Senator Irfan Ul Haq Siddiqi in the chair extended its full support to resolve the employees and pensioners' issues especially those which were related to outstanding medical bills. The DG radio informed the committee that the total expenses of the department were Rs 6.5 billion per annum, whereas total income generation stood at only Rs 4.5 billion.

The committee discussed various options for revenue generation and also directed the PBC to come up with a business and utilization plan in order to meet the future expenses of the institute. "We will reach out to the Prime Minister if needs be for the sustainability of our National asset in the form of radio Pakistan," Irfan Siddique said, adding all possible steps would be taken to ensure its development and progress.

The committee proposed a radio fee amounting to Rs 500 from all vehicles excluding bikes at the time of registration to generate additional revenue for the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation projects and its further development.

"The proposal is expected to generate an additional Rs 15 Billion rupees per annum, as every year more than 30 million vehicles are

registered," the committee told. The committee directed that any sort of activity regarding privatization, renting or leasing out of the building of Radio Pakistan might also be stopped with immediate effect.

The committee also sought a list of all the employees, including pensioners, and their financial issues to address them effectively. Additionally, the committee directed the restoration of Bukhari Auditorium back to its original state with immediate effect. The committee meeting was attended by Senator Fawzia Arshad, Senator Syed Waqar Mehdi, Secretary Informtaion and Broadcasting, DG Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation and other relevant officials.

Road rehabilitation projects underway in Yarak, Ramak, DI Khan City: NHA

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway Authority (NHA) has initiated rehabilitation projects in Dera Ismail (DI) Khan to improve infrastructure and connectivity in the region.

While talking to APP here on Monday, an official of NHA said that the rehabilitation work of all the roads around DI Khan under the jurisdiction of NHA is going on.

He said that the tenders for these projects have already been awarded and contractors have been mobilized to ensure the timely completion of the work.

One of the important projects in the region is the DI Khan Bypass, he said, adding that the project is currently under evaluation and the lowest bidder will be awarded the contract for the work.

He said that the work is expected to start soon after getting the contract, which

will benefit the local population and improve connectivity in the region.

Similarly, he said that Ramik roads have been handed over to contractors, while DI Khan Shahr roads are currently undergoing an evaluation process and the contract for the work will be awarded to the lowest bidder.

He said that work on rehabilitation projects in York and DI Khan is going on and progress is being made in this regard.

He affirmed that these rehabilitation projects will have a positive impact on the region, especially in terms of improving the road infrastructure, reducing travel time and increasing economic activity. He said that NHA is concerned and is working diligently to ensure the timely completion of these projects so that the local population gets maximum benefits.

Niazi' legs are 'trembling' to face arrest: Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Monday criticized that the coalition government was not weak but Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaf chairman Imran Khan Niazi' legs were 'trembling' to face arrest

and the government will not allow him to hold the nation hostage for his personal gains. "Today the nation has recognized who is brave and who is a coward", he said while talking to PTV news channel.

He said that equal justice must be done with Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan, adding, every political leader should be treated equally and must be brought to justice.

Replying to a question, he said that the elections would be held in the country at the right time, adding, we are not running away from the elections but need equal justice from the courts.

The politics of Imran Khan was based on lies, he said, adding, "Imran Khan should be ashamed

of ruining the state institutions during the PTI government's tenure with his poor governance and failed policies. He said that Imran Khan was a power-hungry person and had nothing to do with democratic norms and values, adding, he should answer where has spent the money he took from American companies. Khan filed fabricated cases of corruption against Nawaz Sharif, but failed to produce a single piece of evidence in the court, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in a meeting with Nawabzada Shazaib Bugti, Federal Minister for Narcotics Control at Parliament House.

Railways earns Rs28 bln in six months despite flood devastation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has earned significant revenue of Rs 28.263 billion during the last six months from July to December 2022 from its regular operations despite closures of train operations during flood devastation.

"The expenditure in the same period was Rs. 52.990 billion, out of the total expenditure, whereas 35 percent of it was related to pensions and 33 percent to salaries of the department," said an official document available with APP.

In the same period, July-December, 2022, Pakistan Railways received a subsidy of Rs. 21.750 billion as a grant in aid from the federal government. However, the net deficit for the period July-December was Rs. 2.977 billion, it said.

Pakistan Railways is trying its level best to transform itself into a profitable organization despite financial constraints. The department in this regard has developed a two-pronged action plan that included concentration on core activities and emphasis on revenue generation through non-core activities.

Pakistan Railways has been serving the nation since independence. There have been decades of neglect when it comes to investment in railway infrastructure and rolling stock. This neglect has adversely impacted the financial need of the department. The document said during the first half of the current financial year 2022-23 brought more bad news for the department as the unprecedented floods due to climate change played havoc with the already dilapidated infrastructure.

It not only resulted in revenue loss for Pakistan Railways as train operations remained suspended for more than 35 days but it also put a further burden on the department in terms of restoration of Railway traffic from its meagre resources.

About the concentration on core activities, it said that Pakistan Railways has prepared a business plan in January 2023 to increase its revenue and reduce expenditure through improved governance. The plan is being implemented in letter and spirit. The recent initiatives towards digitization in form of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Railway Automated Booking and Travel Assistance (RABTA) also aim to increase efficiency and reduced the revenue expenditure gap.

The department has restarted its premium train service Green Line from January 2023 and the train consists of new Chinese coaches imported recently equipped with infotainment services like LEDs, Wi-Fi and public address systems.

Pakistan Railways is also importing 230 passenger coaches from China, out of these 46 coaches have arrived from China while the rest of the coaches would be assembled in the country through Transfer of Technology (ToT). Regarding the emphasis on revenue generation through non-core activities, it said that Pakistan Railways recently presented a business plan to the Supreme Court and successfully pleaded before the court to allow the department to utilize its land for the generation of economic activities and thereby ensure revenue for itself.

AOP approves projects

KABUL (Agencies): The National Procurement Authority of Afghanistan, approved many projects worth 2.4 billion Afghanis for the next year in the country. Based on the information from the office deputy prime minister for the economic affairs, the projects will be conducted in the provinces of Kabul, Herat, Farah, Nangarhar, Kandahar and Laghman, adding that the projects will be funded from the government budget.

The Frontier Post

Shabaan 14, 1444 — Tuesday, March 07, 2023

Needy families received aid

NANGARHAR-PAKTIKA (Agencies): 6629 needy families received humanitarian aid in Nangarhar and Paktika provinces. 4479 needy families in Yahya Khel and Yusuf Khel districts of Paktika received aid from the WFP. Flour, cooking oil, lentils and salt were distributed to each family in Paktika according to local officials of the province. 2,150 needy families in Nazian district of Nangarhar received aid from the World Food Programme for the third round.

If plan approved, female students will take exam: Council

KABUL (TOLONews): The Afghanistan Medical Council said that after the approval of this council's plan by the Islamic Emirate, the final exam for medical university will be taken by women.

Technical consultants of the council said they have sent the plan to the Islamic Emirate.

"After the approval of this plan we are ready to take exams of doctors that have graduated recently," said Ahmad Shah, technical consultant of the council.

Farnosh is a medical student and said that after years of education, she is

now concerned about their final exam.

"The exit exam is important and it's not just an exam for doctors, it's a path for our future and career, if we don't take this exam, it will be the end of female doctors' work and education," said Farnosh.

Meanwhile, the Afghan Medical Council allowed four of the doctors who obtained the most points in the sixth round of the final examination of medical schools to work.

Some doctors asked the Islamic Emirate to give the exam to female doctors immediately.

"We request to give exams to female doctors so their fate is known, after all the effort they put in," said Feroz, a doctor who got first position in this exam.

"Immediately provide education opportunities for every student and solve the challenges so students can complete their education," said Ghulam Mujtaba, a doctor.

According to officials, the medical council in Afghanistan gave an exam and 30 percent of male doctors passed the exam and over the next two days they will receive their licenses from this council.

Russia to develop Afghan coal energy sector

KABUL (Pajhwok): Russian entrepreneurs have inked a memorandum on the development of Afghanistan's coal-based thermal power sector.

In an interview, Russian Ambassador to Afghanistan Dmitry Zhirnov said financiers from the Republic of Tatarstan had signed the memorandum.

The ambassador recalled businesspeople from the Republic of Tatarstan signed the deal in Kabul a month back. "It is a trilateral project with Iran and Pakistan."

TASS news agency quoted the envoy as saying Russian pipe producers were prepared to join the construction of the Afghan part of the gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and India.

Zhirnov said Russian engineers had inspected boiler houses, heating networks, water supply systems and power substations in Kabul.

The engineers are said to have drawn up a plan for the refurbishment of the Kabul utility system.

The Russo-Afghan trade volume had surged by 40 percent in a year, the ambassador noted, stressing the need for mutually beneficial cooperation.

268 Afghan detainees released from Iran prisons: Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Taliban's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday said that 268 Afghan detainees have been released from prisons in Iran, and transferred to Afghanistan through the 'Islamqala' crossing point.

The minister has said that the Afghan prisoners were released following the Taliban sperm judge's visit to Tehran, and the discussions with Iranian officials.

The Islamic Emirate authorities have appreciated Iran and said that such positive steps can result in strengthening mutual cooperation between the two countries.

The number of Afghan prisoners in Iran has been announced in 1728, however, the Taliban have not yet commented on what charges the inmates were imprisoned in Iran.

Following the handover of the Afghan Embassy in Tehran to the Taliban, many Afghans who had fled the country fearing persecution and death threats from the Taliban, now are concerned about their security. Some of them have said that now



the Taliban can easily find their details, residential area, and workplace in Iran.

After the overthrow of the previous government in August 2021, more than a million Afghan nationals migrated to Iran, according to Iranian officials. Most of these Afghan migrants entered Iran illegally and without having visas or stay

permits.

Over the past months, the Iranian government has taken serious measures to deal with undocumented Afghan refugees in the host country. They have been continuously incarcerating and forcefully deporting Afghan nationals to Afghanistan through Islamqala and Abrishum

crossing points.

Meanwhile, the Iranian government is accused of misconducting Afghan refugees. The United Nations Agency for Refugees has repeatedly called on Iran to treat Afghan migrants with decency, however, the Islamic Regime pursues its own policy.

EU will not support any armed resistance: Envoy

KABUL (Khaama Press): The European Union Special Representative for Afghanistan, Tomas Niklasson during his visit to Kabul, said that the EU will not support any armed resistance in Afghanistan.

During his week-long visit to Afghanistan, Tomas Niklasson met with senior Taliban officials in Kabul and Kandahar and discussed key issues Afghan people are currently plagued with. Mr. Niklasson also reaffirmed the EU's continued humanitarian aid and active interactions with the people of Afghanistan.

"The EU will not support any armed resistance in Afghanistan, neither armed resistance nor political resistance to the current system, because the war-torn country has already suffered enough over that past four decades," Niklasson said.

He further added, our doors remain open to dialogue with the de facto authorities and other Afghans, within the country and abroad, to hopefully contribute to finding solutions and sustainable peace.

Many countries in the region and beyond including Iran, the US, Russia,



and Norway have clearly announced that they do not support and resist in Afghanistan, instead hoping for the restoration of sustainable peace in the country.

These statements have been made while the Taliban regime has no major military opposition other than, National Resistance Front and Islamic State Khorasan militants. The NRF resistance does not pose any immediate threats to the Taliban regime, according to political and military experts.

Meanwhile, Haneef Atmar, former Foreign Minister of Afghanistan said in

Berlin that without a political agreement with the Taliban to form a government, military resistance against this group is useless.

Atmar emphasized the implementation of the Doha Agreement and the organization 'Bonn Conference Two' under the supervision of the UN and all political groups of Afghanistan.

While speaking at the German Institute of Cultural Diplomacy in Berlin, Atmar tried to highlight the resumption of "intra-Afghan dialogues" to solve the security and humanitarian crises and save Afghanistan from going into isolation.

KABUL (TOLONews): Janan Mama, a resident of the Khwaja Omari district of Ghazni province, plays the flute to diminish the pain of losing his sons in past wars.

His two sons were members of the Afghan army of the former government and were killed in one day in their district.

Janan Mama told TOLONews that he eases the sorrows of his heart by playing the flute.

"When the pain crushes me, I start playing the flute. Not only in tragic moments-I play in happy times as well," said Janan Mama.

Janan Mama, 64, said

he became interested in playing the flute from childhood, but now plays to cope with the heavy pain.

He hopes to see lasting peace across Afghanistan.

"I have no wish except peace and calmness in the nation. I wish a comfortable live for Muslims

(Afghan nation) to breathe comfortably," said Janan Mama.

Meanwhile, the local officials of Ghazni province said that the government will assist all families who lost loved ones during the past wars.

"Families lost their members during the pre-

vious government and their orphans remained, the Islamic Emirate will pay them regularly like the families of martyrs," said Mullah Hamidullah Nisar, head of the information and culture department.

Many of Afghan families lost members during the



wars across the country and are facing serious economic challenges.

Iranian trade center inaugurates in Kabul city

KABUL (TOLONews): A major trade center, described as a permanent exhibition, sponsored by Iran was inaugurated in the presence of Islamic Emirate officials and a newly arrived Iranian delegation in Kabul.

An Iranian delegation has also come to Kabul for the event, the Iranian govt announced.

The head of the trading center, Samana Abdullahi, said that the center will begin activities in the coming solar year 1402.

"Our presence was just to inaugurate the trade center and all of our main programs in practice will be implemented professionally in 1402 based on the needs of Afghanistan," she said.

"This center... will provide trade, legal and economic consultations between the companies from the republic of Iran and brotherly country Afghanistan," said Rostayee, the trade attaché of Iran's embassy.

The acting Minister of Industry and Commerce (MoIC), Nooruddin Azizi,

urged the Iranian delegation to make efforts to improve the trade facilities for the Afghan exports.

"(Featured are) Afghan commodities, particularly in the agriculture sector, including dry fruits and other products. We are trying to get good licenses for vendors of these commodities," Azizi said.

Meanwhile, the acting head of Agriculture and Livestock, Mirwais Hajizada, said that holding such an exhibition is good for the expansion of economic relations of Afghanistan with the neighboring countries.

"Wherever the exhibition is, either in Afghanistan, Iran or

Pakistan or other countries, it benefits our country. It enhances the economic relations of our country, but on condition that the imports should not be at equal level to the production inside the country," he said.

The trade center of Iran was inaugurated at an 11-flat compound in Parwan-e-2 square in Kabul.



Deputy PM attends graduation ceremony of scholars in Uruzgan



URUZGAN (Agencies): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Deputy Prime Minister, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, attended the graduation ceremony of 100 students from Dar-

ul-Uloom Saadeh al-Omariah Madrasah in Tarinkot, the center of Uruzgan, after studying Hadith, memorizing and reciting the Holy Quran.

On the occasion, the

Prime Minister's Economic Deputy Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Uruzgan Governor Mawlawi Mohammad Ali Jan Ahmad, local officials, religious scholars

and hundreds of common people attended in the ceremony.

Deputy PM Baradar congratulated the graduates, said that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will always devotes itself day and night to serve our people.

Meanwhile, Mawlawi Mohammad Ali Jan Ahmad thanked all the scholars who attended in the Islamic and devotional education of the children of the country and provided the basis for education and Islamic education for the children of the nations.

He called on all the people to support religious madrasahs and centers so that all future children and young people can study Islam and Quran in the country.

Deprived of health services, complain Takhar residents

TALOQAN (Pajhwok): Residents of the remote districts of northern Takhar province complain about the lack of access to health services in their areas.

They say conflict and insecurity in the country over the past 20 years has deprived them of basic health services.

Widespread poverty,

economic hardship and a shortage of health centres have created a host of serious problems for them, grumble residents of far-flung localities.

Hamidullah, an inhabitant of Rustaq district who brought his ailing mother and wife for treatment to Taloqan, said: "I have to take care of two patients and visited several health centers in the district, including the public hospital. But the patients did not get better because they did not receive proper treatment for lack of facilities.

"Eventually, we came to Taloqan, where I took the patients to a private hospital despite my weak economic situation. I'm wondering what to do now," he commented.

Hamidullah added: "The area we are living in (Dasht-i-Mirzayee) has no health centers and the facilities located in the district are unable to meet the needs of all patients due to lack of advanced equip-

ment."

Asking the government to address their problems, he said: "My daily income is below 50 afis. Since my patients were not treated well at the government hospital, I have brought them to a private hospital here. I'm worried about payments."

Ghulam Mohammad, another resident, recalled: "My child was diagnosed with lumbar disc disease two years ago after a traffic accident.

"Although he needs medical treatment, the public hospital in Takhar has failed to take care of him in these two years. Now private hospitals are demanding 110,000 afghanis for his treatment and I don't have this amount."

He has shared the issue with the Public Health

Department.

Fateullah Dawlatyar, a civil society activist in Dasht-i-Qala district, said: "Over the past 20 years, the district has been a battleground. We witnessed conflict every day and suffered human and financial losses. Currently we have no access to any kind of facilities."

He said the previous government paid no attention due to insecurity in their district, and many times they witnessed the loss of mothers during childbirth.

Eng. Abdullah, another civil activist, regretted conflict had caused a lot of deprivations in the country. Remote areas in particular had been deprived of health centers, he noted.

The activist chided the previous government for

failing to pay enough attention to resolving health problems.

He said people in most areas of the district were facing health problems. They expected the current government to take action to address their concerns, he added.

According to him, constructing health centers, funding and equipping them in remote areas will address people's problems.

Sadam Hussain Bashash, a social worker in Takhar, said residents of Mawarayee Koccha were among the most deprived people who did not have access to electricity, clean drinking water and health centers.

He claimed the people of remote villages of the district often lost their relatives to the lack of health

centers. The current government needed to pay attention to solving their problems, especially health issues, he believed.

Director of Public Health Dr Abdul Qahar Ahmadi told Pajhwok a survey of this department found 25 health centers in remote areas of the province were inactive due to lack of staff and facilities.

He said efforts were underway to address such problems in remote areas, as well as the provincial capital.

He revealed the ministry was striving to provide health services. He promised 5,000 health centers would be established across the country, including remote areas of Takhar, so that people could benefit from the provision of the facilities.





LAHORE: President Dr. Arif Alvi and Begum Samina Alvi being briefing about various project of students at Department of Special Needs University of Management and Technology.

LHC summons DC, SSP after permission denied for Aurat March

LAHORE (PPI): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Monday summoned Lahore deputy commissioner and Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) on a petition filed by Aurat March organisers against the refusal of NOC for holding the march in the Punjab capital owing to security reasons.

The organisers moved the high court on Saturday, arguing that the DC order was “arbitrary and colourable exercise of power and is in clear violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution [...] The impugned order is, thus, liable to be struck down”. The organisers pleaded the LHC to set aside the DC’s order and direct the respondents “to fully facilitate the petitioners and all the women of Lahore to peacefully participate in the Aurat March being organised at Nasser Bagh”.

The case was fixed for hearing before Justice Muzammil Akhtar Shabbir today (Monday). However he recused himself from hearing the case and sent it back to the LHC chief jus-

tic, asking him to fix the petition for hearing before another bench. Later, the case was fixed for hearing before Justice Anwar Hussain. The organisers of the march were represented by Lahore Bar Association secretary Sabahat Rizvi and Advocate Asad Jamal. The judge has summoned Lahore DC Rafia Haider and SSP Dost Muhammad on March 7 in the case.

On Feb 4, the Lahore DC discarded the plea to organise Aurat March, considering the possibility of a clash with members of Jamaat-i-Islami’s (JI) ‘Haya March’. Civil society, political parties and rights organisations have condemned the DC for rejecting the request to organise Aurat March on International Women’s Day on March 8, saying it seems to have been done under pressure of JI’s ‘Haya March’. They further plan to carry on with the preparations for March 8 despite the disapproval.

“There is no doubt that we will march on March 8th because we will not cede the little space we have

carved for ourselves for 6 years. We will march, upholding the rich history of Pakistani women and transgender activists defiantly fighting the systems that seek to oppress us,” tweeted Aurat March Lahore.

The Aurat March organising committee had requested for a no objection certificate (NOC) from the district administration to hold a rally on March 8 at Nasser Bagh, Lahore, followed by a march around the park area. While, the JI has also announced ‘Haya March’ the same day. In view of threat alerts from security agencies, DC Rafia Haider rejected the plea for NOC.

A statement issued by the DC said the plea was rejected in the wake of the current security scenario, threat alerts and law and order situation. It further quoted ‘controversial’ cards and banners for awareness of women’s rights and the strong reservation of the general public and religious organisations, among the reasons for the disapproval.

Afghan universities reopened

KABUL (Agencies): Afghan universities reopened on Monday after a winter break, but only men returned to class with a “heartbreaking” ban by the Taliban authorities on women in higher education still in force.

The university ban is one of several restrictions imposed on women since the Taliban stormed back to power in August 2021 and has sparked global outrage including across the Muslim world. “It’s heartbreaking to see boys going to the university while we have to stay at home,” said Rahela, 22, from the central province of Ghor. “This is gender discrimination against girls because Islam allows us to pursue higher education. Nobody should stop us from learning.”

The Taliban government imposed the ban after accusing women students of ignoring a strict dress code and a requirement to be accompanied by a male relative to and from campus. Most universities had already introduced gender-segregated entrances and classrooms, as well as allowing women to be taught only by female professors or elderly men.

“It’s painful to see that thousands of girls are deprived of education today,” Mohammad Has-bee Habibzadah, a student of computer science at Herat university. “We are trying to address this issue by talking to lecturers and other students so that there can be a way where boys and girls could study and progress together.” Ejabatullah Nejatii, an engineering student at Kabul University, Afghanistan’s largest, said it was a fundamental right of women to study. “Even if they attend classes on separate days, it’s not a problem. They have a right to education and that right should be given to them,” he said as he entered the university campus.

Punjab police register FIR against Imran

LAHORE (PPI): Punjab police have registered a First Information Report (FIR) against 150 people including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan accusing them of creating hindrances in the legal process.

The FIR was registered at the Race Course police station against PTI chief Imran Khan, Shibli Fraz, and other 150 unidentified suspects against the complaint of SHO Police Station Secretariat Islamabad Nadeem Tahir on various charges including assault, armed rioting, obstructing public servants from discharging their duties, and others under sections 395, 353, 148, 149, 109, and 186 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC).

According to the FIR, the PTI workers assaulted the police officer on the orders of Imran Khan Niazi, who is the PTI chief. When the police came to arrest Imran Khan, the PTI activists surrounded him and threatened him with dire consequences, the FIR claimed. The SHO also claimed in his application that the violent mob threatens to kill the police officer. “Imran Khan did all the planning in mutual consultation,” he added.

The baton-carrying people told the police that they would kill if they came even an inch ahead. The FIR further reveals that Shibli Faraz also obstructed public servants from discharging their duties by giving a false statement.

Govt to stamp out menace of terrorism: Sana

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan on Monday said the government would provide all resources to provinces for maintaining law and order and root out the menace of terrorism through effective measures.

Addressing a press conference, he said there would be no cut in the resources of provincial governments and all requirements of law enforcement agencies would be fulfilled. “Though economic condition is very tough and austerity measures are being taken but the government would not compromise on needs of law enforcement agencies and all resources to be provided to them as per directions of the Prime Minister,” he maintained.

During the meeting of the Apex committee, he said that federal government had assured to provide all resources to the provinces for maintaining law and order. The minister said that entire nation was standing with the brave and courageous law enforcers who were even sacrificing their lives to eliminate terrorism.

Rana Sana said that one civilian and eight personnel of the Balochistan Constabulary were martyred and 13 were wounded

in a bomb attack in Bolan. He said that constabulary van was on its way back to Quetta from Sibi when an explosion occurred on the Kambri bridge in the area bordering the Sibi and Kachhi districts.

The minister said that a suicide bomber riding on motorbike rammed into the police van. He said that wounded personnel had been shifted to hospitals through helicopter and every possible treatment was being given to them.

Regarding comments of Maulana Fazlur Rehman about postponement of elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa amid security concerns, the minister said that his opinion regarding postponement of election was valuable. However, he said the decision to hold elections was not of the government but of the Election Commission of Pakistan. PDM would hold a meeting to discuss this matter as it seem difficult to run the election campaign in the current situation, he said.

Regarding the possible arrest of Imran Khan, the minister said that things were clear against Imran Khan and he would have to appear before court to face the trial. He said that PTI leaders including dramatized the situation when Islamabad police team reached Lahore to arrest

Imran Khan. “If Imran Khan is so much obedient to law, he should appear before the court as per orders,” he added. The minister said the verdict of the court about Imran Khan would be accepted and implemented in case he was acquitted or awarded punishment.

“Imran Khan will have to appear before the court in next hearings otherwise he will be presented there,” he maintained. He said that Imran Khan along with property tycoon looted Rs 50 billion of the national treasury and got registered Al-Qadir Trust of 450 Kanal. He said that Imran Khan and his spouse were the trustees of this trust while both also minted money through their front lady ‘Farah Gogi’.

To a question, the minister said the PTI’s inapt government ruined the national economy during its three-and-a-half-year tenure and it violated the agreements with International Monetary Fund (IMF). To a question, he said that Nawaz Sharif criticized their opponents in past but in decent way as he did not believe in misbehaving with others. To another query about police torture on journalists, the minister said that inquiry report would be presented in court and the decision of court to be respected.

Ex-CJ: SC not declared Imran Sadiq, Ameen in all aspects

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Former Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar on Monday said that the Supreme Court had not declared Imran Khan “sadiq and ameen” (truthful and honest) unreservedly and in all aspects of his conduct in its 2017 verdict in favour of the PTI chief.

However, in an exclusive conversation with private TV channel, the former top judge said that the verdict did not cover all aspects of Imran’s conduct, clarifying that the judgment was in the context of only that particular case.

Nisar also acknowledged that he may have erred in some of his judgments during his time as chief justice

of the apex court. When asked about which judgments he was referring to, he responded by saying that he was a human being and that human beings make mistakes.

He also took exception to the claim made by Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman wherein he claimed the ex-CJP and former spymaster Lt Gen Faiz Hameed were “lobbying” for the PTI chief. He appeared to be dejected at the assertion and said he was trying to get in touch with the JUI-F chief. He said that nothing of the sort had happened.

Asked whether he was denying the allegation that he was “lobbying” for

Imran, Nisar responded by saying that he was not in contact with the PTI chief. Talking about the former spymaster, he said that the contact between them was reserved to Lt Gen Hameed messaging him to ask about how he was doing.

The ex-CJP was also asked about whether his WhatsApp account was “hacked”, to which Nisar responded in the affirmative. He suspected that his data was being misused. It is pertinent to mention that Nisar’s remarks come after several politicians, including PML-N’s Maryam Nawaz, have accused the former CJP of “conspiring” against Nawaz and propping up Imran.

Imran moves LHC against Pemra’s ban

LAHORE (Agencies): PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Monday moved the Lahore High Court (LHC) against the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) decision to bar all satellite TV channel from broadcasting his speeches and press talks.

The LHC registrar’s office has fixed the plea for hearing and Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan will take it up today. In the petition, Imran named Pemra and the authority’s director (operations, broadcast media) as respondents.

The plea pointed out that the IHC had set aside a similar prohibition order in the past. The petition said that Pemra had issued the order “in excess of the jurisdiction vested in it and without having regard to the constitutional rights guaranteed under Articles 19 and 19-A of the Constitution”. It further contended that the authority was not empowered to issue a blanket prohibition order, which appears to be “in vio-

lation of the principle of proportionality”.

The plea argued that according to Section 8 of the Pemra Ordinance, one-third of the total number of members were required to constitute quorum for meetings. But the meeting which passed the order against Imran comprised only the chairman and three members which made the order “coram-non-judice”. It said that Pemra’s order was “illegal, unlawful, more than its jurisdiction, and contrary to the fundamental rights as enshrined under the Constitution” and liable to be set aside.

“The Impugned Order in effect has prohibited all news channels from airing live speeches of Imran based on spreading hate speech and making provocative statements against state institutions and officers. It is submitted that no hate speech or any such statements were made against the state institutions during his

speech which entails such personal consequences as notified in the impugned order,” the petition said, arguing that the ban was in violation of Article 19 of the Constitution and the Pemra Ordinance, 2002. The petition said that Imran’s speech in question had been “incorrectly labelled as hate speech” and his words were in no way “prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order”. It contended that Pemra was taking the statement “out of the context and political backdrop in which it was made in order to create censorship and inhibit the ‘freedom of speech’.”

It further said that the move to ban Imran’s speeches was an “arbitrary and malafide use” of Pemra’s powers to “stifle discussion regarding the torture and brutality being carried out against Shahbaz Gill and keep the public at large unaware of the developments in the case and essentially, thwart justice”.

SHC seeks tax collection and spending details

KARACHI (Agencies): While hearing a commercial case on Monday the Sindh High Court sought a comprehensive report from provincial and federal governments pertaining to detail of tax collection from Karachi and its spending in the metropolis for the past three years.

Granting two weeks-time in the matter, a single-member bench comprising Justice Muhammad Faisal Kamal Alam issued the directives in response to pleas of Muhammad Rameez Khan and others who made Sindh province and others as respondents in the case.

According to copy of a two-page order available with TLTP, Justice Alam also asked President Sindh High Court Bar Association to assist the court in the case which is fixed for March 20. The bench said in its order, “Before the next date of hearing, learned Additional A.G. Sindh, will file the precise report under his statement containing that how much sales tax on services and other provincial taxes have been collected from Karachi in the last three years; how and to what extent, it is expended”.

Similarly the bench issued notice to the Deputy Attorney General and Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) at Islamabad, to submit a precise report showing the figures of federal taxes collected from Karachi for the past three years, and how much portion has been utilized for the development of Karachi.

FSC declares minimum 18 years age for marriage

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Declaring minimum age of marriage for both girls and boys at 18 years in Sindh in accordance with the injunction of Islam on Monday Federal Shariat Court (FSC) ruled saying fixation of this age limit objective is to provide reasonable time period for girls to complete basic education in order to develop mental maturity in a person.

A full bench of the FSC comprising Chief Justice Dr Syed Muhammad Anwar and Justice Khadim Hussain Shaikh ruled while hearing a plea challenging vires of the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013, which set the minimum age of marriage for both girls and boys at 18 years in the province.

The bench said, “setting a minimum age for marriage i.e an act which is “mobah” (permissible) and not absolutely “fard” (mandatory) like marriage is in accordance with the injunctions of Islam, because such fixation of

minimum age limit provides reasonable time period to girls to complete basic education at least, which normally helps in developing mental maturity (Rushd) in a person”.

The bench announced the judgment in response to a plea of a citizen who invoked the FSC jurisdiction challenging vires of the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013, which set the minimum age of marriage for both girls and boys at 18 years in the province. The petitioner had contended that the Act was un-Islamic and violated the injunctions of Islam.

After providing ample opportunity to parties of the case, the full bench decided that the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013 is in accordance with the injunctions of Islam, and therefore does not violate any constitutional or Islamic provisions. The court further stated that the Section 2(a) of the Act is in line with the Islamic teach-

ings of protecting the rights of children and ensuring their well-being. It is pertinent to mention that the Act 2013 was enacted to prevent child marriages by fixing the minimum age limit and promote the protection of children’s rights in the province. It sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for males and females.

It has been stated in the verdict of the FSC that fixing of an age limit to enter into marriage by the state or a government, as is done in the impugned law, is not against the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

“The act of setting a minimum age limit for marriage and setting age for an adult eligible to solemnise marriage vide impugned Section 2(a) of the Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act, 2013 is not against the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah,” read the judgement.

Steps for research’s benefits to farmers directed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister KP Muhammad Azam Khan has directed the authorities of Agriculture & Livestock Departments to develop linkages amongst research institutes, academia and farmers to pass-on the benefits of research activities to farmers.

He issued these directives while presiding over a meet-

ing of Agriculture and Livestock Departments here on Monday. The authorities concerned briefed the Caretaker Chief Minister about the development projects, administrative affairs achievements and issues being faced by these respective departments.

Caretaker Provincial Minister Abdul Haleem Qasuria, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan,

Secretary Agriculture Israr Khan, Secretary Livestock Mukhtiar Ahmad and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The chief minister was told that due to the freezing of development funds in the prevailing situation have affected certain time-bound activities of the departments adding that agriculture produce may be affected if the required funds are not released in time.

More than 850,000 Syrian, Turkish children displaced by deadly quakes

UNITED NATIONS (APP): A month after the two catastrophic earthquakes that struck Türkiye and Syria, more than 850,000 children remained displaced after being forced from their damaged or destroyed homes amid millions in dire need of aid, UN agencies said.

“Families forced from their homes by the earthquakes have spent the past four weeks focused on survival, their lives on hold while aftershocks continue to rumble,” UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, Afshan Khan, said in a statement. She said it was now critical “to do all we can to help families begin to rebuild their lives, providing children with psychosocial support, getting them back into learning as soon as possible, and providing some stability amid the chaos.”

At the same time, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) reported on Monday that the situation for the

356,000 pregnant women in earthquake-affected areas remained critical, especially the estimated 38,800 who were expected to deliver in the coming weeks. Hundreds of hospitals and clinics were either damaged or destroyed, and thousands of women and girls were living in over-crowded, makeshift camps exposed to freezing temperatures, UNFPA said, adding that urgent funding was key to keeping thousands healthy during their pregnancy.

The impact of the earthquakes on the region’s children and families, it added, had been catastrophic, leaving hundreds of thousands living in desperate conditions. The combined death toll from the earthquakes and aftershocks had reached more than 50,000 people in both countries, with thousands of others injured and massive destruction to buildings and other essential infrastructure.

The number of children killed and injured during the quakes and their

aftermath had not yet been confirmed, but was likely to be in the many thousands, UNICEF said. Across Syria, more than 3.7 million children had been affected by the quakes. “Even before these catastrophic earthquakes, humanitarian needs among children of Syria were higher than they have ever been,” UNICEF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, Adele Khodr, said. “As we approach 12 long years of conflict, millions of families are living on the brink of disaster, feeling as if the world had forgotten them. We must support these families for the long term, helping them pick up the pieces of their lives.”

“In Syria, more than 500,000 people are believed to have been forced from their homes by the earthquakes. Many families’ homes have been destroyed and many children are afraid to return to damaged homes as aftershocks continue. “Even before

the earthquakes, Syria had the largest number of internally displaced people in the world, with 6.8 million people displaced, including nearly three million children.

“In Türkiye, over 1.9 million people are staying in temporary accommodation shelters, and 2.5 million children in the country require urgent humanitarian assistance. “Children have seen their whole world crumble before their eyes, but we know how to help them rebuild,” Ms Khan said. “Providing children with the tools – psychosocial support, play and learning, and the stability brought by knowing that their basic needs are met – are immeasurably important in ensuring their long-term well-being.”

“UNICEF has reached almost 500,000 people with lifesaving water, sanitation and hygiene services and supplies across Syria. More than 130,000 affected children under five have been supported with nutrition

services. “Threats come thick and fast for families left vulnerable by the earthquake,” Ms Khodr said. “A comprehensive, integrated response to support children and families is critical in preventing these threats from overwhelming an already catastrophic situation. UNICEF teams are there with children and families affected, but the needs are huge and continued support is vital.”

“In Türkiye, UNICEF has distributed winter clothes, heaters, and blankets to nearly 277,000 people, including more than 163,000 children. Working closely with the Ministry of Health, UNICEF is procuring life-saving vaccines and cold chain storage equipment.” With UNICEF support, Türkiye’s Ministry of Education had set up 87 tents, which were being used as temporary learning centers. Catch-up classes are running in two shifts, benefiting nearly 3,600 children every day, UNICEF reported.

The UN Children’s Fund is

requesting \$196 million to reach 3 million people, including 1.5 million children, in Türkiye and \$172.7 million to deliver immediate life-saving support for 5.4 million quake-affected people, including 2.6 million children, in Syria. The World Food Programme (WFP) continues to reach those in need, facilitating life-saving aid deliveries and expanding efforts to reach more quake-affected communities.

Amid cities laying in rubble and buckled roads, WFP staff said colleagues in both countries often worked seven days a week. “Most of us are on autopilot right now,” said Omer Celik, a WFP programme assistant working with two dozen other staff from a hotel in the relatively unscathed, southern Turkish port city of Mersin. But, his team is “turning the stress into something positive”, he said. “We’re helping over 1.5 million people in northwestern Syria, and it’s motivating us a lot.”