

Gill moves LHC for bail

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former SAPM, Shahbaz Gill on Wednesday moved Lahore High Court to seek protective bail and details of cases registered against him. The PTI leader in his plea filed through Barrister Ahmed Bansota stated that despite permission from the court to travel abroad for four weeks, he was 'harassed' at the airport and was told about the registration of five more cases.

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PM: Mockery is being made with Constitution

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said with the recent decisions of the Supreme Court, a mockery was being made with the Constitution and laws of the country.

Addressing a meeting of the leaders of all coalition parties, the prime minister referred to a decision of the three-judge SC bench over holding of elections in two provinces and said a mockery was being made with the Constitution and law and the fate of the nation was being decided with strange decisions. He said he wanted to say that such kind of treatment with the Constitution and law had never been witnessed before and "such a terrible scene has never met eyes".

The three-member bench had rejected the appeal for the constitution of a full bench and similarly, political parties' pleas were also rejected, he added. The prime minister elaborated that last week, they held a detailed meeting, followed by two cabinet meetings and parliamentary meetings over the evolving situation.

How a decision of another bench was neglected while members of the three-judge bench who had earlier recused themselves and again joined it, he questioned. A circular was

issued over Justice Isa's directive, followed by the formation of a six-member bench that took up the issue and decided it, he added.

The prime minister said the members of the National Assembly had debated the issue in the ongoing session and a resolution had already been passed while tomorrow, another resolution would be tabled in the House. He also highlighted the directive of the three-member bench with regard to the holding of elections in Punjab province and the observation over the election in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The prime minister said the purpose behind holding of the meeting of coalition parties was to mull over the situation and evolve a solid response.

Earlier, the Minister for Energy Engineer Khurram Dastagir Khan on Wednesday said that the coalition government wanted to hold general elections after completing the most important task of census and delimitation.

Without completion of the task of census and delimitation, the election results could not be made transparent, he expressed his fear while talking to a private television channel. Organizing elections with old data of population or census, would create many

issues for political parties and ECP, he added. The minister said that the incumbent government is engaged in collecting data of the population through the census. He said security has been deployed to various parts to finish the process of the census. The Election Commission of Pakistan would have the requirement of security for polling stations and a heavy amount to bear the responsibility of the next elections in the country, he said.

In October, he said the government would provide all required security and finance to ECP to arrange polling in Pakistan. Commenting on the court decision over the elections, he said that all the political partners would discuss the issue of early elections at the forum of parliament. Khurram Dastagir said that coalition partners had expressed reservations over the court verdict regarding elections. He said that a larger bench could help resolve the issue being faced by the political parties about elections. He suggested that next elections could be conducted in October and the people of four provinces could elect their representatives in a befitting manner. He hoped that Pakistan Muslim League-N, would win the next elections with thumping majority.

ECP issues Punjab polls schedule

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday announced the schedule for elections in Punjab — which are to be held on May 14 as directed by the Supreme Court.

According to the electoral watchdog notification, the polling for the Punjab Assembly elections will be held on May 14, 2023. The ECP also withdrew its earlier schedule regarding the holding of general elections in Punjab in October.

As per the schedule, appeals can be filed against the decisions of Returning Officers regarding rejection or accepting nomination papers on April 10. April 17 will be the last date for deciding on appeals by the Appellate Tribunal, and the revised lists of candidates will be published on April 18, the ECP notification stated.

The withdrawal of candidature can be done till April 19 while the candidates will be allotted election symbols on April 20, 2023. The polling will be held on May 14. The ECP schedule comes hours after the consultative meeting of the Election Commission, under the chair of CEC Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, was held in Islamabad today (Wednesday) to deliberate on the Supreme Court's (SC)'s verdict regarding Punjab Assembly elections. During the meeting, the ECP lawyers briefed the commission about the legal aspects and prospects of the implementation on the apex court's order. The participants in the meeting also decided to consult the caretaker Punjab government for administrative and security matters. The ECP has also decided to consult with the finance ministry for the release of funds required for Punjab polls.

8 terrorists killed, soldier martyred

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A terrorist commander among eight others were killed whereas a soldier of Pakistani Army embraced martyrdom while four got injured during a heavy gunfight amid an intelligence based operation (IBO) conducted by the Security Forces in general area Shinwarsak, South Waziristan District on Wednesday.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), intense fire exchange took place between own troops and the terrorists, during the conduct of the operation. The Army troops effectively engaged the terrorists location and eight terrorists including terrorist commander Jan Muhammad alias Chargh were sent to hell.

However, during intense exchange of fire, Sepoy Hamid Rasool (age 31 years, resident of District Rawalpindi) having fought gallantly, embraced shahadat while another four personnel including two officers got injured. Moreover, weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists. The killed terrorists remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces and killing of innocent citizens. "Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the ISPR said.

While responding to a media query regarding the alleged sale of Pakistani weapons to Ukraine, the Spokesperson termed it baseless media speculations and noted that Pakistan maintains a policy of noninvolvement in foreign conflicts and the same is in the case of the Russia-Ukraine conflict.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting of the leaders of coalition parties.

Battle for Takh-e-Lahore could sink the country: Bilawal

F.P. Report

GAMBAT/KHAIPUR: Chairman Pakistan People's Party and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari inaugurated Pakistan's first lung transplant unit and the country's first Health City and Medicine Unit at Gambat in Khairpur district.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of new projects at Pir Abdul Qadir Shah Jilani Institute of Medical Science, Gambat, the PPP Chairman said that the Sindh government has built a world-class medical infrastructure, which is far ahead of other provinces. He said that Gambat Institute is not a provincial but truly a national institution, where patients from Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, besides other provinces, also come for free of cost treatment.

PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto said that people wouldn't have to go to India for expensive treatment of kidney and liver because the treatment is now available in Gambat. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that if the political parties were given space and instead of the politics of hatred, division and abuse, competition was based on the politics of delivery, ideology and manifesto, then it would be useful for the country and the nation. Powerful class has played with every generation here.

Giving historical references, he said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was going to make the country a world power and during his time, there was a Pakistan that was ahead of the world. He said that when Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was the Prime Minister, the Prime Ministers and Presidents of the world used to follow the Pakistani Premier and even the personalities like Hillary Clinton also stood in a queue to get a glimpse of her.

The PPP chairman said that President Asif Ali Zardari was the most powerful civilian President of the country, but he gave all his pow-

ers to the Parliament. Today we see that the Chief Justice is not ready to share his powers with his brother judges. He further said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which is the milestone of Pakistan's economy, was initiated by President Zardari. After presenting the historical background, the PPP Chairman asked what was given to him in response to all these services?

In response to this question, he said that the same courts sentenced the Quaid-e-Awam to death and till today no judge was ready to do justice to Quaid-e-Awam. They give lectures to whole of Pakistan about who is corrupt and who is the Sicilian mafia. Here they come to our Larkano and slap the judge.

He said that after the Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, and myself went to the same courts and applied that I am the grandson of the Quaid-e-Awam and I want to be a part of the pending Presidential reference before you and you should hear the case. Till date, no judge has heard the case of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The Foreign Minister pointed out that when the present Chief Justice was the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, he had ordered the construction of Kalabagh Dam, ignoring the rights of small provinces.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was also martyred, but the judges who ruled the country in collaboration with dictators did not give justice.

Today everyone, including the former establishment, admits that they imposed Imran Khan on the nation in an unconstitutional way, an ugly spot on the Constitution and democracy. Did the same judges not see anything at that time? When Faryal Talpur was picked up from the hospital bed and imprisoned in jail, where were the suo moto powers at that time? Why there was no suo moto notice even



when Imran Khan was using ISI to form his government and pass the budget?

The PPP chairman warned that the battle for Takh-e-Lahore could sink the entire country. He said that I have never used harsh words for not giving justice to the case of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto or the judicial murder of Quaid-e-Awam in the hope that they might think for themselves. But now I understand that if we do politics by being polite, our next three generations will continue to demand justice for Quaid-e-Awam and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, he added.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that PPP is a democratic and ideological party, and does the politics of the manifesto, but we will not hide it now. He said that if a few people in an institution are stubborn that they want to play politics, than be prepared. We know how politics is done and will respond to every undemocratic attack. We know that the plan to make Pakistan one unit, to roll back the 18th Amendment, and to take away the rights of the provinces because those who imposed on us the selected and love the same doctrine are still present in the institutions and promoting him. While playing neutral, these elements were plotting for his Khan, adding that we are ready to expose the whole conspiracy of this group before the people of Pakistan.

350 arrested in Al-Aqsa compound

JERUSALEM (Agencies): Israeli police arrested more than 350 people during the early hours of Wednesday after clashes at Jerusalem's flashpoint Al-Aqsa mosque, a police spokesperson said. In a statement, police said they had "arrested and removed over 350 individuals that violently 'cascaded' themselves inside the mosque in the Old City of annexed east Jerusalem.

Those arrested included "masked individuals, stone and firework hurlers/throwers, and individuals suspected of desecrating the mosque," it said. Israeli police attacked dozens of worshippers in the mosque's compound before dawn in the wee hours of the day in what Israeli police said was a response to rioting. The incident sparked protests across the occupied West Bank and the Israeli military claimed nine rockets were fired from Gaza toward Israel after sirens blared in southern towns.

Violence in the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem has surged over the past year and there is concern that tensions could escalate this month, as the holy month of Ramadan coincides with Judaism's Passover and Christian Easter. The Palestinian Red Crescent said seven Palestinians sustained wounds from rubber-tipped bullets and beatings by the Israeli police at the

Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. It added that Israeli forces were preventing its medics from reaching the mosque. "I was sitting on a chair reciting [Holy Quran]," an elderly woman told Reuters outside the mosque, struggling to catch her breath. "They hurled stun grenades, one of them hit my chest," she said as she began to cry.

Israeli police said in a statement that it was forced to enter the compound after masked agitators locked themselves inside the mosque with fireworks, sticks and stones. "When the police entered, stones were thrown at them and fireworks were fired from inside the mosque by a large group of agitators," the statement said, adding that a police officer was wounded in the leg. Friction at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, known to Jews as the Temple Mount, has set off violence in recent years.

Palestinian groups condemned Israel's attacks on worshippers, which they described as a crime. "We warn the occupation against crossing red lines at holy sites, which will lead to a big explosion," said Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesperson for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Jordan and Egypt, both involved in recent US-backed efforts to de-escalate tensions between Israel and the Palestinians, issued separate

statements condemning the incident. Videos circulating on social media, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed fireworks going off and police beating people inside the mosque.

The Israeli military said nine rockets were fired from Gaza toward Israel, of which at least four were intercepted and four landed in open areas. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the brutal attack of the Israeli forces on the worshippers. In a tweet, the premier stated that the attack violated the sanctity of the holy month of Ramadan. "Impunity granted to Israel has emboldened Tel Aviv to violate basic human rights with abandon," he added.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said the "indiscriminate beating of worshippers and violation of sanctity of one of holiest sites of Islam is reprehensible and a grave affront to Muslims." PTI chief Imran Khan also strongly condemned the Israel police's actions. Taking to Twitter, the ex-premier said: "It is a responsibility of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to apprise the United Nations Security Council and the international community that such barbaric acts cause immense hurt to Muslims across the world."

Trump, facing criminal charges, calls for defunding the FBI

NEW YORK (Agencies): Former US president Donald Trump on Wednesday called on his fellow Republicans in Congress to slash funding for the US Justice Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), going on the offensive a day after pleading not guilty in New York to 34 felony counts of falsifying business records.

Trump, who is seeking to regain the presidency in 2024, took aim at federal law enforcement authorities even though the historic criminal charges against him — the first brought against any former or sitting president — were pursued by the Manhattan district attorney.

"Republicans in Congress should defund the DOJ and FBI until they come to their senses," Trump wrote on his social media platform. DOJ stands for the Department of Justice. Republicans in the past have supported robust funding for law enforcement and have criticised proposals from some on the left in recent years to "defund" local police

departments. Trump, who served as president from 2017 to 2021, backed spending increases for the Justice Department and FBI while in office. The FBI is the US domestic intelligence and security agency.

Trump faces two Justice Department criminal investigations led by a special counsel appointed by US Attorney General Merrick Garland. One focuses on efforts by Trump and his allies to overturn the results of the 2020 election that he lost to Democratic President Joe Biden and the other focuses on classified documents that Trump retained after leaving office. Trump himself appointed the current FBI director, Christopher Wray, after firing the agency's previous chief, James Comey, in 2017.

Congress appears unlikely to follow through on Trump's demand. Republicans control the House of Representatives and Democrats control the Senate. The FBI on Wednesday declined to comment on Trump's remarks. Reduced funding for fed-

eral law enforcement also would not affect another criminal investigation involving Trump led by a county prosecutor in Georgia, focusing on whether he unlawfully sought to overturn his 2020 election loss in that state.

The office of Alvin Bragg, the Manhattan district attorney, charged Trump on Tuesday with 34 felony counts of falsifying business records over allegations that he orchestrated payments to two women before the 2016 election to suppress publication of their sexual encounters with him. Prosecutors said the payments to adult film actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal constituted an attempt to conceal a violation of election law.

Opinion polls show Trump as the front-runner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination as he seeks to deny Biden a second term in office. Trump has over the years complained that law enforcement at the national and state level were targeting him for

political purposes, and his fellow Republicans in Congress have held hearings to examine what they describe as the "weaponisation" of government. Trump and his allies have accused Bragg, a Democrat, of bringing the charges for political reasons. Bragg, in comments after the charges were brought on Tuesday, said he has a responsibility to ensure everyone stands equal before the law.

Trump appeared at an arraignment in New York on Tuesday before flying back to his home in Florida to make public remarks. He declared himself the victim of election interference, without offering evidence. "I never thought anything like this could happen in America," Trump told supporters gathered at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach. "The only crime that I've committed has been to fearlessly defend our nation against those who seek to destroy it."

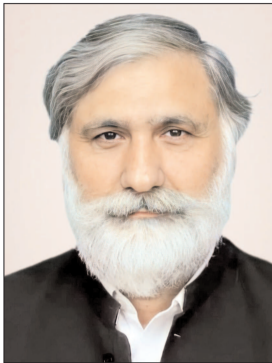
Trump accused Bragg of being out to get



him "before he knew anything about me." He said the judge in the case, Juan Merchan, is "a Trump-hating judge." Merchan has set the next hearing in the Trump case for December 4. Legal experts said a trial may not even get under way for a year. Indictment or even conviction does not legally prevent a person from running for president.



CM's aide assumes charge of Revenue Dept



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to KP Caretaker Chief Minister, Pir Haroon Shah has assumed the charge of the portfolio of Revenue Department, said a notification issued by Establishment Department here on Wednesday.

Pir Haroon Haroon takes charge of Revenue Department and performing his duties.

Police arrest drug dealer, seize 1.1kg hashish

KARACHI (APP): Police have arrested a drug dealer in a drug smuggling case and recovered 1,100 grams of hashish from his possession. According to District South Police Karachi spokesman, the arrested accused identified as Abdul alias Abdul Jalil was smuggling drugs from Quetta to Karachi. It is worth mentioning here that the name of the suspect was included in the list of wanted drug dealers issued by the authorities concerned. A case has been registered against the arrested accused while further investigation was underway.

Team of Int'l experts perform successful operation of ailing elephant 'Noor Jahan'

KARACHI (APP): A team consisting of international experts performed successful operation of elephant Noor Jahan in Karachi Zoo on Wednesday and also conducted various blood tests, x-rays and ultrasound of the elephant, as a result of which it was revealed that Noor Jahan has hematoma disease.

Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori and Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saif-ur-Rahman were also present with the team during the operation of the elephant, said a statement.

Later while talking to media Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori said that Veterinary hospital and modern laboratory will be established in the Karachi zoo so that timely medical facilities can be provided to the animals.

He said that the team of medical experts worked with utmost diligence and hard work today which is commendable. "I took notice of unwell condition of the elephant a month ago and directed the Administrator Karachi to immediately arrange her treatment so that the elephant can recover from any ailment", he said. He said that today a seven-member team of doctors under the leadership of Dr. Amir Al-Khalili has successfully operated and the prescribed medicines will continue to be given to them.

Moinuddin Haider calls on Sindh Governor

KARACHI (APP): Former Governor of Sindh Lieutenant General (Retd) Moinuddin Haider on Wednesday called on Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor's House.

They discussed the matters related to the measures taken for the social and economic wellbeing of the people of Sindh.

The Governor said the government was utilizing all available resources for welfare of the people.

Tessori said he himself go among the people so that their problems can be solved immediately.

Moinuddin Haider said that Sindh Governor's steps to solve problems of the people are commendable.

Widow receives pemsionary benefits after 10 years

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The widow of late Muhammad Latif, formerly working as Driver with National Trust for the Disabled (NTD) filed a complaint against Ministry of Human Rights through Mobile App of Wafaqi Mohtasib's Secretariat (WMS) for inordinate delay in payment of her dues admissible under the Prime Minister's Assistance Package.

She stated that her husband expired during service in 2014 and she was entitled to receive full pay and allowances till the age of her husband's superannuation.

Although monthly salary started w.e.f. April, 2021 but arrears of salary and PM Assistance Package was not disbursed to her. Her repeated visits, spread over many

years, to NTD and the Ministry of Human Rights failed to get the lawful entitlements released to her. Hence, she filed the complaint before the Federal Ombudsman.

The NTD (later on merged with Directorate General of Special Education) and the Ministry of Human Rights replied that the widow's dues including the senior scale promotion benefits have not been paid due to shortage of funds.

During hearing proceedings at the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Office, the representative of Special Education Directorate informed that an amount of Rs. 3.2 million is pending against the Agency. The representatives of Special Education and the Ministry of Human Rights made written commitments that her

case is being sent to the Finance Division for provision of funds. After taking into consideration the facts of the case, the Federal Ombudsman directed the Director General, Special Education and the Ministry of Human Rights to make payment to the complainant within 45 days.

The Deputy Advisor Implementation Wing of WMS Mr. Pervez Haleem vigorously pursued the implementation of the Mohtasib's decision which culminated in the payment of all dues to the widow. The complainant also acknowledged receipt of her dues and submitted a letter thanking the Wafaqi Mohtasib for his kind intervention resulting in the payment of pensionary dues of her late husband after 10 years.

Administration fined Rs.0.573m for overcharging

KARACHI (APP): During the ongoing campaign to check to profiteers, Karachi administration, on Wednesday, took action against 125 vendors and imposed fines of more than Rs. 573,000 for overcharging customers. According to a statement issued here by the commissioner's office, various monitoring teams visited different areas of the metropolis on the 14th of Ramadan and imposed fine of Rs.13000 on 3 flour sellers, fine of Rs.188000 on 8 bakeries, fine of Rs.57000 on 18 poultry shops, over Rs.100000 on 18 grocery stores, Rs.32000 on 6 meat sellers, Rs.33000 on 23 vegetable sellers, Rs.40000 on 31 fruit sellers and Rs.109000 on 18 milk sellers. The Commissioner Karachi, Muhammad Iqbal Memon, directed all deputy commissioners to continue action against profiteers and provide relief to citi-

zens by addressing their grievances.

The Commissioner said that the Karachi administration has also made arrangements to set up bachat bazaar to ensure availability of items of daily use to citizens at official rates. The commissioner instructed all the magistrates to conduct field visits and take action against the shopkeepers found guilty of profiteering to ensure relief to the citizens.

Listen to and address the complaints of the citizens, the commissioner asked adding that on complaint of excessive pricing, the magistrates should sell the confiscated goods on the spot at the official rate in presence of the shopkeeper. Iqbal Memon also appealed to the citizens to register their complaints against the profiteering at Commissioner Karachi's control room by calling on telephone numbers 02199203443 and 02199205645.

DC South to ensure ample arrangements for Youm-e-Ali (A.S)

KARACHI (APP): Deputy Commissioner South Captain (Retd) Muhammad Saeed Leghari on Wednesday chaired a meeting regarding the arrangements of Majlis and procession of Youm-e-Ali (A.S) to be observed on 21st Ramadan, at the DC South Complex here.

Necessary arrangements including law and order and municipal services on the venues of Majalis and routes of Youm-e-Ali (A.S) processions were discussed.

The participants of the meeting made detailed deliberations on cleaning, lighting and sanitation services at Imambargahs and overall security arrangements on the occasion of the martyrdom anniversary of Hazrat Ali (A.S).

They were briefed that there are many Imambargahs in South District in which Majlis are held, besides other events are also held on the Day.

The DC directed the officials concerned to ensure proper arrangements of cleanliness and lighting at all Imambargahs as well as other venues of Majlis and routes of processions.

He said all the necessary facilities should be provided to the mourners of Youm-e-Ali (A.S) processions and Majalis. The Deputy Commissioner directed the officials of local administrations and other concerned departments that the public should not face any kind of problem on this occasion.

The representatives of Pakistan Jafferia Alliance, all Assistant Commissioners, officials of Police, Pakistan Rangers Sindh, other law enforcement agencies, KMC, DMC, SSGC, K Electric, Fire Brigade, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board were in attendance.

Representatives of the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board, scouts, traffic police and trustees and administrators of Imambargahs and officers of concerned departments were also present.

Saeed Laghari said he will personally review the arrangements in and around the venues of Majalis, Imambargahs and routes of the main procession of Youm-e-Ali (A.S) and no negligence will be tolerated in this regard.



LAHORE: An artist is giving the final touch to various decorative artwork patterns by hand with colorful paint at his work place.

JI Emir to contact PDM, PPP, PTI leadership

LAHORE (NNI): Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq has decided to contact the leadership of the PDM, the PPP and the PTI to develop consensus on the national polls.

The decision was made in a meeting of JI central leadership at Mansoorah on Wednesday.

According to a press release issued after the meeting, Haq presided over the meeting which condemned the Israeli forces terrorism in Masjid-e-Aqsa and demanded the OIC and the leaders of the Muslim world take practical steps for the freedom of Aqsa Mosque and people of Palestine from Israeli occupation.

It also expressed grief over the losses to wheat crop due to unexpected rains, asking the nation to seek the collective forgiveness from Allah Almighty. The meeting condemned the illegal detention of Gwadar Rights Movement leader

Hidayatur Rahman Baloch and decided to approach the Supreme Court for his release from prison.

Haq said the JI would launch the movement for the restoration of rights of people of Balochistan from May 1. He asked the provincial government to fulfill the agreement signed with the people of Gwadar.

The JI chief said the parliamentary parties should come to the table to develop consensus on the general elections. He believed the polls in two provinces would not bring stability rather situation was expected to turn into worst after the elections as nobody would accept the results.

He said the JI would initiate efforts with good intent amid the prevailing deadlock. The fight among the ruling political parties brought the country to a point where masses were burning in the

fire of inflation, unemployment and lawlessness, he said, adding the current economic crises were due to decades long bad-governance and incompetence of the governments as it was not developed suddenly. He said the corruption, interest-based economy and unfair distribution of resources were the reasons behind the prevailing economic crisis. The country, he said, did not need any foreign loans if its leadership was wise and capable.

He said the JI had started the "Dastak Mohim" to create awareness and the party was fully prepared for the polls. He said the JI would go to the elections under its own flag and electoral symbol and would not make any alliance.

He said since all the parties were exposed and failed to deliver, it was only the JI which could pull the country out of prevailing circumstances.

IGP for joint operations in 'Katcha Areas'

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police IGP Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon on Wednesday directed the officers concerned to conduct joint operations in 'Katcha areas'.

Presiding over a meeting, he instructed the SSPs of Ghotki, Shikarpur and Kashmore to specially focus on proper utilization of available manpower and resources.

The SSPs of Ghotki, Shikarpur, Kashmore briefed separately on prevention of kidnapping for ransom and

other police measures. IGP Sindh asked to accelerate the intelligence based operations. Secret intelligence network should be further strengthened for operations. He said the three SSPs should coordinate with each other as well as with other law enforcement agencies. Ghulam Nabi Memon ordered provision of all facilities to the police pickets established in Ghotki, Shikarpur, Kashmore.

He said honey trap should be stopped in all circumstances and the

public should also be informed in this regard. Sindh Police chief said he will not let the blood of martyred policemen go in vain. Intelligence-based operations will continue until the complete elimination of robbers.

DIGPs of Headquarters Sindh, CIA Karachi, Admin and Operations Sindh, AIGPs of Logistics CPLC Chief attended the meeting while DIGP Hyderabad, SSPs of Jamshoro and Qamber-Shahdad Kot attended via video link.

MD Solid Waste inspects cleaning in different areas of metropolis

KARACHI (APP): Managing Director Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) Syed Imtiaz Ali Shah paid a detailed visit to Korangi district and inspected the sanitation situation and directed the officials concerned to further improvement it.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that cleanliness should be ensured in all areas of the city.

The MD SSWMB visited Landhi, Korangi, Ibrahim Hydari, Fisherman Chowrangi, Garbage Transfer Station - GTS Imtiaz, GTS Hundred Quarter and various roads of the Industrial Area. He visited most of the areas of the Korangi district including Landhi Shah Faisal Road, Korangi Causeway

and Dadabhoy Colony.

Executive Director Operations Tariq Nizamani, Deputy Director Korangi, Jamal Shah, representatives of Chinese Sanitation company and contractors were also present.

The MD SSWMB saw the garbage on the side of Korangi Causeway and called the concerned officers and ordered them to clear the garbage from the road immediately.

He said that in case of poor sanitation situation, the concerned company and officers will be responsible.

Syed Imtiaz Ali Shah directed that the garbage transfer vehicle be covered with a tarpaulin.

On this occasion, the GTS Incharge said that 2500 tons of waste

is collected from different areas of the city only at GTS Imtiaz and shifted to the landfill site on a daily basis.

The process is being further improved to make it more efficient so that backlog of the waste can also be cleaned out. The MD SSWMB also visited Ibrahim Hydari area and directed the cleaning of the roads leading from Fisherman Chowk to Jetties. He also inquired about the performance of the sanitary workers from the residents and issued instructions for prompt redressal of grievances. He said that garbage is being lifted from most parts of the city on daily basis, but there is still a lot of work to be done.

Creating awareness on breast cancer through tourism good omen

LAHORE (APP): Post Graduate Medical Institute & Ameer Uddin Medical College Principal Professor Dr. Muhammad Al-Fareed Zafar said on Wednesday that creating awareness on breast cancer through international tourism was a good omen.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that fundraising for the great cause from this platform would undoubtedly help save lives of poor women suffering from breast cancer. He said that the international delegation traveled from the UK through eleven countries by road and reached here at the Lahore General Hospital (LGH). He said that Allah Almighty would reward those who come out with this great humanitarian mission in this holy month of Ramadan, as they had much love and concern for their motherland even living abroad. Dr. Saeed Ahmad from the UK said that for the purpose of fundraising for breast cancer and special children was to provide mod-

ern facilities to patients and acquaint local doctors about modern research and treatment. He said that 65 years ago, Begum Naheed Sikandar Mirza from Iran laid the foundation of Darul

ed fundraising from the same institution in Pakistan.

SUIT NOTICE

In the court of Mr Jehangir Khan Judge banking Court-II Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar Case No:10/1 Institution 22/3/23 Date of hearing: 2/5/23 Suit for the recovery of Rs. 811381/= NBP Reg. Head Sup / Reg. office Swat Vs: Arsalan Khan Notice Versus:- 1). Arsalan Khan S/o Aaziz R/o Khal Kari Bahi Matta Swat 2). Arshad Ghafar Khan S/o Abdul Ghafar R/o Hair education department swat Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs. 811381/=Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtained leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/publication of the notice in the newspapers. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today On 20/3/23 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Judge Banking Court-II Peshawar

SUIT NOTICE

In the court of Mr Jehangir Khan Judge banking Court-II Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar Case No:10/1 Institution 22/3/23 Date of hearing: 8/5/23 Suit for the recovery of Rs. 774929/= Meezan Bank Ltd Sadar Road Peshawar Cantt Vs: Attaur Rehman. Notice Versus:- Attaur Rehman S/o Gul Rehman R/o Khushal Bagh Warsak Road Peshawar Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs. 774929/= Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtained leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspapers. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today On 22/3/23 under my signature and seal of the Court.

Judge Banking Court-II Peshawar



KARACHI: A large number of people breaking fast (Iftar) in the holy month of Ramadan ul Mubarak arranged by market shopkeeper at Hasan Square area.



Excise authorities must focus on 100% targets achievement: Haji Manzoor Afridi

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi has said that it is the need of the hour to adapt the government machinery to the day today requirements of the modern era, while the performance and role of the Excise & Taxation Department in serving the masses should be clearly visible.

He was talking to the new Excise Secretary Ehsanullah at his office Civil Secretariat Peshawar, who took guidance from the provincial minister regarding his new

assignment and had a detailed discussion to deal with the problems and challenges faced by the department.

Haji Manzoor Afridi said that the litmus paper of the importance of any government department is see whether its efficiency and effectiveness is visible at the public level.

He directed that if all the concerned authorities of the Excise Department should pay full attention to achieving 100% of their set targets, then there is no reason that this department will get public recognition and popularity on the one hand and the revenue of the province will also increase substantially on

the other hand.

He said that the importance of Excise Department in terms of vehicles registration, properties taxation and anti-narcotics is above board both at the provincial and the national level and if the authorities ensure the achievement of their goals, then only this department will be sufficient to contribute to the revenue and economic stability of the province.

The Secretary Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control assured that the instructions of the minister incharge would be properly implemented and 100 percent targets would be achieved according.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Choudhry presiding over 18th PaRRSA Committee meeting.

Agriculture is in dire straits, says Khaled

PESHAWAR (APP): President Kisan Iteehad Khaled Khokhar Wednesday said that today agriculture in Pakistan is in dire straits and as an agrarian country we are importing vegetables, wheat and pulses by spending millions of dollars foreign exchange.

"I am very hurt that my mothers and sisters are giving their lives for 10kg of flour as people across the country are dying," Khaled Mahmood Khokhar said while addressing a press conference here at Peshawar Press Club.

He said every year we are adding 5.5 million people to our population and did not care for the food as per needs rather the politicians are busy fighting for their own interests. "People are martyred in lines for Rs 1000 worth of flour," Khaled Mahmood Khokhar said.

According to the UNICEF report, eight out of ten children do not have

access to food, Khaled Mahmood Khokhar said, adding, the people are being defended in parliament and there is no one to defend Pakistan.

After becoming a nuclear power, despite international sanctions, the country was run by agriculture, Khaled Mahmood Khokhar said.

He said ironically colonies are being built on agricultural lands, but no legislation is being made in this regard.

In the whole world, there is no such cotton that can be cultivated in the land of Balochistan, Khaled Mahmood Khokhar informed. Due to ever-growing population and less steps for food production, Pakistan is facing a shortage of 300,000 metric tons and the farmer's cast-off production has increased so it is up to the government that they should come and give land to small farmers, Khaled Mahmood Khokhar added.

Till date, no government in Pakistan has given priority based development as in Pakistan the fertilizer sack is Rs. 3500 while in India it is on Rs. 750, Khaled Mahmood Khokhar informed. He said we are spending millions of dollars on importing edible oil worth 6 billion dollars every year.

"I have made request to the Chief of Army Staff to come forward for food security," Khaled Mahmood Khokhar said.

"I am tired of telling politicians about food shortage and making suggestions that land should be distributed among small farmers as the issue of food security in Pakistan has become a serious situation, a food security emergency should be imposed," Khaled Mahmood Khokhar further added.

The country needs food security more than border security, Khaled Mahmood Khokhar opined.

Minister directs Auqaf Dept to release salaries

PESHAWAR (APP): The Caretaker Provincial Minister for Religious Affairs and Information Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah on Wednesday directed the Auqaf department to release the salaries of Khateeb's throughout Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He issued these directives after a meeting with a delegation of Khateeb's at his office.

The caretaker minister expressed concern over the stoppage of their salaries and not relies on time.

The minister directed the Auqaf department to release their salaries within a week otherwise strict action would be taken against the concerned officials.

The minister also assured them to resolve all their problems on priority basis.

Hayatabad residents deplore heavy traffic

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Residents of Ring Road and Hayatabad has demanded the authorities to stop the heavy traffic including truck and trailers from using the residential areas for reaching their destinations. They were of the view that drivers of such traffic which is mainly bound for Afghanistan carrying different kinds of goods are using the residential areas instead of main roads to reach their destination in shortest possible time. However, this practice is causing accidents each passing day.

The residents also demanded that action must be taken against those who are allowing these heavy vehicles to enter the Hayatabad and Ring Road areas including police and PDA. They demanded immediate action on the issue.

Over 20 shopkeepers arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): The district administration in a grand operation against profiteers on Wednesday arrested more than 20 shopkeepers and butchers for profiteering.

Assistant Commissioner Peshawar Syeda Zainab Naqvi visited different markets in Tehkal and Tehkal Payan and found the butchers were not complying with the government price list while other shopkeepers were also selling food items at expensive prices.

The AC along with a heavy contingent of local police conducted a grand operation in Tehkal and Tehkal Payan and arrested 20 shopkeepers for selling meat, vegetables, fruits and other edible items at high prices.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting to review progress on free wheat flour distribution among deserving house holds.

Focusing on agriculture, livestock can strengthen economy: Abdul Halim

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Abdul Haleem Qasuria on Wednesday said that if special attention is given to agriculture and livestock, it will have a good impact on the country's economy and will play a very important role in eliminating unemployment and creating employment opportunities.

He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting held in his office Civil Secretariat, regarding the development projects of the Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery departments.

Director Generals of all wings of the department and other officers participated in the meeting.

The caretaker provincial minister was given a detailed briefing regarding the development projects.

He said that establishment of various projects for the development of fisheries department, water management besides various projects, embankments for water conservation, silt conservation projects to conserve rain water and bring it to agricultural land use, date palms planting in Dera Ismail Khan, supply of seeds and fertilizers in the province is initiating.

He said that steps have been taken to develop olive cultivation in the integrated tribal districts, ensuring vegetables and fruits in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa like

the Punjab government, and establishing a hostel for women in ATI.

A detailed briefing was given on the restoration of the cooperative bank, establishment of handicrafts center and other important projects.

On this occasion, the caretaker provincial minister Abdul Haleem Qasuria directed the relevant authorities to cooperate fully with the farmers and cattle herders, as most of the village's people's employment is related to agriculture and livestock.

It is among the priorities of the caretaker provincial government to give more benefits to the people in a short period of time, he added.

Zubair obtains transit bail in anti-state rhetoric

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: District and Session Judge (D&SJ) Peshawar has granted transit bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s Chitral Youth Wing General Secretary Zubair Chitrali and ordered to appear before competent forum on 13th April, on Wednesday.

According to prosecution, PTI's youth wing general secretary Zubair Chitrali involved in anti-state rhetoric while used abusive language on social media against institutions. In this regard Sajad Alam has lodged complaint against Zubair Chitrali at City police station, lower Chitral.

First Information Report has registered under 153A against Zubair Chitrali for involvement in anti-state rhetoric on social media and busy in propaganda against government's institutions.

The counsel Qazi Anwar, Arbab Fakhar Alam and Yasir Khalid advocates appeared on behalf of Zubair Chitrali and argued the case before D&SJ while seeking transit bail.

D&SJ Peshawar has granted transit bail to PTI youth general secretary Zubair Chitrali till 13th April and ordered to appear before competent forum after conclusion of arguments.

Residents approached PHC seeks extension of BRT's routes

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A writ has been filed before Peshawar High Court (PHC) seeking extension of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Feeder Route for Warsak Road, on Wednesday.

The petition was filed by Ghani Ullah, Rashid Ahmad and Najib Ullah residents of Ghari Sher Dad while Muhammad Saeed Warsak and Saad Jan Rabani should argue the case before honorable court.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretary Transport, Secretary Com-

munication and Director General Peshawar Development Authority along with other competent authorities were made respondents in the writ petition.

The petition seeking extension of BRT Feeder routes for Warsak road to cover Ghari Sher Dad, Bara and adjacent areas because Hayatabad, Kohat Road, Naguman and Pabbi are facilitated with feeder buses for transportation. Hundreds and thousands of people are deprived from BRT facility because they are living on Warsak Road, the writ stated.

The writ argued that Warsak Road laying in the premises of Peshawar while several government offices including erstwhile Fata secretariat, schools and hospitals are located on the Warsak road while thousands of people are visiting the area for obtaining different service.

The petition requested for provision of feeder route by extension of BRT to Warsak Road to facilitate local residents in the premises with proper transportation facility while early hearing is expected on the writ.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of District & Tehsil Khateeb's meeting with Caretaker Provincial Minister for Religious Affairs and Information Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah at his office.

Removal of encroachment ordered

PESHAWAR (APP): Commissioner Muhammad Zubair on Wednesday issued orders for the immediate removal of encroachment from the banks of rivers, waterways, canals to save the area from damages due to rains and flood and immediate construction of roads, embankment head works and bridges damaged during the last monsoon.

A meeting was held in which the deputy commissioners of all the five districts of Peshawar Division including Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, Mohmand and Khyber district and representatives of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Disaster Management Authority participated in the meeting to review the damages caused by monsoon rains in the past few days.

It was decided in the meeting that the construction work on roads, embankments and bridges damaged due to monsoon rains would be started immediately.

Food Authority continues crackdowns

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (FSHFA) on Wednesday continued crackdown against substandard food items, beverages, junk food and dairy and bakery products across the province and imposed heavy fines on shopkeepers.

Following the directives of Director General KP

FSHFA Shah Rukh Ali Khan the teams of food authority visited shops, hotels, bakeries and general stores in Lower Kurram, Chitral, Mardan, Kohat, Tank, Bannu and imposed fines over certain violations.

The officials of the Food Authority visited Sada Bazaar in Lower Kurram, inspected the production unit of a bakery in

Haqqani market and fined the unit for violation of hygiene rules during operation and overlooking the food safety SOPs.

Similarly, in Dinin Bazaar, Lower Chitral, the food authority confiscated a large quantity of mislabelled and hazardous packets of junk food and also fined a bakery for using non-food grade chemicals.

International symposium on Men Role in Gender Justice held



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: International Symposium on Men Role in Gender Justice organized by Department of Social Work University of Peshawar in collaboration with Faculty of Social Work University of Calgary, Canada.

Professor Shah Jehan VC INU welcomed all distinguished panellist and pay tribute to this initiative to highlight and streamline the male contribution towards gender justice in the local context. Zainab Qaiser Khan Head of Office UN women Peshawar was Guest of the and paid honour to the family male for continuous support and achievements in the field. In fact she is the leading

from the front to promote gender justice movement.

The Son of the Soil Dr. Aamir Jamal Associate professor tributes his grandfather to allow and educate his mother to become the first lady in the family to get education and joined the teaching profession. Prof. Fakhar UI Islam Ex Director Area Study Center University of Peshawar shed lights on the Islamic perspectives on gender justice which promotes equality and emphasize on equal educational rights. Dr Muhammad Quraish Khan, Additional Inspector General KP Police briefed about gender oppressive practices. A case study of GHAG Kurram, when he was the DPO at that time in Kurram.

KP police has manifold

achievements in terms of gender police reporting and established 65 model police stations with gender help desk. We had incorporate the gender sensitive training module into police curriculum and trained twenty thousand plus levies force on gender policing reporting. The Province has 3 gender exclusive police stations at Peshawar, Swat and Abbottabad. We encourage women to joined the Police force which represent 01 % in the force. A local practiced of GHAG where male can simply shoot a fire in front of female house to give the loud and clear message that no one can marry her instead of him. We have the protection of GHAG act 2013 which is non bailable and non-com-

poundable act with 07 years imprisonment. A local gender police reporting setup has achieved multiple success in coping gender-based challenges.

Mahmood Jan Babar expressed the role of media in gender-based cases and suggested check and balance on social media control and ethical guidelines adherence. Inayat begum was Ex MNA and parliamentarian contributed in the legal framework for women protection and empowerment. Habib Ur Rehman shared that 4.3 million children are out of school and elementary and secondary education foundation has introduced E Education, POHA LMS program, community based informal schools and enrolled 0.2 million children.

Provincial Ombudsman Rukhshanda Naz appreciated the concept of promoting Male role in gender justice and overview on the Protection against harassment of women at workplace. At the end, honorary shield was given to the panellist and the book of Dr Aamir Jamal titled "The Gate Keepers" English and Urdu version were honoured to the panellist.

Funeral prayer of Dr. Siraj to be offer today

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The funeral prayer of former Principal Khyber Medical College and Professor of Medicine Dr. Siraj-u-Din Ahmad will be offered at cantonment graveyard today 2.30PM (on Thursday) who was passed away on Friday at Chicago.

The deceased has served at Lady Reading Hospital

as medicine expert and later at KTH while served as Principal KMC twice. He was widely respected for his qualities as teacher, doctor and a kind human being.

Deceased is brother of Barrister Zahoor-ul-Haq while leaves behind 3 sons, a daughter and thousand of students and well wishers to mourn on his departure. The condolence should be



offered with his family at his residence: 53 Mall Road, Peshawar.



In brief

Polio drive reviewed
F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: Deputy Commissioner Syed Saif ul Islam on Wednesday reviewed ongoing polio vaccination drive in the district and visited different areas and checked progress in the drive. Flanked by officials of the health department and team leaders, the DC visited civil dispensaries and District Health Units and checked the polio vaccination record. He addressed the polio teams and appreciated their dedication and hardwork to make the country free from crippling polio disease. The DC advised them to ensure vaccination of each and every child under the age of five and pay special attention to refusal cases. He urged parents to cooperate with the polio teams and get their children vaccinated to protect them from permanent disabilities.

Man killed, six injured in clash
Sahibzada Afridi

PESHAWAR: A man was killed and six others injured in a deadly clash between rival groups over property dispute in Kohat district on Wednesday, police said. Noorul Hassan and Bilal Khan's groups clashed on a shop's ownership dispute at Mohallah Pir Abdullah Shah after exchanging heated words. As result of indiscriminate firing, Noorul Hassan son of Jamil Ahmed was killed while Jamil Ahmad, Muhammad Ebad and Khalil Ahmad sustained critical wounds. From the other group, Bilal Khan, Shahkeel Ahmad and Raheel Ahmed sustained injuries. The injured were shifted to hospital. Police have registered a case and started an investigation.

Police arrest accused

KASUR (INP): The police arrested on Wednesday an accused who attempted to molest a nine-year-old boy in Kasur. According to police official, Tayyab Islam, a resident of Bhedian Kalan, reported the police that his 9-year-old nephew Shehzad was playing outside the house when the suspect Mubeen lured him to his house and tried to molest him. Police official said that when the accused tried to molest the boy, he started screaming and on listening the voice of the boy, the nearby residents reached the spot. The local residents caught the accused and handed over to police. A team of Police Station Ganda Singh Wala led by SHO Ahad Masood took immediate action after the incident was reported and took the suspect into custody. A case has also been registered against the arrested suspect.

Murder suspect shoots himself

BUREWALA (INP): A suspect, who had slit the throats of two persons open over some monetary issue, shot himself dead over failure to break the police siege laid to his hideout in Burewala city, Vehari district, police said on Wednesday. The accused identified as Afzal drank two persons intoxicating tea and then slit their throats open with a sharp-edged knife. The incident had taken place in 203/EB village in the Gago police precincts the other night. "The accused had also sexually assaulted a 15-year-old boy, one of the persons whom he later killed," police said. The police officials investigated in the light of evidence and laid a siege to the hideout of the suspect, asking him to surrender. Fearing arrest, the accused shot himself dead. DSP Umar Farooq Baloch said that the accused had a criminal record, adding that he had also murdered two other persons.

KP IGP orders community policing

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (IGP-KP) Akhtar Hayat Khan has said on Wednesday that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police has made a new history by making eternal sacrifices as the frontline force in the war against terrorism.

He expressed these views while addressing a 'Darbar' of officers and personnel of Mardan police line. A large number of officers and men of all ranks of different units and departments of the police force participated in the Darbar. RPO Mardan Muhammad Ali Gandapur, DPOs Mardan, Swabi, Nowshera, Charsadda, Mohmand and other senior police officials were also present on the occasion.

IGP said that two-thirds of the terrorist incidents in the country take place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In which 70 percent of the

incidents involve the police and other law enforcement agencies as targets and said that nowadays especially the police has become a prime target. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police is fighting against terrorism. We have already won this war and this time too defeat will be the fate of terrorists.

IGP further said that the police station and Muharrar police station have a key position in the police structure. And while addressing the editors, he said that they should consider it their first professional responsibility to deal with the suffering and distressed citizens who come to the police station level with complaints. That my policy is to be the strength of the weak and helpless and the personnel of the force should be my arm and strength to carry forward this policy.

IGP urged the participants to consider their duty as worship. Pay taxes and behave well with the public

at every forum, especially at police stations and check posts. He directed the higher police officials to make the appointment of Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent at the police station level on merit through regular examination. Directed them to fulfill all safety requirements before sending them on duty.

Referring to the welfare of the police force, the IGP said that the police force is like a family and added more perks to its welfare package. Measures have been taken with far-reaching results in their health and education and intelligent children of police personnel will bear the educational expenses in top 20 universities of the country on the basis of merit. Officers and youths of different ranks in the court presented the personal and collective problems faced by them IGP issued orders on the spot to solve them.

Special counter setup for transgender at hospital

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Separate counter will be established for transgender at district headquarter hospital Hafizabad while ramp will be constructed for persons with disability in all health offices including office of the CEO Health Hafizabad.

This was stated by the Chief Executive Officer Health Dr. Fareha Malik while talking to a delegation consisting of prominent social worker/Member CIP Lahore Region Syed Ghulam Abbas Sharazi and Coordinator Sangat Development Foundation Dr. Nazir Hussain Khokhar.

Dr. Fareha Malik said that serving the humanity was my mission and provision of free of cost treatment facilities under the people friendly vision of the Chief Minister Punjab was my top priority. She said that special directions were issued to get repair CT scan machine and provision of all necessary medical facilities Trauma Centre Hafizabad.

On the demand of the social workers, she assured that ramp for providing easy access to person with disability would be constructed. She said that doctors and other staff were directed to perform their duties with the passion of serving ailing humanity, deal the patients and their attended with patiently and no any negligence would be tolerated.

Dullah Bhatti 434th anniversary observed: A special ceremony under the

title of Resistance Struggle of Dullah Bhatti and Present Era' was held at Tehsil Bar Pindi Bhattian to observe 434th anniversary of Legend Hero of the Sandal Bar "Dullah Bhatti".

Addressing on the occasion, prominent historian Professor Asad Salim Sheikh said that Dullah Bhatti was born in village Chochik situated on the bank of the river Chenab near Pindi Bhattian in 1547. He was son of Farid Khan Bhatti and Mughal Emperor was hanged Bijli Khan Bhatti grandfather of Dullah Bhatti on resistance against the Mughal Empire.

Dullah Bhatti did not accept the Mughal Empire and fought the whole life and folk stories of his bravery are famous in across the Punjab, he said and added that Dullah Bhatti was refused to bow before Empire Akbar and he was hanged on 26 March 1589.

The bravery of Dullah Bhatti gave new elegance to Punjabi poetry and Sufi poet Shah Hussain (Shalmar) and others mentioned bravery of Dullah Bhatti in their poetry.

Additional District and Session Judge Pindi Bhattian Muhammad Mohsin, President Bar Chaudhry Fada Hussain Bhatti and Secretary Bar A.D. Dahar also addressed the ceremony.

CEO assures release of salaries: Chief Executive Officer Education Wazir Ahmad Agha said that salaries of Insaf Afternoon School Teachers will be transferred to accounts of teachers soon while free

books are being distributed among students in the district and complaint of shortage of some books would be addressed as soon as books reached to Hafizabad from printing press.

He was talking to a delegation of Young Teachers Association Hafizabad led by General Secretary Mohsin Ijaz Tarar. The delegation presented problems including deduction of convivance allowance of dengue focal persons, promotion of teachers, establishment of special counter for approval of qualification allowance, payment salaries of Afternoon School Teachers and non-availability of books in the schools. CEO assured the delegation that pre-DPC will be arranged till 10, April and other problems will also be addressed at the earliest.

Man poisons wife to death in Hafizabad: A brutal husband killed his wife after making her swallow poisonous pills in Hafizabad on Wednesday.

In her video statement recorded minutes before her death, Salma Bibi revealed that her husband made her consume poisonous pills. After recording her statement, Salma Bibi lost her battle for life. Her body was shifted to the DHQ Hospital. DPO Dr Fahd Ahmad vowed to take strict legal action against the culprits. A mourning atmosphere prevailed in the locality. The police have registered the case and started further probe into the incident.

Use of fire in forest area of Orakzai banned

F.P. Report

KALAYA: The Deputy Commission Orakzai Muhammad Tayyab Abdullah on Wednesday imposed section 144 in the district for a period of 30-day and banned use of fire in the forest area to avoid possible fire eruption and loss to forest.

A notification issued here said that the decision has been taken following reports received by the Divisional Forest Officer Orakzai Forest Division

about the possibility of forest fires occurring in different areas of the district from April 01 until the onset of the monsoon season.

According to the reports, the forest fires could be caused by burning of grass by farmers, throwing of burning cigarettes by smokers and cooking during picnic by the general public in forests. The ban, which takes effect immediately, prohibits the aforementioned activities in forests to prevent forest fires from occurring. The ban will

remain in force for a period of 30 days from the 4th April 2023, unless withdrawn or modified.

Any person to be found contravening the order would be penalised under section 188 Cr.PC. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Tayyab Abdullah urged the public to cooperate and follow the ban to prevent the occurrence of forest fires in the district. He emphasized the importance of preserving the environment and the need to take measures to protect it.

Farmers trained on growing techniques

F.P. Report

TIRAH: An awareness campaign was organized by the Security Forces at different places of Tirah Valley to educate local farmers about crop growing techniques for better yield and alternate crop production.

The campaign was held in coordination with the local farmers association and was attended by 150 farmers. During the campaign, farmers were educated about growing various crops such as potatoes, sunflower, mushrooms, olives, etc., and the techniques to produce good crops in prevailing weather conditions.



The campaign aimed to help farmers maximize their yields and improve their livelihoods by introducing them to new techniques and alternate crop production. The efforts of Frontier

Corps North were appreciated by the local elders and farmers who said that it encouraged farmers to adopt new techniques and practices to improve their crop yields.



LOWER DIR: People offering funeral prayer of martyred police cop in Ouch area.

Sindh CM opens Sachal Sarmast's Urs
F.P. Report

KHAIRPUR: Chief Minister of Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday inaugurated the 202nd annual Urs of Sufi saint Hazrat Sachal Sarmast at Daraza Sharif in Khairpur district.

Murad Ali Shah laid floral wreath at Mazar of Sachal Sarmast and opened annual Urs celebrations. People's Party's Nawab Wassan and others were accompanied with the chief minister, who landed at Daraza Sharif in a helicopter today. Daraza Sharif has been a small town near Ranipur in Khairpur district.

The devotees of the shrine of Sachal Sarmast, have thronged in Daraza to attend the Urs ceremonies. The celebrations this year comprising events such as Mehfil-e-Sama, Mehfil-e-Naat, the national literacy conference at Daraza Sharif auditorium, poetry recital etc.

Besides, Sachal Awards will also be presented to eminent scholars. Sachal Sarmast (1739 – 1829) a Sufi poet, was born in Daraza. His real name was Abdul Wahab Farouqi and "Sachal" or "Sachoo", are the names he used in his poetry. Sachal Sarmast composed poetry in seven languages thus being called "Shair-e-Haft Zaban". His Sindhi and Saraiki poetry has been sung by Sufi singers. Sachal Sarmast was a follower of Wahdat-ul-Wujood (unity of existence), a notion of Sufi worldview. The annual Urs will be continued for three days.

Rain victims compensated
F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Thirteen families recently affected in torrential rain in the district were granted financial support here in Deputy Commissioner, office Khyber. Compensation cheques were given away by the DC, Khyber Abdunisar, additional DC (relief) Numan Ali Shah and Assistant Commissioner, Bara to the deserving ones in a ceremony held last day.

In his DC Khyber said that the government was aware of the miseries of the rain effectees and would never leave them in that time of need. Every possible assistance would be provided to them, he vowed. According to the administration official a total of 1.610 million rupees financial aid was granted to approximately 13 families across the district for human loss, injury or roofs and walls collapse in recently passed rain and earthquake. The cheques were distributed after completion of the scrutiny process by the PDMA.

16 arrested

SARGODHA (PPI): Police claimed on Wednesday to have arrested 16 criminals from various part of the district and recovered narcotics and illegal weapons from their possession.

The teams of different police stations raided and arrested Amir, Aslam, Sajid, Bakr, Zakir, Naveed, Nadeem, Nawaz, Wahab, Shafique, Rafique, Ramzan and other. The police recovered 12 pistols, 9 rounds, 267 liters wine, 187 liters liquor, 1.1 kg hashish, 218 bullets and valuables worth millions of rupees from them.

Martyred police cop laid to rest in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The martyred police cop laid to rest with full official honour at his ancestral graveyard in Ouch here on Wednesday. A large number of locals, senior police officers and Frontier Corps personnel attended the funeral prayer. The cop, Bakht Zamin was shot dead by an unknown suspect at Talash bazaar during his duties here the other day.

The martyred body was first taken to the Timergara police lines where a police contingent presented him a salute. The Regional Police Officer Malakand Nasir Mahmood Satti, Commandant Dir Scouts Colonel Mussawir, district police officer Tariq Iqbal, SDPOs and area elders were in attendance.

The body was then taken to his hometown Ouch Sharqi where he was laid to rest with full official honour. The deceased who joined the police department in 1999, left behind a widow, three daughters and one son. Two brothers of the deceased also perform

their duties in the police department. According to the family the deceased had no enmity with anyone.

Meanwhile the Lower Dir police, personnel of the Frontier Corps and CTD officials carried out a search and strike operation in Talash to trace out the killer who had escaped from the scene after the crime. All the entry and exit points of Talash were closed and strict checking was conducted there.

The Talash Youth Jirga led by its president Muhammad Raziq staged a protest rally and blocked the main Timergara Peshawar road for all kinds of vehicular traffic on Tuesday night. The protesters chanted slogans against the police for their failure to arrest the killer who fled in the broad daylight. The rally was addressed by Muhammad Raziq, Dr Fazal Wahab, Zahid Khan and others. The speakers condemned the incident and said that local residents felt insecure. They demanded of the government and police high ups to immediately arrest the

killer and hang him publicly.

Residents demanded proper drainage, sanitation system: The residents and shopkeepers of Timergara city have complained that rainwater flowed on the main GT road in front of the district headquarters hospital due to choked drains causing miseries for them.

Talking to local journalists the residents said that rainwater always stood on the main road for several days near the DHQ hospital that caused miseries and diseases for the local people. They said that not only the DHQ hospital was situated on that road but there were several private hospitals, clinical laboratories and medicines' stores.

They demanded of the district administration and Timergara tehsil municipal administration to take notice of the matter and get the people rid of this filth. The residents threatened to stage a protest rally against the issue if the TMA or district administration failed to resolve it soon.

PPP observes ZA Bhutto 44th death anniversary

F.P. Report

BUNER: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) observed 44th death anniversary of party chairman Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and lauded his efforts for nations especially granting Constitution of 1973 with consensus across the country.

PPP Buner president Saifullah Khan, general secretary Rafiqullah Advocate, PDF president Dr. Imean Shah, Minority leader Dr. Parkash, Dr. Sultan and large number of party workers participated.

The speakers Saifullah Khan Rafiqullah Khan Dr Sultan highlighted Z A Bhutto's services and great sacrifices rendered for empowerment of common man the country and Muslim Ummah as well.

They mentioned Bhutto was behind one man one vote passport foreign services for Pakistan citizens and empowering Pakistan by initiating nuclear proliferation and world Islamic summit that was why the enemies planned to martyr Z A Bhutto at the hands of dictator and doctoral judge-

ment and other Muslim countries leaders Shah Faisal etc.

They claimed those were hatched conspiracies were buried forever while Z A Bhutto was still alive in the hurts and tongue of billions and would always be remembered till life exist on this planet. The leaders and Jealos offered Fatihah for the departed soul of Z A Bhutto and other members of the family and jointly shouted the slogans Zinda Hin Bhutto Zinda Hin Bibi and Jeyy Bhutto and Jeyy PPPP.

Several booked for artificial price hike

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Khal administration's crackdown against wholesalers, dozens of shopkeepers were fined for violation. According to the details, on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Dir Payin Iftikhar Ahmed, Tehsildar Khal Humayun Khan conducted a detailed review of the daily food items in Khal and Rabat markets for

the convenience of the people and to prevent self-inflicted inflation during Ramadan.

In which milk, meat, weight of bread, vegetable and fruit prices were checked. Legal action will be taken against several butchers for selling meat at more than the price list, while the rest were given a stern warning and told to sell meat according to the price list and strict legal

action will be taken if anyone is found to be selling at a high price.

He said that the traders should make prices without profiteering and ensure the implementation of the official price list. He said that it is the responsibility of the district administration to provide relief to the people, the bodies will not be neglected in any way and visit the markets on a daily basis.

Kazak envoy visits Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin visited Mardan Hearing and Speech Center and distributed Ramadan food package among one hundred students, on Wednesday.

According to the details, Kazakh Ambassador visit-

ed Mardan Hearing and Speech Center on Wednesday on this occasion MNA Shaheen Toru, Farooq Khan, Anwar Khan, Naseer Afridi and others were also present.

Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzan Kestifan said that the children studying in Mardan hearing and speech center

will continue to be supported in every way. Kazakhstan has distributed the relief package in Islamabad and now in Mardan and will continue to support it in the future. Later, the ambassador also planted a sapling in the institution in connection with the plantation campaign.

Two teenagers killed

BHAWANA (INP): Two teenagers were killed when the motorcycle they were riding on was collided with a dumper in Bhawana.

According to details, the tragic accident took place at

the under-construction Jhang-Chiniot Road where a rashly driven dumper hit a motorcycle, killing two youth on the spot. Police and rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the

dead bodies to Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital. According to rescue sources, the deceased were identified as 16-year-old Hassan and 17-year-old Ahmed Sheikh.



India’s push for 24/7 clean energy from dams upends lives

KINNAUR (AP): The pickup truck jostled away from the roaring Sutlej River and up the steep mountain path flanked by snow-capped Himalayan peaks, some nearly 7,000 meters (22,965 feet) high. The nine passengers, farmers-turned-activists campaigning to prevent more dams from being built, were traveling to the remote Kandar hamlet in India's Kinnaur district.

The few-dozen Indigenous residents were forced to relocate after falling boulders destroyed most of their previous homes in 2005. And villagers believe tunneling for dams was to blame, although authorities deny it. Indigenous activists like Buddha Sain Negi, 30, went there to learn more about the continued struggles faced by Kandar. Sitting atop a steep slope overlooking a 19-year-old dam, the activists heard residents speak of ways India's hydroelectric push had upended their lives and led to nearly two decades of protest. Some families took shelter in sheds, and more lives were lost because of falling boulders before they got compensation to build new homes, although it wasn't enough to mend livelihoods.

For villagers like Raj Kumari, 48, the fear of that night remains. The farmer said her husband was out when the boulders began rolling down. "My daughter said that we'll get left behind and die, and only her father would survive," she said. A favorite initiative of Indian governments, the push for dams has skyrocketed as the nation looks for round-the-clock energy that doesn't spew planet-warming emissions. Hydropower commonly is produced when fast-moving water spins turbines to generate electricity.

But natural water systems have been altered by dams in this region

that receives little rainfall, and farmers are struggling to irrigate their orchards. Spring waters from melting glaciers they've historically relied on also are drying up with climate change. Farmers found themselves turned into activists fighting against more dams, with thousands protesting last August after a fatal landslide in the district. Carving mountains to build tunnels that funnel river water has made deadly landslides more common - a risk scientists and locals have flagged, although authorities say they take precautions. India's federal ministries for renewable energy and environment didn't respond to an email request for comment.

"This is a fight for our survival," said Buddha Sain Negi, the activist-farmer. Dam opponents point to other impacts: Thousands of trees, including the rare Chilgoza pine whose nuts are prized and provide valuable income for local communities, are being cut to make way for construction. The Sutlej River is now dry in patches, meaning some families struggle to immerse the ashes of cremated loved ones. And some residents fear thousands of migrant workers, coming to work on the dam, could overwhelm them. The district, home to around 100,000 people, already produces 4,000 megawatts of clean energy - the equivalent of four nuclear power plants, said Jiya Lal, a farmer who is part of an advocacy group for environmental justice in the mountains. He said locals here have been asked in the "national interest" to reconsider their objection to dams. He asked a question echoed across the Himalayas: "How much more can be demanded of us?" The federal government aims to increase India's electricity output from dams to 70,000 megawatts by 2030 - an increase of 50% that could account



for 8.5% of India's entire capacity. It also wants to add 18,800 megawatts of pumped-storage dams, which act as giant batteries that store energy by pumping water from one reservoir to another that's elevated then releasing it through turbines to produce power.

Only China and the US have more dams than India's over 4,400. The country hopes dams can help solve the clean energy puzzle: How to keep the grid running on renewables when the sun doesn't shine or the wind doesn't blow. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that electricity generated by dams in Himachal Pradesh state would generate profits and jobs. "The wealth of water and forest in tribal areas is priceless," he said in October. But recent disasters, including a holy town sinking in January, have resulted in "question marks" over the focus on dams as a way of ensuring round-the-clock clean power, said Vibhuti Garg, an energy economist at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.

About a tenth of India's power comes from the sun or wind, and large dams provide the "backbone" by allowing it to balance the grid when there are sharp changes in demand, said Ammu Susana Jacob, a scientist at the think tank Center of Study of Science, Technology and Policy. To wean itself off dirty fuels and meet its 2030 goals, India needs to increase its energy storage capacity to 41 gigawatts, according to government estimates. Bhanu Pratap Singh, director of the hydropower company Shree Bhavani Power Project, rued that dams hadn't received the same kind of governmental boosts that solar or wind had, but said this was changing.

Delays due to legal challenges of getting land meant that private companies were less keen to build large dams, Singh said. And with rising concerns about the risks of building dams in the fragile mountains, he said that those opposing dams and those building dams needed to be in "consistent and transparent dialogue".

While dams, unlike battery storage, aren't reliant on expensive imports, they are still costly. Land needed to build them is scarce, and communities are often displaced. Cascading environmental impacts trigger local protests, like the one in Kinnaur, which add to costs. This helps make hydropower more expensive than solar or wind in India. With global battery prices plummeting since 2017 and likely to get cheaper, India is faced with the "tricky" question of whether it makes sense to lock billions of dollars into new dams when other technologies are getting more viable, said Rahul Walawalkar, who heads the India Energy Storage Alliance, an industry group.

The sheer scale of India's energy transition - demand for electricity will grow more than anywhere else in the next 20 years - means there are limited options if the country wants to restrict imports. "It's a necessary risk," Walawalkar said. In Kinnaur, the costs of India's answer to this question looms large for Shanta Kumar Negi, a local politician who says people in the higher reaches of the mountains buy water to irrigate fields, with dams exacerbating the water crisis triggered by global warming. "If I don't fight to stop the wrong being done to us - how will I answer my children?" he asked.

Experts say the ongoing protests in Kinnaur and elsewhere underline the risks of pushing dams without thinking through potential impacts on the environment and the resulting financial costs. In 2019, at least 37 dams were delayed, and there were another 41 where construction hadn't begun for reasons ranging from financial problems to protests, according to a parliamentary report. Signs of tensions over dam construction are visible on the national highway in

Kinnaur: There are warnings about loose boulders on mountain walls, and ancient trees are painted with red crosses marking them for felling. The situation reflects India's "siloed approach" to building big projects, such as dams, that don't take into account climate realities, said Abinash Mohanty, who heads climate change and sustainability at the global development organization IPE Global. The Himalayas are a more fragile ecosystem than others, disrupted by climate extremes and intense human activities - yet whether the environment had reached its tipping point wasn't taken into account. Mohanty compared it to people trying to lift heavier weights than they can handle. "You'll either hurt yourself or drop it," he said.

Climate change is exacerbating threats. Over a fifth of 177 dams built close to Himalayan glaciers could be at risk of flooding if glacial lakes burst, according to a 2016 study. Five years later, a flood made worse by melting glaciers smashed two dams, killing at least 31 people. Even some dams listed in government documents as designed to pump water to help store power aren't actually doing so. A 25-year-old dam in Gujarat doesn't pump water because of an engineering issue, while a second reservoir is still being built for another 17-year-old dam, according to the India Energy Storage Alliance. India has drafted guidelines for boosting use of pumped-storage dams that suggest doing away with environmental assessments and public hearings for some projects. But Walawalkar of the industry alliance said governments need to be careful about choosing the right locations to build dams. "Blanket environmental clearances could be a double-edged sword," he said.

EU lashes out at China for support of Russia in Ukraine war

BRUSSELS (AP): On the eve of a major European Union diplomatic foray into China, the bloc's foreign policy chief lashed out at Beijing for its support of Russia amid the invasion of Ukraine, and called it "a blatant violation" of its United Nations commitments. "There cannot be siding with the aggressor," Josep Borrell said ahead of a trip to Beijing by the EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and French President Emmanuel Macron. "There is a clear expectation from a permanent member of the (UN) Security Council to stand up in defense of international rules-based order and China as a moral duty to contribute to a fair peace."

Standing alongside visiting US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Borrell was unusually blunt in his condemnation of a nation that has increasingly moved from being an EU partner to being a rival on the global stage. The comments set

the stage for two of Europe's pre-eminent leaders to press the point that EU-China relations will pivot on Beijing's friendship with Russia. Macron and von der Leyen are expected to warn China against sending weapons to Russia during talks with President Xi Jinping. Just ahead of the visit, von der Leyen had a phone call with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to coordinate strategy.

Even if Beijing says it is neutral in the war, Xi's visit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow two weeks ago had all the visuals and speeches of a meeting among trusted friends. "They agreed on the need to not deploy nuclear arms abroad," Borrell said of the Moscow meeting. "Some days later, Russia deployed tactical weapons, nuclear tactical weapons in Belarus," he added, referring to an announcement by Putin of plans to deploy such weapons. "This comes,

ironically, after Chinese President Xi visited Moscow and mentioned the need for peace." He called the prospect of deploying such weapons in Belarus Putin's "newest nuclear gamble" and said it constituted "a direct threat to European security." Borrell said he was looking for a change of heart in Beijing if relations were not to deteriorate. "We have been clear with China that its position on Russia's atrocities and war crimes will determine the quality of our relations with Beijing," he said.

Discussions between Macron, Xi and von der Leyen will mainly focus on trade, the war in Ukraine and climate change. The European officials are expected to underscore the importance of China's role in supporting peace, and to tell Xi that he should engage directly with Zelenskyy following his visit to Moscow last month. They will also urge him to put pressure on Putin to stop threatening nuclear

Jailed US reporter's defense appeals his arrest

MOSCOW (AP): Lawyers representing an American reporter for The Wall Street Journal arrested in Russia on espionage charges have appealed his arrest, a court in Moscow announced. Evan Gershkovich, 31, was detained last week in Yekaterinburg, Russia's fourth-largest city. It was the first time a US correspondent had been detained on spying accusations since the Cold War. The Journal has said it "vehemently denies" the charges and demanded his release.

At a hearing, Moscow's Lefortovsky District court quickly ruled that Gershkovich would be kept behind bars for two months pending the investigation. The court reported that it has received an appeal against Gershkovich's arrest that was filed by his defense, according to Russian news agencies. No date for a hearing on the appeal has been set yet.

Gershkovich was put in Moscow's Lefortovo prison, which dates from the czarist era and has been a terrifying symbol of repression since Soviet times. In the first report of his condition and prison circumstances, a Russian state prison monitor said that Gershkovich was in a quarantine cell while he underwent medical checks, was in a double cell without a cellmate, was reading a book from a prison library, and had access to a TV, radio and refrigerator. The Moscow-area prison monitor, Alexei Melnikov, wrote on the Telegram messaging app that the journalist hadn't complained about the prison conditions. "At the time of the visit, he was cheerful. During the conversation there were a lot of jokes," Melnikov wrote, without specifying when he saw the journalist. The monitor's report couldn't be independently verified.

Russia's Federal Security Service, the top successor to the Soviet-era KGB that is known by the acronym FSB, accused Gershkovich of trying to obtain classified information about a Russian arms factory. The Kremlin alleged that Gershkovich was caught red-handed, without offering details. US National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said that the Biden administration was pressing hard for Gershkovich's release. "It's got attention all the way up to the Oval Office in terms of how we can get him home," Kirby told reporters in Washington. President Joe Biden himself weighed in, urging Russia to release Gershkovich. "Let him go," Biden told reporters at the White House when asked if he had a message for Russia.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged his Russian counterpart in a rare phone call between the diplomats since the start of the Ukraine war - immediately to release Gershkovich, as well as another imprisoned American, Paul Whelan.

Train derailment near The Hague kills one

VOORSCHOTEN, Netherlands (AP): A passenger train slammed into a construction crane and derailed near The Hague, morning sending two carriages into a field next to the tracks. One person died and 19 were hospitalized, Dutch emergency services said. Police opened an investigation to establish if any crime was committed.

Another independent probe was opened into the cause of the crash. Television images showed people using temporary bridges and ladders to cross a narrow drainage canal running alongside the rails to reach the stricken train in the darkness. Many windows in the train carriages were broken. It was not clear if that happened during the accident or as passengers attempted to escape. Two of the bright yellow and blue train carriages came to rest perpendicular to the tracks across the small canal and partially in a field. What appeared to be the front of the train was badly damaged. Other parts of the train were partially derailed. Video footage from inside the train in the immediate aftermath of the crash showed chaotic scenes as

passengers tried to get out of the wreckage in darkness.

The four-carriage passenger train was carrying about 50 passengers at the time of the crash. John Voppen, CEO of the rail network company Pro Rail, said that the passenger train and a freight train both hit a crane that was being used to carry out maintenance work. He said the crane was on tracks that were not being used by train traffic and it is not clear how the trains collided with the crane. "We don't understand how this could have happened," he told reporters at a news conference.

The identity of the person killed in the accident was not immediately released and it was not clear if the person was on the train or part of the maintenance team that had been at work on the rails between the cities of Leiden and The Hague when the crash happened around 3:25 a.m. (0125 GMT) in the town of Voorschoten. Railway company NS also said in a statement that a passenger train, a freight train and a construction crane were involved in a collision, but the company gave no further details. "Like everyone else, I'm full of questions and we want to know exactly what happened," NS CEO Wouter Koolmees said in a statement. "A thorough investigation must be carried out. At the moment, all attention is focused on the wellbeing of our travelers and colleagues."

The regional coordinator of emergency services said that 11 of the injured passengers were treated in homes near the line and 19 were transported in a fleet of ambulances to five hospitals, including a "calamity hospital" opened in the central city of Utrecht. "A terrible train accident near Voorschoten, where unfortunately one person died and many people were injured. My thoughts are with the relatives and with all the victims. I wish them all the best," Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said in a tweet. Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima also expressed their sympathy in a tweet. Ingrid de Roos, a spokeswoman for local fire services, told news show WNL that a small fire broke out at the rear of the train but was quickly extinguished.

Moscow hosts talks aimed at Syria-Turkey rapprochement

MOSCOW (AP): Senior diplomats from Russia, Turkey, Syria and Iran wrapped up two days of talks in Moscow, part of the Kremlin's efforts to help broker a rapprochement between the Turkish and Syrian governments. Russian and Turkish foreign ministries issued terse readouts, saying the diplomats have discussed preparations for a planned meeting of the four countries' foreign ministers. Moscow described the consultations as "frank and direct," and Ankara said they were held in a "transparent and clear manner," while offering no details.

Russia has waged a military campaign in Syria since September 2015, teaming up with Iran to allow Assad's government to fight armed opposition groups and reclaim control over most of the country. While the bulk of the Russian military has been busy fighting in Ukraine, Moscow has maintained its military foothold in Syria and kept warplanes and troops at its bases there. The Kremlin has also made persistent efforts to help Syria rebuild fractured ties with other countries in the region, including neighboring Turkey, which has backed armed opposition fighters have clashed with the SDF in the past, accusing them of being an arm of Turkey's outlawed

Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. The PKK has for decades waged an insurgency within Turkey against the government in Ankara. Assad's government has cast the SDF as a secessionist force that has been pilfering the country's wealth while controlling Syria's major oil fields.

The efforts toward a Turkish-Syrian reconciliation come as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who faces presidential and parliamentary elections in May, is under intense pressure at home to send Syrian refugees back amid a steep economic downturn and an increasing anti-refugee sentiment. The reconciliation efforts between Syria and Turkey topped the agenda for Russian President Vladimir Putin's talks with Assad when he visited Moscow last month. After the catastrophic earthquake that struck Syria and Turkey in February, international sympathy appeared to have sped up the regional rapprochement. Some have called for dialogue with Syria and for bringing the country back to the 22-member Arab League more than a decade after its membership was suspended over the crackdown in the early months of the uprising that turned into war and has killed nearly half a million people.

New images from inside Fukushima reactor spark safety worry

TOKYO (AP): Images captured by a robotic probe inside one of the three melted reactors at Japan's wrecked Fukushima nuclear power plant showed exposed steel bars in the main supporting structure and parts of its thick external concrete wall missing, triggering concerns about its earthquake resistance in case of another major disaster.

The plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, has been sending robotic probes inside the Unit 1 primary containment chamber since last year. The new findings released were from the latest probe conducted at the end of March. An underwater remotely operated vehicle named ROV-A2 was sent inside the Unit 1 pedestal, a supporting structure right under the core. It came back with images seen for the first time since an earthquake and tsunami crippled the plant 12 years ago. The area inside the pedestal is where

traces of the melted fuel can most likely be found.

An approximately five-minute video - part of 39-hour-long images captured by the robot - showed that the 120-centimeter (3.9-foot)-thick concrete exterior of the pedestal was significantly damaged near its bottom, exposing the steel reinforcement inside. TEPCO spokesperson Keisuke Matsuo told reporters that the steel reinforcement is largely intact but the company plans to further analyze data and images over the next couple of months to find out if and how the reactor's earthquake resistance can be improved. The images of the exposed steel reinforcement have triggered concerns about the reactor's safety. About 880 tons of highly radioactive melted nuclear fuel remain inside the three reactors. Robotic probes have provided some information, but the status of the melted debris is still largely unknown. The amount is about 10 times

the damaged fuel that was removed in the cleanup of the Three Mile Island nuclear plant in the United States after its 1979 partial core meltdown.

Fukushima Gov. Masao Uchibori urged TEPCO to "swiftly evaluate levels of earthquake resistance and provide information in a way prefectural residents can easily understand and relieve concern of the residents and people around the country." The video taken by the robot also showed equipment that slipped down as well as other types of debris, possibly nuclear fuel that fell from the core and hardened, piling up as high as 40-50 centimeters (1.3-1.6 feet) from the bottom of the primary containment chamber, Matsuo said. The pile is lower than the mounds seen in images taken in previous internal probes at two other reactors, suggesting that the melt-downs in each reactor may have progressed differently, company officials said. Matsuo said the data collected

from the latest probe will help experts come up with methods of removing the debris and analyze the 2011 meltowns. TEPCO also plans to use the data to create a three-dimensional map of melted fuel and debris details, which would take about a year.

Based on data collected from earlier probes and simulations, experts have said most of the melted fuel inside Unit 1 fell to the bottom of the primary containment chamber, but some might have even fallen through into the concrete foundation - a situation that makes the already daunting task of decommissioning extremely difficult. Trial removal of melted debris is expected to begin in Unit 2 later this year after a nearly two-year delay. Spent fuel removal from the Unit 1 reactor's cooling pool is to start in 2027 after a 10-year delay. Once all the spent fuel is removed from the pools, the focus is to turn in 2031 to taking melted debris out of the reactors.

US urges Iran to back political solution in Yemen

UNITED NATIONS (AFP): The United States called on its longtime adversary Iran to help end Yemen's conflict by backing a peace process, one year after a truce dramatically reduced fighting. Iran, which backs Huthi rebels who have seized much of the country, last month announced a major reconciliation deal with Saudi Arabia, which led a devastating air campaign to bolster Yemen's government.

"If the Iranians want to show that they're really turning a corner on conflict, then there won't be smuggling of weapons to the Huthis anymore in violation of UN Security Council reso-

lutions," said Timothy Lenderking, the US special envoy for Yemen. "We also would like to see the Iranians show support for the political process that we hope is coming." Lenderking said at the Middle East Institute in Washington. Lenderking noted favorably that Iran welcomed the ceasefire a year ago. The truce lapsed in October, in part over Huthi demands for payments to civil servants in areas under their control, but fighting has not resumed at a significant level.

"We are urging the parties to seize this opportunity, recognizing that an agreement will require compromises from all parties," he said. The United

Nations' Yemen envoy, Hans Grundberg, said the anniversary was a "moment of hope" although he also said there were significant risks. Nearly a decade of war has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, both directly and indirectly, with most of the population relying on aid to survive.

President Joe Biden took office promising a greater priority on ending the devastating conflict, after his predecessor Donald Trump's staunch backing and military support for the Saudis. The Saudi-Iran agreement was announced by China, playing an unusually visible role in a region where the United States has long been the top power.

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Messy politics and values of a nation

FORMER Prime Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-N's supremo Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has rejected the Supreme Court of Pakistan's verdict nullifying the ECP's decision to postpone Punjab elections and directed his party to submit a reference against the three-member Supreme Court bench. Addressing a press conference via video link, the former Premier noted that the verdict was enough to file a reference against the Supreme Court's three-member bench, which comprised Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, and Justice Muneeb Akhtar. While quoting his lifetime disqualification by the same bench, Nawaz demanded that a reference should be filed against them in the Supreme Judicial Council for a 'partisan judgment to facilitate one person. Nawaz questioned no constitution of the full court and observed that those who violated the constitution were allowed to amend the constitution as a reward.

The reaction of the former three times Prime Minister and Pakistan Muslim League (N) Supremo to yesterday's decision of the apex court regarding the polls in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is seemingly to be out of revenge and hostility toward the bench that deposed him from the top position is although natural but an unwise act and can push the country into a new disaster in the future. After the announcement of the court's verdict, Nawaz held a news conference on the video link and busteagainst the top Judiciary, while other government leaders also issued a controversial statement against the top judiciary which clearly predicts an impending government-judiciary tussle that would not have far-reaching effects for the judiciary but can worsen the ongoing political turmoil and derailed the political system in the country.

Historically, the state of Pakistan has meted out a series of catastrophes and crises one after another over the past months, while the people of Pakistan faced disastrous consequences of rising inflation, persistent economic meltdown, and global energy crisis and suffered utmost from heightened domestic political unrest in the country. Unfortunately, unhealthy and rigid politics have pushed the country into an unending quandary while leaders are determined to comprehend their agendusingof confrontation and clash instead of political wisdom and the legacy of cooperation and alliance. Currently, Pakistan is passing through the most crucial phase of its history while the persistent political instability remained at the heart of all other issues in making the country one of the most unsuccessful nations in the world despite owning the title of seventh nuclear power of the universe. The current upheaval is only due to the repeated wrong policies and irrational policies of our political and military leaders that always protected their personal, party, and institutional interests instead of the promotion of national unity, institutional development, and economic growth.

Although our judicial system has multiple flaws and weaknesses while no judge enjoys exception from guilt and felonies yet the current decision of the Apex Court has revalidated the constitution amid prevailing political chaos, and economic and security issues in the country. The PML-N must not penalize the entire nation for its failed economic policies or legal and political lapses, while no miracle is likely to happen in the next five months if polls schedule in October this year. The coalition government must use collective wisdom to tackle the situation by adopting a political course to achieve its agenda instead of reigniting the newest legal, political, or constitutional crisis because the pain and flames of revenge produce no things except destruction, ruination, and failure.

The current political landscape and performance of the past and present governments utterly disappointed the masses and no party is likely to gain a one-third majority, whereas a hung parliament is expected as the result of the next election. Pakistani leaders must consider and adopt the divine values and teaching of our true religion which tells us patience, tolerance, and mutual cooperation that not only offer remedies to all failures but also pave way for success. Hopefully, the entire spectrum of Pakistani political leadership would pursue the course of a peaceful election instead of a clash and confrontation in the greater interest of the nation.

Africans should help bring Putin to the ICC

ON March 17, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Russia's President Vladimir Putin and its Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lyova-Belova for the war crimes of illegal deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation.

The crimes were allegedly committed from at least February 24, 2023 - the day Russia embarked on an all-out invasion of Ukraine. Russian officials have since dismissed the ICC indictment and closed ranks around their accused leader. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the charges "outrageous and unacceptable", as well as "null and void" because Russia - like China and the United States - does not recognise the jurisdiction of the ICC.

Former President Dmitry Medvedev described the intergovernmental body as a "legal non-entity", as he warned that any attempt to arrest Putin "would be a declaration of war on the Russian Federation". But ICC President Piotr Hofmanski said it is "completely irrelevant" that Russia has not ratified the Rome Statute, the treaty that established the ICC. "The court has jurisdiction over crimes committed in the territory of a state party or a state which has accepted its jurisdiction," he told Al Jazeera. "Ukraine has accepted the ICC twice - in 2014 and then in 2015."

So, as things stand, the ICC's 123 member states are obliged to detain and transfer Putin to the organisation's headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands should he land in their territory. As the second sitting head of state to be charged with war crimes, Putin's prosecution would be a significant achievement for international justice. The first was former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who in March 2009 and July 2010

was charged with committing genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes during the 2003-08 Darfur war. According to the United Nations, the bloody conflict between the Sudanese government and rebel forces killed at least 300,000 people and displaced 2.5 million.

Regardless of the veracity of the charges made against al-Bashir, the landmark indictment amplified widespread disgruntlement in Africa over the ICC's inordinate focus on investigating and prosecuting African leaders. In 2010,

sibility under international law or the Rome Statute to arrest a serving head of a non-state party.

Meanwhile, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) rightly bemoaned the fact that because "countries can choose whether to be a signatory or not" of the ICC, it meant that "gross human violations committed by non-signatory countries go unpunished". This was a valid and pertinent observation. In 2020, for instance, the US denounced an ICC investigation into

Tafi Mkaka

Sudanese, African or international court. While African countries were right to condemn the fundamental shortcomings of the ICC, they should not have obstructed the sincere attempts to secure justice for the people of Darfur. Like other global institutions that are hamstringed by the violent, lawless and regressive policies and actions of global powers, the ICC must be reformed and decolonised.

In the meantime, Africa's leaders should not repeat

Al-Bashir eventually left the country in unclear circumstances after a South African court ordered his arrest. Later, the Southern African nation argued that it believed it had no responsibility under international law or the Rome Statute to arrest a serving head of a non-state party. Meanwhile, the ruling African National Congress (ANC) rightly bemoaned the fact that because "countries can choose whether to be a signatory or not" of the ICC, it meant that "gross human violations committed by non-signatory countries go unpunished". This was a valid and pertinent observation. In 2020, for instance, the US denounced an ICC investigation into the actions of US troops in Afghanistan. It labelled The Hague-based tribunal a "kangaroo court" and imposed sanctions on former prosecutor Fatou Bensouda and a senior official, Phakiso Mochochoko. So the ANC had described the structural and operational deficiencies of the ICC in clear terms and inadvertently made the case for across-the-board reforms.

the African Union (AU) urged its member states to "not cooperate with the ICC in the arrest and surrender of President Bashir", allowing countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Chad, Djibouti, Nigeria and South Africa, among others, to roll out the red carpet for him. Only a few countries, including Botswana and Malawi, expressed their willingness to arrest al-Bashir. South Africa famously refused to arrest him in 2015, while he was attending an AU summit in Johannesburg, saying he enjoyed diplomatic immunity. Al-Bashir eventually left the country in unclear circumstances after a South African court ordered his arrest. Later, the Southern African nation argued that it believed it had no respon-

the actions of US troops in Afghanistan. It labelled The Hague-based tribunal a "kangaroo court" and imposed sanctions on former prosecutor Fatou Bensouda and a senior official, Phakiso Mochochoko. So the ANC had described the structural and operational deficiencies of the ICC in clear terms and inadvertently made the case for across-the-board reforms. But it did not suggest an alternative court for the thousands of men, women and children who had been raped and killed in state-orchestrated systemic violence in Darfur.

Nearly eight years after he escaped arrest in Johannesburg, al-Bashir still has not stood trial for his alleged crimes in a

the mistakes they made regarding al-Bashir's unenforced arrest. From August 22 to 24, 2023, South Africa will host the 15th BRICS summit, with leaders from Brazil, India, China and Russia expected to attend. Should the obstinate and increasingly belligerent Putin attend the meeting, South Africa must respect its obligations to the ICC and arrest him, even though Russia is a long-standing ANC ally.

The Soviet Union provided considerable financial, military and political support to South African and African movements during the struggles for i n d e p e n d e n c e . Nevertheless, that commendable assistance cannot justify any South African or African attempt to stop

Putin from assuming responsibility for his alleged war crimes. International Relations and Cooperation Minister Naledi Pandor has confirmed that South Africa has sought legal advice on how to handle a visit from an alleged war criminal.

The South African Communist Party (SACP), meanwhile, has characterised the ICC as "a supranational institution at the service of imperialist states". And Julius Malema, commander-in-chief of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party, has

Blair should certainly face the full might of the law for transgressing Iraq's sovereignty on false grounds.

But Putin's culpability for war crimes in Ukraine cannot be diminished, expunged or disputed over the US's countless military transgressions around the world. South Africa must thus publicly reaffirm its commitment to support international justice before the BRICS summit and state its willingness to arrest Putin. No African nation that is committed to the establishment of a fair and equitable international order can ignore his murderous and destructive conduct.

Suffice it to say, as many judicial systems in Africa are either politically compromised or constantly undermined by despotic leaders, Africa must abandon its redundant whataboutism and instead strive to ensure the ICC becomes a strong and independent multilateral institution. And in as much as they advocate for legal redress for the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis killed in an unjust war, Africans should also seek justice for the victims of war crimes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Syria, Palestine, Myanmar and Ukraine. No one - not even US President Joe Biden, China's President Xi Jinping or Putin - must be allowed to contravene international law and avoid the requisite legal consequences - especially with the support of Africa.

African states must view Putin's indictment as the perfect opportunity to abolish once and for all the longstanding impunity claimed and perpetrated by global powers. The Russian leader must be ostracised and made to understand that the world will not support the genocidal mayhem that he has orchestrated in Ukraine. If he lands in South Africa or elsewhere in Africa, please arrest him. Putin should face the court.

Netanyahu is now more dangerous than ever

Yossi Mekelberg

THE quip 'a week is a long time in politics' is widely attributed to former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson. In Israeli politics, a week can feel like an eternity and, more recently, it has become a protracted knife-edge drama that has everyone on the edge of their seat.

Depending on where one looks, there is, on the one hand, a reason for grave concern for the future of Israel as a liberal democracy, and even as a democracy at all. On the other hand, there is a reason for cautious optimism, since, for the first time, the previously silent pro-democratic progressive forces have abandoned their highly crowded fence-sitting show and, for several weeks, instead been taking to the streets throughout the country to make their voices heard in protesting the Netanyahu government's assault on the judiciary's independence.

One of the most controversial aspects of this judicial coup is the shameless and brutal attempt to "rescue" Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from his corruption trial on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust, as if it

was being conducted by foreign forces who had kidnapped him and made him the victim of a show trial, and not being carried out through the country's due legal process.

On the eve of his trip to London for yet another needless and futile trip abroad and a cursory meeting with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak - a trip that was really all about enjoying another luxurious weekend with his wife at the expense of the Israeli taxpayer - Netanyahu, with the help of his allies, passed a law that shields him from being declared unfit for high office. Like thieves in the night, albeit in the early hours of the morning, 61 of the Knesset's 120 lawmakers voted in favor of yet another law with Netanyahu's fingerprints all over it; one that effectively prevents the attorney general from declaring him unfit to serve as prime minister.

If anyone required further proof that Netanyahu - along with several other ministers - is unfit to hold public office, let alone lead the country, the last few weeks have provided more than ample evidence. The very idea that a defendant in a corruption trial is running the country is most

perturbing. In the eyes of many, it makes him unfit to remain in post while his trial is ongoing and it would be reasonable to expect that, until the court reaches a verdict, Netanyahu should be suspended from any position of power, let alone from involvement in any activity that might influence his trial's outcome. Instead, with the tail wind from his far-right and religious coalition, he is pressing ahead with legislation that seeks to normalize corruption at the heart of government.

It is only through the pressure exerted on Netanyahu's coalition government by the protests, including the voices of captains of industry and the military reservists' refusal to serve, that the headline rush to enshrine this extreme antidemocratic legislation has been slowed. However, under a law passed last month that amends the Basic Law on Government, a prime minister is only declared unfit either if he or she declares themselves physically or mentally unfit to fulfill the role or the Cabinet, backed by three-quarters of the

ministers, declares them unfit due to health issues.

Thus, in their audacity, Israeli lawmakers have effectively prevented the attorney general from declaring Netanyahu unfit to serve in the event of a conflict of interest between his prime ministerial role and his position as defendant in a trial, as stated in the signed agreement with Netanyahu of 2020 that bars him from involvement in changes to the judicial system. It is an agreement that was not only signed by him, but it also got the stamp of approval of the High Court. It states that he must "avoid any involvement in matters concerning the activities of the Judicial Appointments Committee and in all matters concerning the justices of the Supreme Court and the Jerusalem District Court." This agreement did not come out of the blue, but it makes perfect sense considering the fact that Netanyahu is himself being tried on criminal charges.

Not surprisingly, petitions were immediately issued to the Supreme Court, whose president has demanded that Netanyahu explain how he will avoid

this conflict of interest. A few hours after dropping this constitutional bomb, signaling that as long as he is at the helm there will not be any respite to the antidemocratic legislation that is preparing the way for a messianic dictatorship, he flew to London for a city break, only to be received by thousands of protesters over the course of that weekend.

This piece of legislation, the first move in the government's plan to demolish the justice system and usurp most of its powers and the first to go through all of its readings, reveals the true intention of Netanyahu and his coalition. Not only do they want to put themselves above the law, but they aim to declare themselves as the law.

Not surprisingly, this has further enraged the protesters on the streets. It was the boldness as much as the content of the new law that has made it clearer than ever that only through perpetual protest and civil disobedience can the most dangerous and ill-intentioned government in the country's short history be stopped.

By now, the battle lines have been drawn and no one is in any doubt that

Netanyahu is prepared to sacrifice the good of the country for his own sake. He might, or at least should, now be regretting that he did not sign a plea bargain when it was offered to him, but that train has left the station. His incitements against political rivals, and for all means and purposes his encouragement of physical clashes between his supporters and those who oppose them, knowing that this will likely lead to violence and possibly bloodshed, is a worse sin than the corruption crimes he stands accused of.

His decision to pause the legislation after the backlash he encountered on sacking his defense minister was not made in good faith for the sake of entering a national dialogue, but was rather just another of his manipulative ploys to sedate the opposition. Should the protesters fall for any further such deceptions and halt their actions, they might find the master manipulator of Israeli politics continuing to dismantle Israeli democracy under pressure from his messianic right-wing coalition partners, not out of conviction but out of fear of conviction.

Arab News

Sorry for getting old

Belén Fernández

their former selves, having fallen casualty to a Turkish sidewalk where in 2019 I undertook to perform acrobatics after drinking too much wine.

When I thought about it candidly, however, I recognised an arc of guilt that had accompanied the ageing process and realised that I, too, felt reflexively apologetic whenever my gray hairs were too visible or my eyes looked tired. Then there is the matter of mobile phone selfies, and the perennial temptation to avail myself of all wrinkle-minimising options whenever the image is destined for social media dissemination. While the use of such editing features can easily be ridiculed as an exercise in narcissistic self-delusion and false advertising, it can also be a manner of compensating for an overriding sense of shame and the sense that one is somehow failing at life by getting old.

But given that life consists of getting old, feeling ashamed about it is a pretty

exhausting way to live. To be sure, the age of social media has only amplified stigmas associated with ageing, particularly for the female gender, which has traditionally been disproportionately tasked with being aesthetically pleasing.

In the protracted superficiality that passes for existence in US-style capitalist society, skin wrinkles and other perceived female defects are cast as failures of the individual. And according to capitalist logic, such failures can only be rectified by buying beauty products, paying for cosmetic adjustments, or otherwise contributing to a landscape fundamentally dedicated to corporate profit rather than human wellness. There are, of course, those celebrities who present their own glamorous trajectories into older age as constituting a stand against age-shaming. But this doesn't really do anything in terms of fixing capitalism, furthering feminism, or making the non-

glamorous population feel any better about our bodies.

A new report from the American Psychological Association (APA) meanwhile notes that "ageism is one of the last socially acceptable prejudices" in the US - with age discrimination "so ingrained in our culture that we often don't even notice". Unsurprisingly, ageism has "a host of negative effects, for people's physical and mental well-being and society as a whole". The APA cites research by Becca Levy, a professor of psychology at Yale University and of epidemiology at Yale School of Public Health, into why it is that the Japanese enjoy the longest life expectancies in the world. One of the first things Levy noticed during a trip to Japan as a graduate student was "how differently older people there were treated ... They were celebrated in families, on TV shows, in comic books."

Indeed, barring any sudden developments in the field of immortality, it

would seem self-evident that a positive approach to ageing is the most constructive option on the table. But it is easier said than done, especially when capitalism wants you to believe that there is always something wrong with you.

This March, the month after Michelle's visit to Zipolite, I turned 41. The first person to wish me a happy birthday, via WhatsApp, was a young Venezuelan asylum seeker I had recently met in Panama when he exited the treacherous stretch of jungle known as the Darién Gap. In response to his inquiry as to how old I was turning, I plunged into a preemptive state of massive guilt at having to reveal to this charming young man that I was twice his age, and instead typed back: "You don't even want to know". To which he in turn replied: "Why not? It's normal." And the fact of the matter is that, for something as normal as ageing, it should be far more normalised.

Aljazeera

US foreign policy community must improve communication

THE US foreign policy community spends little time thinking about how to communicate with the American public or how to better listen to American voters. This is problematic, because American voters elect the leaders who shape foreign policy. When American voters feel that their country's foreign policy uses resources while yielding no tangible benefits - and perhaps actual harm - it erodes their faith in their governing institutions, leaders and foreign policy principles.

One problem is that foreign policy experts - in government, academia, media and think tanks - make huge assumptions that the American public might not agree with. Such experts often assume that the public will quickly understand and agree with precepts about international norms, key allies and competitors, core principles and so forth. They often use jargon or refer to key ideas such as "global system" or "treaty allies" without bothering to explain what the terms mean or why they matter. Foreign policy experts need to "banish stale organizing principles for US foreign policy" when communicating with the American public, as a report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace stated.

Some of the reasons for this disconnect are understandable and difficult to fix. Foreign policy is a complex topic and practitioners and experts require years of study and experience to master specific policy issues. Just a small sampling of foreign policy topics includes nuclear weapons, diplomacy, trade, military power, migration, bilateral relations, multilateral relations, interna-

tional law, terrorism and cultural exchange. Furthermore, each of these topics could be broken down into more specific areas of expertise.

Just as a patient hopes that a surgeon has an excellent education and experience, so the American people - and, indeed, the world - should want US foreign policy practitioners and experts to have deep expertise.

Additionally, government officials and many others in the foreign policy community often must cope with constant demands on their time and attention. They are human beings, with their own personal and professional concerns. Government officials must work within large bureaucracies; they often lack the resources and institutional support to adapt to changing circumstances or put forward new ideas and perspectives.

Some other reasons for the disconnect between the foreign policy community and the American people are less excusable. The community tends to draw from elite institutions and personal networks that exclude the perspectives and experiences of most Americans. The field tends to draw heavily from a small number of elite colleges. For most of the foreign policy community's existence, white men with elite educations, primarily from the eastern United States, led the field. In recent years, that has started to change. Today, more women and members of ethnic and racial communities have joined the ranks of the foreign policy community, and the number of educational institutions contributing to the

Kerry Boyd Anderson

field has expanded. Still, many American subcultures lack much representation in forming foreign policy.

The lack of diversity in the field is a problem because it means that the community shaping foreign policy often has no personal understanding of how those policies affect many Americans. Furthermore, experts whose personal networks are solely based around American and international elites will struggle to explain foreign policy to the broader public.

There is a growing awareness that Americans have lost faith in their government's foreign policy - that many Americans question the benefits of globalization, military interventions and the US role in the world.

Donald Trump tapped into that sentiment in an instinctive way with his America First rhetoric, but the emotional approach lacked grounding in policy and did not reflect what many Americans want. Polling and other research shows that Americans tend to support global US leadership (but not overreaching military interventions), global trade (with limits) and working with allies.

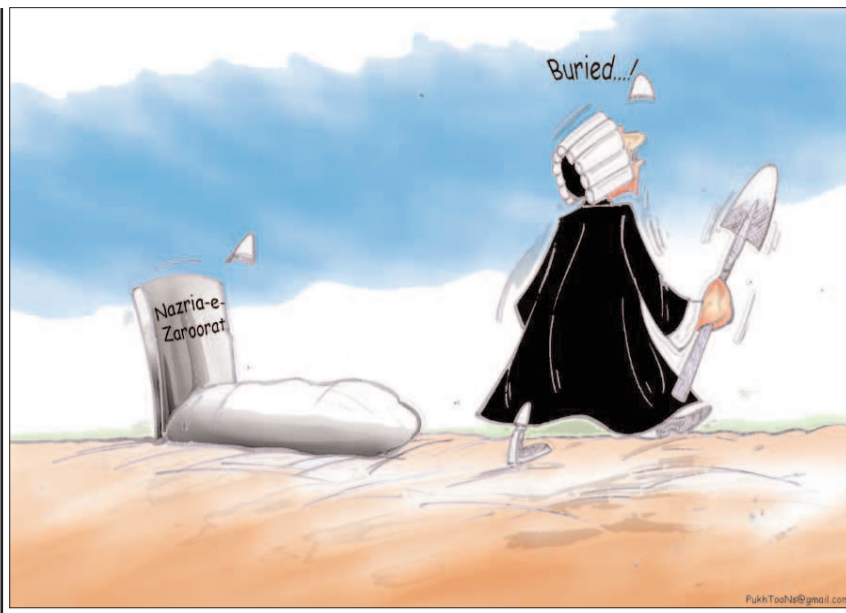
The Biden administration recognizes some of these problems. From 2018 to 2020, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace conducted a major project on "US Foreign Policy for the Middle Class," collecting information on the perspectives of middle-class Americans and how foreign policy affects them. Jake Sullivan, now national security adviser, was on the project's task force. In 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken gave a speech on

"A Foreign Policy for the American People," in which he acknowledged that "those of us who conduct foreign policy haven't always done a good job connecting it to the needs and aspirations of the American people." He attempted to directly connect Biden administration foreign policy principles with American interests.

These are important steps forward, but the US foreign policy community needs to do more to communicate with the American public in ways that both respect the public and present complex information in clearer ways that directly relate to Americans' concerns. Dialogue must also be a two-way street. Foreign policy practitioners should listen to the American public.

For example, many Americans increasingly consider border security as a key foreign policy priority rather than just a domestic concern. While many Americans still believe in the value of democracy and supporting allies, they are less attracted to Cold War-style ideological competitions.

The US foreign policy community needs to diversify the perspectives on which it draws to better connect with the concerns of the American people. Important steps include actively recruiting capable students from public universities in different parts of the country and providing paid internships so that such experience is not limited to wealthy families. Providing opportunities for experts to interact with a range of Americans is another useful idea. Softening the distinction between "foreign" and "domestic" policy and highlighting the links between them is crucial.



Russia seeks to secure gains in Syria

Osama Al-Sharif

Russia is stepping up its efforts to normalize ties between Syria and Turkiye in a bid to bolster its alliance with Damascus, which has proved exceptionally beneficial to both sides since President Vladimir Putin ordered a military incursion in 2015 that saved the regime of President Bashar Assad. Recent attempts by Moscow to set up a meeting between Assad and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan must be seen against the backdrop of an elusive victory in Ukraine, and heightened tensions between Moscow and the West.

In contrast to its miscalculated adventure in Ukraine, Russia's intervention in Syria has been a resounding success. It now has permanent naval and air bases in the country, which have allowed it to extend its military and political influence across the Mediterranean into Libya and in the Red Sea as far as Sudan. Assad has become increasingly dependent on Russia for survival, and during a meeting with Putin in Moscow last month, he said he would welcome any Russian proposals to set up new military bases and boost troop numbers in his country. Syria has supported Russia's war in Ukraine, with Assad saying that Damascus recognizes the territories annexed by Russia.

However, the protracted military operation in Ukraine has taken a toll on Russia's military resources, forcing it to relocate troops and munitions from Syria to the Russian-Ukrainian front lines. It needs to secure its gains in Syria and bolster a shaky alliance with Turkiye and Iran - two countries that have presence in Syria, but with conflicting agendas.

Erdogan, meanwhile, realizes that Assad's regime has survived and that new geopolitical realities will make it harder for him to maintain support for anti-Assad rebel groups in Idlib while hosting millions of Syrian refugees in the provinces of southern Turkiye. This has forced him to adopt a more pragmatic approach toward Damascus.

Hosting Syrian refugees and Turkiye's support for Syrian rebels have become hot issues in an election year. Erdogan's popularity has suffered over his government's handling of the earthquake disaster, while the opposition has vowed to pull Turkish troops from northern Syria if it wins the May elections. Erdogan's plans to deploy troops in northeastern Syria to quash Syrian Kurdish groups have been dashed by the US, which has more than 2,000 soldiers in the same region working with the Syrian Democratic Forces to confront Daesh. Still, Ankara has set up dozens of bases in northern Syria, which have prevented the Syrian army from regaining territory.

Following a meeting between the defense ministers of both Turkiye and Syria in Moscow last December, Erdogan announced that he was ready to sit down with Assad to foster peace and stability in Syria. But so far Damascus has been unwilling to reciprocate. Last month Assad said he would meet Erdogan only when Turkiye was ready to completely withdraw its military from northern Syria and restore the situation that existed before the Syrian war. This week's four-way meeting involving the deputy foreign ministers of Syria, Turkiye, Iran and Russia in Moscow is another attempt

by the Kremlin to iron out differences between Damascus and Ankara. This time the Russians invited the Iranians to join the talks. Iran has thousands of militia fighters and numerous military advisers in Syria.

In recent weeks, Israel has intensified its airstrikes on suspected Iranian military positions and convoys in Syria, while Tehran is believed to have targeted US positions in eastern Syria in retaliation. A shadow war between Israel and Iran in Syria is getting out of control and, so far, the Russians have done little to contain it. Ideally, Russia will hope to bring Assad and Erdogan together, sending a message that they call the shots in Syria. Still, Moscow's attempts to find a political settlement to the 12-year Syrian war have failed. Rapprochement between Damascus and Ankara would deliver a blow to the Syrian opposition and most likely end Turkish military support for rebel groups in Idlib.

That leaves the US presence in the east and the fate of the Syrian Kurds under Washington's protection. While the US says it opposes Arab gestures toward Assad - approaches that could culminate in restoring Syria's place in the Arab League ahead of the May summit in Riyadh - it is unlikely that Washington will be able to derail the current process aimed at rehabilitating the Syrian regime. It is an understatement to say that the Syrian crisis is complicated. With so many state and non-state actors involved, finding a satisfactory solution that will preserve the country's territorial integrity, while addressing issues including repatriation of refugees and investigations of war crimes, is highly unlikely at this stage.

Lula's victory

Yara Rodrigues Fowler

ON 30 October last year, Jair Bolsonaro lost to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil's presidential election, making Bolsonaro the first incumbent to fail to be re-elected in Brazil since redemocratisation. Just over a week later, Brazil's congress, presidential palace and supreme court were invaded by thousands of supporters of Bolsonaro.

They proceeded to smash the windows, artworks and computers of the buildings that symbolise Brazilian democracy. I mention this not because the invasion of Brasília made me happy (it did not), or because Lula's election made me happy (it did), but because Lula's campaign slogan was sem medo de ser feliz, which translates literally as "without fear of being happy", or, put more succinctly, "unafraid of happiness".

In his first speech as president, Lula began by promising every Brazilian three meals a day, a job, and access to healthcare and education. He went on to promise zero deforestation, indigenous land rights and the recreation of the ministries for racial equality, women and culture. Lula's slogan acknowledges something we can be loth to admit. That happiness - this supposedly intangible, romantic thing - is directly linked to the most quantifiable and decidedly unethereal aspects of lives: our material conditions.

It may be an obvious thing to say, but it is our material conditions that determine how long and how hard our lives are, what we can do with them and where. Sem medo de ser feliz argues for better material conditions not simply for their own sake - or for the sake of increased productivity or fairness - but for

the sake of happiness. It was not a given that things would be this way. My Brazilian mother and British father married in London in 1988, the year Brazil passed a new constitution after two decades of military dictatorship. I was born in 1992 and grew up surrounded by post-cold war political optimism: one of the earliest things I can remember is my reception teachers celebrating Labour's victory in 1997. Until the financial crash of 2008, the defining mood of my childhood and adolescence was that things could only get better. However, as an adult, the material conditions experienced by my generation are worse than those experienced by our parents at our age. Most of us rent at a time when rented housing has become harder to secure (bidding wars and payments of a year's rent upfront are now commonplace in London) and of increasingly low quality (the Times reports that only 10% of flatshares in London have a communal area). Inflation is increasing and wages are not, and in many sectors pensions are also being slashed. Childcare provision is collapsing and the climate crisis only worsens.

When I think of myself and my friends, it is obvious that our happiness is determined by our material conditions. One friend can't live on the same continent as his long-term partner because he doesn't earn enough to sponsor her visa. Another puts off having a baby because it's too expensive. Another has been evicted for the second time in a year because their landlord has decided to sell. Others spend the working day in discomfort because they can't afford

to heat their homes. These kinds of stories are not exclusive to young people; they'll be familiar to people of all ages, especially people with dependants, people who do not own their own homes and do not have family wealth. In terms of happiness, the effect is both day-to-day deprivation, and something qualitatively different, more prolonged. We are less free.

Lula's victory has made me feel freedom is possible. His strategy was to build a broad coalition of Black, Indigenous, gay, bisexual, transgender and working-class Brazilians. He did this by promising to improve the material conditions of all these groups. The logic here was the opposite of austerity-style scarcity, which pits one marginalized group against another, whether that's trans and cis women, or working-class people from migrant- and non-migrant backgrounds. The logic of Lula's broad coalition is that if the most vulnerable in society are better off, everyone else will be better off too. It asks Brazilians to dream of freedom for each other - happiness for all - instead of fighting each other for scraps. Happiness then to me is, first and foremost, a case of material conditions - of good, warm housing, education, healthcare and a job. Because having these material needs met means freedom to live well and as you wish. The way I see it, sem medo de ser feliz means being unafraid of the happiness of others too. It means letting go of the fear that if the material conditions of another group of people improve that the group I belong to will suffer. To me, being unafraid of happiness means believing in freedom for us all.

Globalization may not be dying, but it is changing

Joseph S. Nye Jr.

LATE last year, Morris Chang, founder of Taiwan's (and the world's) leading semiconductor producer, proclaimed that "globalization is almost dead." In a world where supply chains have been disrupted by COVID-19 and the deepening Sino-American rivalry, other commentators have echoed this view, and many companies have begun "on-shoring" and "near-shoring" their procurement of goods. But it is a mistake to conclude that globalization is over. A lot of human history reveals why.

Globalization is simply the growth of interdependence at intercontinental, rather than national or regional, distances. Neither good nor bad in itself, it has many dimensions, and is certainly not new. Climate change and migration have been driving humanity's spread across the planet ever since our ancestors began to leave Africa over a million years ago, and many other species have done the same.

These processes have always given rise to biological interactions and interdependencies. The plague originated in Asia, but killed a third of the European population between 1346 and 1352. When Europeans journeyed to the Western Hemisphere in the 15th and 16th centuries, they carried pathogens that decimated the indigenous populations. Military globalization goes back at least to the days of Xerxes and then Alexander the Great, whose empire stretched across three continents. And, of course, the sun never set on the 19th-century British Empire. Through it all, great religions also spread across multiple continents - a form of sociocultural

globalization.

More recently, the focus has been on economic globalization: the intercontinental flows of goods, services, capital, technology, and information. Again, the process is not new, but technological changes have greatly reduced the costs associated with distance, rendering today's economic globalization "thicker and quicker." The Silk Road connected Asia and Europe in the Middle Ages, but it was nothing like the vast flows of modern container ships, let alone internet communications that now connect continents instantaneously.

While globalization came to be seen primarily as an economic phenomenon in the 20th century, it then became a political buzzword - for both proponents and critics - in the 2000s. When rioters in Davos broke the windows of a McDonald's to protest labor conditions in Asia, that was political globalization.

The current globalization clearly differs from that of the 19th century, when European imperialism provided much of its institutional structure, and when higher costs meant that fewer people were involved directly. Western firms began spreading around the world in the 1600s, and by the end of the 19th century, the global stock of foreign direct investment was equivalent to about 10 percent of global output. By 2010, the worldwide stock of FDI included non-Western companies and was equivalent to about 30 percent of the world's gross domestic product.

On the eve of the First World War in 1914, there was a high

degree of global interdependence, including movements of peoples, goods and services. There was also inequality, because the benefits of economic globalization were unevenly shared. But economic interdependence did not prevent the major trading partners from fighting each other, which is why people at the time called it the Great War. After those four years of devastating violence and destruction, global economic interdependence was sharply reduced. World trade and investment did not return to their 1914 levels until the 1960s.

Could the same thing happen again? Yes, if the US and Russia or China blunder into a major war. But barring that continental contingency, it is unlikely. For all the talk of economic "decoupling," the breaks so far have been quite selective and incomplete. Global trade in goods and services made a strong comeback after the pandemic downturn in 2020, though not all areas recovered equally.

With the US having established new barriers to hamper the flow of certain sensitive goods and from China, its imports from that country have risen by only 6 percent above pre-pandemic levels, while its imports from Canada and Mexico have risen by over 30 percent. In the US case, then, regionalization seems to have recovered more robustly than globalization. But look more closely and you will find that while China's share of America's imports dropped from 21 percent to 17 percent between 2018 and 2022, US imports from Vietnam, Bangladesh and Thailand rose by more than 80

percent. Those figures certainly do not suggest that globalization is dead.

It bears mentioning that this new Asian trade with the US is, in fact, intermediated Chinese trade. The US and its allies are still more deeply intertwined with the Chinese economy than was ever the case with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Western countries can reduce their security risks by excluding Chinese companies, such as Huawei, from Western 5G telecommunications networks without incurring the inordinately high costs of dismantling all global supply chains.

Moreover, even if geopolitical competition were to curtail economic globalization substantially, the world would remain highly interdependent through ecological globalization. Pandemics and climate change obey the laws of biology and physics, not politics. No country can solve these problems alone. Greenhouse gases emitted in China can lead to costly sea-level rises or weather disruptions in the US or Europe, and vice versa.

These costs could be enormous. Scientists estimate that both China and the US suffered over 1 million deaths as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that began in Wuhan, partly owing to both countries' failure to cooperate on policy responses. Success in addressing climate change or future pandemics will require recognition of global interdependencies, even if people do not like it. Globalization is largely driven by technological changes that reduce the importance of distance. That will not change. Globalization is not over. It just may no longer be the kind we want.

of public support for continued protests is likely to come to the government's rescue.

There is no doubt that France's pension system requires reform, thanks to the country's public spending deficit, aging population and a current retirement age below that of peer-group nations. However, the high-handed manner in which Macron has gone about these reforms highlights the shortcomings of his presidential style, so much so that even if his government can push through the changes, it may be at the cost of his presidency. Mounting public anger and disruption could lead to a situation where Macron either resigns or risks widespread chaos. His ham-fisted approach has emboldened both extremes of the political spectrum, as he saw to his detriment during last year's election.

While Macron's maneuvering drives voters into the arms of the extreme left and right, his commitment to pension reform only reinforces the view of him as anti-democratic. His alienation of would-be allies has left him without a majority in parliament and lacking support on the streets, so that the economic necessity of his proposals is being drowned out by disaffection with his presidency.

France braces for more mayhem as Macron remains defiant

Zaid M. Belbagi

KEEN to put last year's electoral disappointment behind him, France's President Emmanuel Macron chose pension reform as an important policy area where he could have an impact and, importantly, leave a legacy where his three predecessors had failed.

However, what he believed might be a difficult, but brief, period of bargaining and concessions has developed into three months of political upheaval. With workers now being urged to walk out for an 11th official national "Day of Action" on Thursday and the Elysee having had to cancel a visit by King Charles, France looks set for further instability and chaos.

At first, Macron's proposed pension reforms - socially controversial but fiscally necessary - were expected to be seen through eventually, though not without some opposition. Last month, however, he decided to shun parliament and impose the reforms via a special constitutional power, the so-called Article 49.3, a procedure that allows the government to force passage of a bill without a vote unless the parliament passes a motion of no confidence. However, its use this time has drawn signifi-

cant criticism because of the significant public opposition to the proposed reforms.

While Macron was chastised for wearing a luxury watch during an interview on the pension changes, the broader fury of opposition lawmakers was echoed on the streets, leaving France's urban centers stinking with uncollected rubbish and public services in tatters. Along with protesters angry at the prospect of having to work longer before retiring, government critics also have condemned Macron's use of special powers as detrimental to democratic debate. The government has since narrowly survived two no-confidence votes, while protests have resulted in hundreds of arrests and widespread destruction of property. The IGP, the internal affairs unit of the French police, has reportedly launched 17 investigations into allegations of heavy-handed tactics since the pension protests began.

However, the arrests have failed to discourage further disruption. Although the government and opposition vary greatly in their estimation of the scale of public dissent, France's powerful unions clearly retain their ability to pres-

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PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 29.89 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 29.89 points, with a positive change of 0.08 percent, closing at 39,717.15 against 39,687.26 points on the previous day.

A total of 86,723,163 shares were traded during the day as compared to 83,255,062 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 2.435 billion against Rs 2.186 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 354 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 175 of them recorded gains and 147 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 32 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Silk Bank

Ltd. with 11,002,000 shares at Rs 1.03 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 5,743,963 shares at Rs1.17 per share, and Telecard Limited with 5,347,500 shares at Rs 7.91 per share.

Khyber Textile witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 37.02 per share price, closing at Rs 530.72, whereas the runner-up was Premium Tex. with a Rs 33.51 rise in its per share price to Rs 480.31.

Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 148.50 per share closing at Rs 1835.00, followed by Philip Morris Pak. with a Rs 26.99 decline to close at Rs 344.02.

Rupee sheds 56 paisas against dollar

Pakistan rupee weakened by 56 paisas against the Dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs 287.85 against

the previous day's closing of Rs 287.29.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of Dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 289.5 and Rs 292 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 2.17 which closed at Rs 315.60 against the last day's closing of Rs313.43, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen gained 02 paisas to close at Rs 2.18; whereas an increase of Rs 2.67 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 360.00 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 357.33.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal increased by 15 paisas each to close at Rs 78.37 and Rs 76.74 respec-

tively.

Gold prices increase by Rs.2500 to Rs. 217,000 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 2500 and was sold at Rs 217,000 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs. 214,500 the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 2142 to Rs 186,042 from Rs 183,900, whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs 170,539 from Rs 168,575.

The price of per tola and that of ten-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs 2450 and Rs 2100.48 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market rose by US\$ 41 to \$2023 against its sale at \$1982, the association reported.

Pakistani textile merchants explore Chinese market

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan has been exporting cotton and yarn to China for 40 to 50 years and now Pakistani textile merchants are trying to develop exports of fabrics and ready-made garments, said Usman Saeed, head of the China operations of a Pakistani textile company.

Talking to media at the Intertextile Expo held in Shanghai, Usman said the international textile exhibition provided a platform to showcase Pakistani products.

Pakistani exhibitors can also benefit from the state-of-the-art technologies and trends from their Chinese counterparts, he added.

Usman hoped that more Chinese enterprises would participate in the upcoming

4th International Textile Expo to be held in Karachi next month for technical and professional exchanges, CEN reported on Wednesday.

There will be products ranging from raw materials to finished goods at the expo that are competitive in price and quality all around the world, he added.

Pakistan is a leading textile country with a production capacity spanning the whole industrial chain. Most of its textile products are exported to Europe and America. Usman's company has also contributed to Pakistan's textile exports by manufacturing for international sports brands. Believing that China's large population, with its diverse tastes, could make room for

many products, the company started its business in China in 2016 by opening an office in Dongguan, Guangdong.

Usman sees a golden opportunity to tap the Chinese market, where dying and processing policies are becoming more stringent. With the development of high technology, the rising labor cost in China has challenged the development of the labor-intensive textile manufacturing industry.

Pakistani men's garments export to China increased by nearly 33% in 2022 and its T-shirt export to China reached \$ 5.53 million in the first two months of 2023, up 106% compared with the same period in 2022.

The figures boost confidence in Pakistan's ailing textile industry, which is teetering on the brink of default, and highlight its pillar status and potential, said Usman.

It only takes seven days to export textiles by land from Pakistan to China with zero tariffs. Usman and his team are working hard to make the most of these huge benefits. "We have Chinese technicians working with us in our Pakistani factory to produce fabrics that meet Chinese standards. We hope that in the near future, more fabrics and garments produced by Chinese standards can be exported to China and around the world," Usman concluded.

Dubai Islamic Bank inaugurates its branch in EMAAR Karachi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Dubai Islamic Bank inaugurates its state of the art branch in EMAAR Karachi to facilitate the residents of EMAAR for their banking needs in a Shariah Compliant manner. H.E. Bakheet Ateeq AL-Romaithi Consul General of United Arab Emirates (UAE) grace the occasion as the Chief Guest for the inauguration ceremony. Being World's First Islamic Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank is operating in Pakistan since 2006 with 235 branches in over 65 cities.

Speaking on the occasion H.E. Bakheet Ateeq AL-Romaithi Consul General of UAE said that "I would like to congratulate my brother (Junaid Ahmed) for this achievement in opening an Islamic Bank branch in the project of EMAAR. I am really happy to be here today to see a lovely branch in EMAAR. We will be supporting your bank as usual. We need to support investment in Pakistan and we need to stand with Pakistan in this situation"

Mr. Junaid Ahmed CEO, Dubai Islamic Bank added that "We have opened this branch exclu-



sively for the residents of EMAAR to cater to their banking needs with our Wajaha- Priority Banking services. Dubai Islamic Bank is the World's First Islamic Bank and we are operating with 235 branches in over 65 cities. We are a profitable bank and serving the country with investment not only through capital injecting but also supporting Government of Pakistan through bilateral facilities and also investing in sukus. We are acting as a catalyst between Pakistan

and the UAE and bridging the gap of financial arrangements between the two countries. I specially thank H.E Bakheet Ateeq

AL-Romaithi Consul General of UAE for supporting us and gracing his presence at the inauguration ceremony."

Services exports increased by 6.48 per cent

ISLAMABAD (APP): Services sector exports from the country during the last eight months of the current financial year grew by 6.48 percent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-February, 2022-23, the services exports were recorded at \$4.779 billion as compared to the exports of \$4.487 billion in the same period of last year, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Meanwhile, the imports of services into the country decreased by 32.95 percent and were recorded at \$5.119 billion as compared to the imports of \$7.635 billion in the same period last year.

During the last eight months of the current financial year services trade deficit narrowed by 89.19 percent as it went down from \$3.147 billion in July-February, 2021-22 to \$340.39 million in the same period of the current financial year. On year on year basis, the services trade

deficit shrank 90.57 percent in February 2023 and it was recorded at \$38.77 million as against \$410.98 million in the same month of last year.

In February 2023, services valuing \$547.15 million were exported as compared the exports of \$543.16 million and it was up by 5.71 percent, whereas services imports decreased by 35.76 percent as it was registered at \$612.92 million against \$954.14 million of the same month of last year.

On month on month basis, the services trade deficit decreased by 316.68 percent and it was recorded at \$38.77 million in February 2023 as against \$17.89 million in January 2023.

In the month of February 2023, services valuing \$574.15 million were exported as compared to the exports of 608.98 million in January 2023, whereas services worth \$612.92 million were imported as against the import of \$592.09 million of the last month of the current financial year.



PESHAWAR: Women busy in selecting and purchasing children's clothes in connection with upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr at Cantt area.

TotalEnergies, Iraq agree on delayed \$10b deal

PARIS (AFP/APP): French energy giant TotalEnergies announced on Wednesday an agreement with Iraq on a \$10 billion project that had been delayed due to disagreements over the terms of a deal aimed at improving the country's electricity supply.

The contract, originally signed in 2021, includes investments in oil, gas and solar production.

But the two sides had disagreed over the terms, with an Iraqi oil ministry spokesman saying earlier this year that Baghdad wanted a 40-per cent stake, with TotalEnergies getting 60 per cent.

A source at the ministry said the French company wanted Iraq to have a smaller stake.

TotalEnergies said Wednesday that Iraq's Basrah Oil Company would get a 30-per cent stake in the project while a Qatari firm -- QatarEnergy -- would get 25 per cent and the French firm would own 45 per cent.

The agreement follows four rounds of talks between TotalEnergies chief executive Patrick Pouyanne and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, the company said.

The \$10 billion Gas Growth Integrated Project (GGIP) includes recovering flared gas from oil fields to power electricity-generation plants.

A one-gigawatt solar power plant would be built to supply electricity to the Basra regional grid, with Saudi firm ACWA Power joining the project, TotalEnergies said.

The GGIP also includes the construction of a seawater treatment plant to provide water used in oil production -- an alternative to using fresh water from rivers and aquifers, the French firm said.

"TotalEnergies welcomes the continuity of the voice of the State of Iraq on this Development & Production Contract, which is a strong and positive signal for foreign investment in the country," the company said.

FAW reports robust exports in Q1

CHANGCHUN (APP): China's leading automaker FAW Group Co., Ltd. exported 15,000 complete vehicles in the first quarter of this year (Q1), up 125 percent year on year.

In 2022, the export value of the group subsidiaries, FAW Jiefang, FAW Benteng and its leading sedan brand Hongqi, registered a record high of over 6 billion yuan (about 872 million US dollars), said Yang Dayong, chairman of China FAW Group Import and Export Co., Ltd.

The company has been accelerating the expansion of Hongqi in the overseas high-end auto market, and is planning to boost overseas sales of Hongqi to a level where it will account for over 10 percent of Hongqi's total sales by 2025 and 25% of Hongqi's total sales by 2030.

The state-owned FAW Group was founded in 1953 and is headquartered in the city of Changchun in the northeastern province of Jilin, which is known as the cradle of China's auto industry.

80% infrastructure development work on BEZ completed

PESHAWAR (APP): Bannu Economic Zone (BEZ) is near completion as 80% construction work has been completed on the project and remaining work will complete soon.

This was stated by the Chief Executive Officer, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC), Javed Iqbal Khattak while talking to APP here on Wednesday.

Enveloping the vast land of 408 acres, Bannu Economic Zone is geo-

graphically located in close proximity to districts Lakki Marwat, North Waziristan, Karak and D.I.Khan. Construction work on road infrastructure, water supply, and boundary wall and security gate has been completed.

He said that as many as 260 industrial units will be established in the economic zone wherein over 25000 youth of the districts

Bannu, Karak, Lakki Marwat and North Waziristan would be provided employment.

The zone is specified for mineral and agricultural sector units especially chromites, copper and PVC pipe manufacturing units. With 80.5% literacy rate of Bannu Division, the zone has the potential to set the fast growth trajectory of the district ablaze with provision of skilled labour from native population of 1.2 million.

BEZ holds an anchoring ability for foreign investment in the division, which will not only boost the economy of Bannu rather also the surrounding districts of Lakki Marwat, Karack and Waziristan.

He said that the proximity of the Indus Expressway with BEZ also adds a better deal of value to the strategic importance of the economic zone connecting his part of the region with

Afghanistan through the Ghulam Khan border.

He said that provision of developed land, integrated infrastructure, business friendly environment for sustainable industrial growth, process innovation according to international standards and dedicated facilitation office at the zone are key features of the Bannu Economic Zone.

The zone has an easy access via N-55 highway and N-5 Bannu link road to make it an ideal vantage point for investors from Peshawar, D.I. Khan and Divisions, whose accessibility will be further enhanced after the construction of the western route of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

Target markets of the industrial products from Bannu Economic Zone can potentially be in high demand at local markets of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian States.

SECP seeks comments on draft amendments to NBFC Regulations, 2008

ISLAMABAD (APP): The SECP has proposed amendments in the Non-Banking Finance Companies and Notified Entities Regulations, 2008 to facilitate the adoption of new technologies, improve the ease of doing business and enhance investor protection.

The draft amendments have been placed on SECP's website for public consultation, said a press release issued on Wednesday.

The key proposed amendments include provisions to enable the launch of digital fund management, lending, and trustee

services. Provisions also include enabling Asset Management Companies (AMCs) to promptly notify unitholders of account activity and maintain the confidentiality of client information. Redundant and superfluous provisions were also removed.

Additionally, the 100% equity cap on total unsecured exposure had been eliminated. Lending NBFCs that had recently received licenses have been given a year to meet the minimum investment requirement in their primary business, the release

added.

Investment Advisors can now provide portfolio management services to all investors in accordance with global best practices, as are countries like Canada, India, and Malaysia. The deadline for submitting CEO applications has been increased from 10 to 30 days.

Furthermore, enabling provisions had been introduced to allow certain financial institutions to distribute units of CIS/VPs without obtaining a license, subject to compliance with S&FA Regulations, it said.

Russia exports 91% of its crude oil to China, India

LONDON (APP): China and India accounted for 91% of Russia's crude oil exports in March as Western sanctions led the country to almost totally shift its trade routes from Europe to Asia, according to data from energy analytics company Vortexa compiled by Anadolu.

Russia's oil and oil products exports totaled 6.75 million barrels per day (bpd) in March, rebounding from lower levels impacted by the sanctions since the start of the war in Ukraine.

Its crude oil exports, meanwhile, reached 3.38

million bpd out of the total in March, the highest level seen in the last 10 months.

Moscow found new ports for its crude oil and oil products especially in Asia after starting to lose its biggest export destination, Europe, due to the sanctions.

China's crude oil imports from Russia hit 1.65 million bpd last month, overtaking India as the largest buyer of Russian crude. China imported 1.1 million bpd of crude from Russia in February.

China's crude oil purchases from Russia have stood at over 1 million bpd

since May 2022 while it remained below this level only in December 2022 with 769,790 bpd.

India, who has been buying high amounts of discounted Russian crude since the start of the war, imported 1.43 million bpd in March.

India's crude oil imports from Russia have seen a dramatic uptick in the last year. Crude oil shipments from Russia to India jumped from 68,000 bpd in March 2022 to 1.43 million bpd in March this year, growing more than twentyfold.

Chinese bankers optimistic over macroeconomy

ISTANBUL (APP): Chinese bankers and entrepreneurs are optimistic over the country's macroeconomy during the first quarter of 2023, the People's Bank of China's (PBOC) survey showed on Wednesday.

According to the Chinese broadcaster CGTN, the macroeconomy heat index was at 40.2% in the January-March period,

up 22.8 percentage points from the previous quarter.

Some 62.8% of surveyed bankers said the macroeconomy was operating "normally."

The bankers' outlook index for macroeconomy heat increased to 50.9%, 10.7 percentage points higher.

Aggregate loan demand posted an increase in the first three months, while

the index was up by 19 percentage points to 78.4%.

Another survey from the central bank showed that entrepreneurs' macroeconomy heat index rose to 33.8% in the first quarter, up 10.3 percentage points on a quarterly basis.

Some 64.6% of the entrepreneurs from 5,000 businesses said the macroeconomy was operating "normally."

Court Notice

IN the Court of Haq Nawaz Khan district Judge /Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No.28/14. Institution 29/7/2022. Date of hearing. 18/4/2023. Sultan Zeb VS Abdullah Shah etc. Notice to Amer Hasan s/o Sher Hasan. 6/1.Hamad Ghafor son. 6/2.Mst Farkhanda. 6/3.Mst Naila. 6/4.Mst Aysha.6/5.Mst Husna daughters of Amr Hea resident of Bampokha thesl Gadezai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8. am dated 18/4/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the court of Kiran Noor civil judge/judge family court matta Swat. case # 83/6 year 2022 Hearing.17/04/2023. Mst.Rahim Ranra VS sir Zameen etc.Notice to:1/4.Dost Muhammad khan s/o sir Zameen khan r/o shakardara thesil matta swat. Presently. Deezet sapara Mobile. 00971569570336. 1/5 zoordost khan s/o bakht buland khan heirs 1/7/1 sikandar shah 1/7/2.Afzal shah 1/7/3.Nasir shah 1/7/4. fatma 1/7/5.mst shir Rehmat sons d/o Mst Afzal bacha r/o shakardara thesil matta swat. Whereas the above named respondents cannot be served in ordinary manner it is therefore proclaimed or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court on 17.04.2023 at 9.30 am. Ex- parte proceeding will be initiated against you. Seal of the court.



In brief

Tennis Tournament

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Brig Mustafa Kamal Burki Shaheed Tennis Tournament would kick off here at the Pakistan sports Complex after Ramadan. Davis Cup coach Inam ul Haq told APP that male and female athletes from across the country would participate in the event. He said there are three categories in the tournament, including men's singles, ladies' singles and senior 40 plus. Medals, certificates and shields would be distributed to the winning players after the finals of the tournament, he added. Speaking about the promotion of tennis in the country, Inam said concrete steps were needed to be taken to utilize the talent of tennis in the country, he said. Inam said the game of tennis needs to be introduced in rural areas and more courts should be built there to promote tennis.

Yorkshire sign Hope

LONDON (Agencies): Yorkshire have signed West Indies batter Shai Hope for the first three games of the County Championship. The 29-year-old will make his debut in Thursday's opening game of the Division Two season against Leicestershire. Hope became the first player to hit two centuries in the same first-class match at Headingley when he did so for West Indies against England in 2017. New Yorkshire captain Shan Masood will miss the start of the season after being called up by Pakistan. "He [Hope] brings so much experience - one thing we are lacking is just a little bit of experience so he just gives us that and comes into the squad for this first game," managing director Darren Gough told the club website. "Hope has literally just got home a few days ago so it is a straight turn around. He will have to adjust to playing red ball, from white ball but he is a fantastic player and it's good to have someone of his quality to come in at short notice for three games."

Messi move to Saudi Arabia

RIYADH (Agencies): Lionel Messi is considering a move to Saudi Arabia that would see him join Al Hilal, the city rivals of Cristiano Ronaldo's Al Nassr, when his Paris Saint-Germain contract expires this summer, a source familiar with the negotiations told ESPN. Having opened talks with Messi and his advisers late last year, senior figures in the bid to take him to the Middle Eastern nation had initially believed they had no more than an outside chance of persuading the former Barcelona forward to follow Ronaldo to Riyadh. However, a source told ESPN there is now an increasing likelihood of Messi, 35, who fronts the Visit Saudi tourism campaign, moving to the Saudi Pro League, putting the probability as high as "50-50" following talks with the player's camp in Saudi Arabia last month. A separate source told ESPN that Messi received an offer from Saudi Arabia last week. ESPN reported Tuesday that Messi is unlikely to reach an agreement to extend his contract at PSG, which runs out at the end of the season. He signed a two-year deal on his arrival from Barcelona in 2021. While Barcelona president Joan Laporta maintains an interest in funding a deal to take the Argentina captain back to the Spotify Camp Nou, the LaLiga leaders continue to battle against financial problems, and a move for Messi appears unlikely to succeed.

New Zealand beats Sri Lanka in 2nd T20, levels series

DUNEDIN (AP): Fast bowler Adam Milne took 5-26 as New Zealand bowled out Sri Lanka for 141 on Wednesday and went on to win the second Twenty20 cricket international by nine wickets.

Milne became only the third New Zealander to claim a five-wicket haul in a T20 international after Tim Southee (5-18 vs. Pakistan) and Lockie Ferguson (5-21 vs. West Indies), helping the Black Caps bowl out Sri Lanka in exactly 19 overs.

Opener Tim Seifert then hit an unbeaten 79 from 43 balls as New Zealand reached 146-1 in 14.4 overs to win with 32 balls to spare, finishing off with consecutive sixes.

Milne's bag included the wickets of Kusal Perera (35) and Charith Asalanka (26.) who were half century-makers in the first T20 match between the teams on Sunday which Sri Lanka won in a Super Over. He also dismissed opener Pathum Nissanka (0) and wrapped up the innings by clean bowling Pramod Madushan and Dilshan Madushanka.

"Any time you get a five-for it's very nice and after the last game with the Super Over it's nice to come back and put in a good performance," Milne said.

Sri Lanka made 196-5 in the first match and looked on course to another high score when it reached 50-2 in the power-play on Wednesday and 83-2 in the first 10 overs, led by Perera and Dhanjaya de Silva, who made 37 from 26 balls. The pair put on 62 for the third wicket.

But after Milne removed Perera, de Silva fell to the spinner Rachin Ravindra and Sri Lanka's innings lost some of its momentum. The pitch at the University Oval was slow but the boundaries were short and inviting and the visiting batters found it hard to resist the temptation of the big shot.

New Zealand used the slower ball to good effect and a succession of batters fell to catches in the deep. "I think the spinners did really well through the middle there to tie them up," Milne said. "I think compared to the last game we were able to take a few quick wickets in the middle and that allowed us to attack a bit more."

South Africa-born opener Chad Bowes got the New Zealand innings off to a fast start with 31 from 15 balls, including seven fours. When he was out with

the total 40, Seifert took over the assault on the Sri Lanka bowlers and New Zealand rushed to 103-1 after 10 overs.

Seifert reached his sixth T20 half-century from 30 balls with two fours and four sixes. He hit the sixth six of his innings out of the ground from the bowling of De Silva to take New Zealand to 140-1, then the seventh on the next ball to end the match.

Captain Tom Latham was 20 not out, having played the support role in an unbeaten 106-run partnership with Seifert.

"It was a pretty clinical performance," Latham said. "From eight overs on we clawed things back and the way we were able to keep taking wickets, we were able to stall the run-rate. I thought the bowling performance was outstanding. 'The way Chad and Tim played was the icing on the cake.'"

Sri Lanka wasn't able to recapture the batting form of the first match. "We lost wickets at regular intervals and 141 was never enough on this wicket," captain Dasun Shanaka said. "We were looking around the 180 mark when the wickets were there but we lost too many wickets and couldn't get there."

CM Naqvi okays Ramadan Mubarak Sports Series

LAHORE (PPI): Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi Wednesday approved the "Ramadan Mubarak Sports Series" in a special meeting held in Lahore on Wednesday..

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary, Provincial Minister of Information, Advisor for Sports, DG Sports, Secretary Sports, Secretary Information, Commissioner Lahore, DC Lahore, DG Sports and related officials.

In the meeting the CM was briefed about the total number of teams, different sports, venues, how the series would be executed sans government funds and the total prize money.

It was explained in the

briefing that "Ramadan Mubarak Sports Series" will feature football, table tennis, badminton, hockey, kabaddi and cricket contests. Teams from nine divisions across Punjab will take part in the competitions.

In terms of how the series will be executed, the series will be fully sponsored, no government funds will be spent and winning teams will receive prizes worth Rs8.5 million.

Likewise, the champions of table tennis, cricket, hockey, kabaddi, badminton, and other sports will also receive a cash award of Rs2.2 million.

Moreover, hockey matches will be played at Mini Hockey Stadium

every night from 7th to 11th April. On the other hand, football and Kabaddi matches will be held at Punjab Football Stadium, and table tennis matches at Sports Gymnasium.

Badminton competitions will take place at International Gymnasium Hall and cricket matches will be played at LCCA Cricket Ground. The 57 teams will compete in sports events during Ramadan, totaling 903 athletes and officials.

The promotion of sports, according to CM Naqvi, is one of the Punjab government's top priorities, and more and more young people will be given the chance to take part in sports event.

Lukaku calls for 'real action' after racist abuse



MILAN (Agencies): Romelu Lukaku says Serie A must take "action for real this time" after he was racially abused by Juventus fans before being sent off on Tuesday.

He was shown a second yellow card for holding his finger to his lips in front of the home fans after scoring a 95th-minute penalty in the Coppa Italia tie.

"History repeats itself," the Inter Milan striker wrote on Instagram. "Been through it in 2019 and 2023 again. 'This beautiful game should be enjoyed by everyone.'"

He added: "I hope the league really take actions for real this time."

Michael Yormark, president of Lukaku's representatives Roc Nation Sports International, said the abuse was "beyond despicable". Juventus said they would work with police to identify those responsible following the game.

A statement read: "Juventus Football Club, as always, are collaborating with the police to identify those responsible for the racist gestures and

chants which took place last night." Scuffles broke out between players from both sides after Lukaku's equaliser.

Inter captain Samir Handanovic and midfielder Juan Cuadrado were shown red cards after the final whistle, with the fracas continuing down the tunnel. "Tonight's racist remarks made towards Romelu Lukaku by Juventus fans in Turin were beyond despicable and cannot be accepted," Yormark said in a statement.

"Romelu scored a penalty late in the game. Before, during and after the penalty, he was subjected to hostile and disgusting racist abuse." "Romelu celebrated in the same manner he has previously celebrated goals. The referee's response was to award a yellow card to Romelu."

"Romelu deserves an apology from Juventus and I expect the league to condemn the behaviour of this group of Juventus supporters immediately."

"The Italian authorities must use this opportunity to tackle racism, rather than

punish the victim of the abuse." Lukaku, who returned to Inter on loan from Chelsea last summer, suffered racist abuse during his first spell at Inter between 2019 and 2021.

In September 2019 he said the game "was going backwards" after he was racially abused by Cagliari fans. Cagliari were later cleared of racist chanting, with Piara Powar - chief of anti-discriminatory body Fare - claiming the disciplinary systems to combat racism in Italian football were "not fit for purpose".

In September 2021, Lukaku said racism in football was at an "all-time high" and that players, football authorities and social media could do more to tackle the issue.

In January, Serie A opened an investigation into allegations of racist abuse aimed towards Lukaku by Napoli fans.

The same day Lazio supporters racially abused Samuel Umtiti and Lameck Banda of Lecce, with the club later ordered to close part of their stadium for their next match.



DUNEDIN: Ben Lister chipped in with 2 for 26.

Pakistan-born pacer spearheading USA's World Cup assault

ISLAMABAD (APP): The plaudits continue to roll in for quick Ali Khan after the Pakistan-born pacer picked up a seven-wicket haul to help USA defeat Jersey on Tuesday and keep their dreams alive of featuring at this year's ICC Men's Cricket World Cup.

Khan used his sheer pace and ability to bowl fast yorkers to tear through the Jersey batting line-up and collect sensational figures of 7/32 from 9.4 overs as the USA booked their place at June's Qualifier tournament and moved one step closer to claiming a place at this year 50-over World Cup, the ICC reported on its website on Wednesday.

The 32-year-old picked up five wickets alone during a blistering opening spell at the United Cricket Club Ground and then returned at the death when his team needed him most to wrap up the Jersey tail just when they threatened to claim an unlikely victory.

Khan's haul was the seventh best figures achieved in Men's ODI cricket, with Sri Lanka great Chaminda Vaas the only bowler to have previously taken more than seven wickets in a 50-over ODI contest.

It also helped Khan catapult to the top of the list of wicket-takers at the Qualifier Play-off, with the dynamic right-arm now having taken 16 scalps at the event as a miserly average of just 12.37 from five matches.

That's four more wickets than any other bowler at the event, with Papua New Guinea pacer Semo Kamea (12 wickets) and fellow American Nisarg Patel (11) the only other players to have claimed more than 10 wickets heading into the final matchday on Wednesday.

Khan is a relatively late bloomer in terms of professional cricket, first making waves in American cricket in the mid-2010s. Upon Cricket World Cup League 2 success in 2019, the exciting quick made his ODI debut for his adopted country of the USA when he featured against Papua New Guinea in 2019.

It has been a long road to the top for the Punjab-born pacer, who only moved to the USA as a teenager and started to display his capabilities in various T20 leagues around the world last decade when turning out alongside the likes of Adam Zampa, Martin Gupitli and Chris Lynn when playing for the Guyana Amazon Warriors in the Caribbean Premier League last decade.

But it seems we are only going to see more of the exciting fast bowler, who will now be expected to spearhead USA's assault on the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier tournament in Zimbabwe during June and July, where the emerging cricketing country will get the chance to battle it out for a place in the 10-team event that is scheduled for the end of the year. USA will face the likes of 1996 champions Sri Lanka, emerging cricket nation Nepal and two-time winners the West Indies at the Qualifier tournament in the middle of the year, while UAE will also join them at the event after they progressed from the Play-off.

Philippines thrash Pakistan in AFC Olympic Qualifiers

HISOR (Monitoring Desk): The national women's football team failed to script a winning start to their AFC Olympic Qualifiers campaign as the side endured a 0-4 thrashing in their opening fixture against the Philippines.

Pakistan collided with the ruthless Philippines side in their first Group E fixture of the qualifiers and

suffered a one-sided defeat.

The Philippines dominated throughout the match while Pakistan struggled to get themselves going in the game.

The green shirts had a dismal start to the game as they conceded the first three goals during the first half with Hali Long, Sarina Bolden and Eva Madarang scoring one each for the

Philippines.

Pakistan's defence then put up a relatively better show in the second half and allowed the Philippines to notch only a goal more when Chandler McDaniel registered herself on the score-sheet in the 85th minute.

Pakistan next faces Hong Kong and the hosts Tajikistan on April 8 and 11, respectively.

Mushfiquer ton, bowling attack gives Bangladesh edge in Ireland Test

DHAKA (Agencies): Bangladesh left-arm spin duo Shakib Al Hasan and Taijul Islam made quick work of Ireland's top order on Wednesday to leave the tourists flailing at 27-4 on day two of their one-off Test in Dhaka.

Mushfiquer Rahim's knock of 126 put the hosts on the front foot after early wobbles in the first innings and the hosts were still 128 runs ahead at stumps.

Andy McBrine claimed 6-118, becoming only the second Irish bowler to take five Test wickets, to help close out the first innings in the final session.

But Ireland's batsmen spoiled his party with four quick wickets before the day was done.

Murray Commings (1),

James McCollum (0), Andy Balbirnie (3) and Curtis Campher (1) wilted in front of Taijul and Shakib, who claimed 2-7 and 2-11 respectively.

Herry Tector was batting on eight alongside Peter Moor, 10 not out at the end of play to leave Ireland staring at the prospect of an innings defeat.

Bangladesh resumed on 34-2 and looked shaky after losing Mominul Haque, bowled round his legs for 17, in the third over of the morning. But Shakib and Mushfiquer turned up the aggression to quickly claw back the deficit with a 159-run partnership for the fourth wicket.

Shakib was at his mercurial best until he chased a ball from McBrine wide

outside the off stump to get a feather touch on the bat.

He was caught behind after an impressive 14 fours from his 94-ball knock. Liton Das joined Mushfiquer to continue on the front foot, adding 87 runs for the fifth wicket.

Mushfiquer finished his hundred from 135 balls with a four off Mark Adair before Ben White dismissed Liton for 43 runs.

McBrine finally dispatched Mushfiquer -- with Commings taking a fine diving catch at long-on -- and cut short the tail with three wickets in three consecutive overs.

Ireland have lost all three of their previous Tests since becoming a full member of the International Cricket Council in 2017.

Azam Khan reacts after being ruled out of New Zealand series

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistani batter Azam Khan has vowed to more focus on his game and fitness after he was not included in the national squad for the T20I and ODI home series against New Zealand scheduled to begin in mid-April.

His reaction comes after the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced the squads for the series.

Senior players, who were rested during the series against Afghanistan in Sharjah are back now. These players included Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Fakhar Zaman,

Haris Rauf, and Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Shaheen, who continued to cause uproar in the cricketing world, is set to make his comeback after a period of four months. As per the PCB, Shaheen had missed five tests and three ODIs after sustaining a knee injury during the ICC T20 World Cup in November.

Azam Khan, the son of former player Moinul Haq, had come under fire for his poor performance in the three-match T20I series against Afghanistan. He had been named in the squad following his impressive performance in

the eighth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL8) in which he played for the Islamabad United.

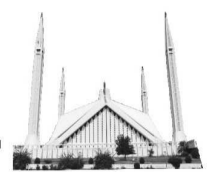
However, the wicket keeper-batsman could not maintain the momentum while playing against Afghanistan in Sharjah as the neighbouring country registered historic series win against the Team Green.

Now, Mr Khan took to Twitter and vowed to make hard work to get back a place in the national squad.

"Good luck to the boys in green for the home series, inshaAllah will keep working hard on my game and fitness to get back a place in the team," he wrote.



SHEFFIELD: Stephen Hendry plays a shot in the first round match against James Cahill during the Cazoo World Championship 2023 Qualifiers.



In brief

IRSA releases 94,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 94,400 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 63,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1431.14 feet and was 33.14 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 23,800 cusecs while outflow as 7,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1106.00 feet, 56.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 24,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 27,300, 32,900, 39,900 and 13,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 28,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 10,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Death anniversary of Sabri marked

ISLAMABAD (APP): The death anniversary of renowned Qawwal Ghulam Farid Sabri marked on Wednesday (April 5). Ghulam Farid Sabri along with his brother Maqbool Sabri were known as Sabri Brothers and earned much fame in Qawwali, a private news channel reported. "Mera Koi Nahin Hai Tere Siwa", "Bhardo Jholi Meri Ya Muhammad" and "Tajdar-e-Haram" are some of their most acclaimed qawwalis. He was born in 1930 in Rohtak, India and died on this day in 1994 in Karachi.

Police returns lost phone to owner

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Motorway Police on Wednesday found a lost mobile phone worth Rs 45,000 and returned it back to the owner. According to Spokesperson Motorway Police, a man named Mohsin sought help from the Motorway Police near Burhan, and said that he had forgotten his mobile while changing the tire of his car. To which the nearest police mobile was informed. They reached the spot and found the mobile phone and it was handed over to the owner.

Police arrest 12 for possessing weapons

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi Amir Khan Niazi conducted raids in different areas and netted 12 accused for possessing illegal weapons. According to a police spokesman, Waris Khan, Naseerabad, R.A.Bazar, Civil Lines, Airport, Wah Cantt, Saddar Wah, Saddar Baroni and Dhamial police rounded up 12 namely Faisal, Irfan, Afaq, Adil, Ihtesham, Anas, Majid, Rafi, Sajid, Abdul Wahab, Kamran, and Amir Shehzad and recovered 10 pistols 30 bores, a 30 bore rifle and ammunition from their possession. The spokesman informed that Rawalpindi district police in their ongoing operation against professional beggars also arrested 39. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process. The SSP said that strict action by the law was being taken against the lawbreakers and operations against aerial firing and illegal weapon holders would continue.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique chairing meeting at Ministry of Railways.

Govt. provided free flour to deserving families despite economic challenges: Abbasi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Wednesday informed the National Assembly that despite facing difficult economic challenges, the incumbent government provided free flour to deserving families under the Ramadan Package.

Responding to a calling attention notice regarding incidents of loss of precious human lives during flour distribution in the country, he said the government, in line with directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, was making all-out efforts to execute the initiative of free flour distribution without hurting the self-respect of any citizen.

Abbasi said that the prime minister himself visited the flour distribution

points established across the country to review the arrangements made by the government to alleviate the financial sufferings of the common man. "The government is taking all possible measures to reduce the difficulties of poor people during the holy month of Ramadan," he added. Abbasi said the government was well aware of the difficulties being faced by the masses due to high inflation and fully determined to provide maximum relief to them through various initiatives. Commenting on the price-checking mechanism in the federal capital, he said the district administration was regularly checking the price across the city. "No one will be allowed to overcharge," he assured.

Member of National Assembly Aliya Kamran complained that people of the country were facing high inflation and there was no mechanism to check the overpricing.

She asked the government to take steps to overcome the difficulties being faced by the people in Ramadan.

Whereas, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Sardar Ayaz Sadiq suggested snap-checking by the district administration to check the price of edible items in the month of Ramadan.

The minister noted that it was an international practice to decrease the prices of edible items before any festival, but it was unfortunate in Pakistan some elements remained indulged in making an extra buck.

PAC directs authorities to conduct DAC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to conduct the Departmental Accounts Committees (DAC) of their respective institutions, departments and divisions.

The meeting, chaired by PAC Chairman Noor Alam Khan, directed the relevant authorities to promptly carry out the DAC of institutions for smooth functioning and ensure transparency to streamline the system. He said that a letter had already been written to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to direct the institutions and divisions to conduct the DAC at departmental levels.

The country was confronting economic woes and it was foremost responsibility of every individual to contribute their services for the welfare and prosperity of the country and masses, he added.

The PAC had shown dismay over not conducting the DAC by the departments and divisions. The PAC was also revealing the corruption scandals and alleged irregularities in various departments, Noor Alam Khan said. The PAC meeting was attended by MNAs Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, Chaudhry Muhammad Barjees Tahir, Shahida Ali Akhtar and Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed.

Robber killed in police encounter

RAWALPINDI (APP): A robber was shot killed in New Town area when four unknown armed robbers, riding bikes, opened indiscriminate firing on a police party, informed police spokesman.

Police have also recovered weapons, 2 motorcycles from their possessions. According to police, the gang has been recorded in cases of snatching vehicles, motorcycles and also wanted police in terrorism and firing on the police in the twin cities.

The gang is also recorded in the cases of killings and injuring citizens during the robbery. The senior officers of the police reached the spot along with the police force on the information of the incident. The evidence has been collected from the scene while police teams are searching in the area to arrest 03 escaped robbers.

NA Speaker, Deputy condemn attacks on worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque, India

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaz Ashraf and Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani on Wednesday strongly condemned the recent attacks on Muslim worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque by the Israeli forces and the attack on Muslim worshippers in eight Indian states by extremist Hindus.

They expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people and the Muslim community in India. The attacks were a serious violation of basic human rights, they said in a joint statement.

The Speaker and Deputy Speaker expressed their concern over the brutal attack on Muslim worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque during the holy month of Ramadan and urged the Organization of

Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to take immediate notice of the atrocities.

They also called upon international human rights organizations to take action against the violations of human rights against Muslims in Al-Aqsa Mosque and Indian states.

"The Parliament and the people of Pakistan pray for the speedy recovery of those injured as a result of the attack by Israeli forces in Al-Aqsa Mosque and condemn the attack on Muslim worshippers in India," they added. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker called on the international community to break their silence on the violence and atrocities committed against Muslims in Al-Aqsa Mosque and Indian states and take urgent action to address the issue.

Senate chairman, Qatari envoy discuss strengthening of bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Qatar's Ambassador Saoud bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani on Wednesday called on Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, and discussed the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries and exploring new avenues for cooperation in various fields of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the Senate chairman acknowledged the significant role played by Qatar in promoting peace and stability in the region.

He expressed Pakistan's readiness to strengthen its relations with Qatar and assured the ambassador of his full support in promoting bilateral cooperation in all fields, said a news release.

The Qatari envoy delivered a letter of appreciation to the Senate chairman, expressing gratitude on behalf of Hassan bin Abdulla Al-Ghanim, Speaker of the Shura Council of the State of Qatar, for the Senate's unanimous resolution congratulating Qatar and its leadership on its historic achievement of hosting the FIFA World Cup 2022, the largest and most renowned global sporting

event ever hosted by a Muslim country.

Ambassador Al-Thani said his country was keen to further enhance collaboration with Pakistan in the areas of trade, investment, energy, and culture.

He emphasized the importance of expanding people-to-people contacts and deepening cooperation in the education and tourism sectors. The meeting was held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere, reflecting the strong ties between Qatar and Pakistan. Both sides expressed their commitment to further deepen and diversify their bilateral relations in the years ahead.

Commissioner visits Divisional Public School to review SSC exams arrangements

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta here on Wednesday visited Divisional Public School, center of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) annual examination and reviewed the arrangements made by Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Rawalpindi.

The Commissioner visited various examination halls and rooms and inspected the arrangements and the exams holding process. The Commissioner also checked attendance sheets of the students and their roll number slips.

"Transparent examination is the first responsibility of all of us," he said adding, there would be no compromise on the transparency of the examination system.

Deputy Commissioners, Additional

Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners of all the districts were monitoring all the examination centers on daily basis, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta informed. Strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against the cheating mafia and no one would be allowed to violate the rules, he said and informed that separate raiding teams had been formed to make the monitoring system more effective.

He directed the monitoring teams to perform their professional duties without any discrimination.

He informed that sealed question paper envelopes are opened in front of CCTV cameras.

Security personnel had also been deployed outside each examination centre, the Commissioner added.

Imran Khan distracting public; damaging democratic system of country: Javed Latif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister Mian Javed Latif Wednesday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan was trying to damage the democratic system of the country as his main moto was to distract the public from the right path.

Talking to a private news channel he said, Imran Khan had given a protest

call so that the system could be brought to a standstill, adding that the law enforcement departments would intervene to prevent any violation in that regard.

No one would be allowed to disrupt peace and security in the country, he warned.

In reply to a question about talks with the PTI, he said Imran Khan was not

willing to hold dialogue with the coalition government. He categorically stated that the country's economic and security situation didn't render any plausible justification to hold elections at this point in time. He said all the coalition partners including Pakistan Peoples Party had agreed unanimously to hold elections in October.

RDA to hold public hearing for Peri-Urban Structure Plan on April 10

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) would hold a public hearing for the finalization of the Peri-Urban Structure Plan and Site Development Zone on April 10 in the office of Assistant Commissioner Gujar Khan. According to the RDA spokesman, Assistant Commissioner Gujar Khan, Mott McDonald Pakistan Company's team, Deputy Director of District Office Environment, the Deputy Director of Agriculture Department, the Director of Admin and Finance RDA and the Deputy Director Planning RDA would participate in the public hearing.

He said that RDA on the directives of the Director General Muhammad Saif

Anwar Jappa had completed and uploaded on the RDA's official website www.rda.gov.pk, the proposed Peri-Urban Structure Plan of the four tehsils of Rawalpindi, Gujar Khan, Kallar Syedan, Taxila and Kahuta.

He further said the general public was requested that if there were any objections or suggestions related to the plan, they could be submitted to the offices of Director Metropolitan Planning Muhammad Tahir Meo and Assistant Commissioners so that the objections and suggestions could be incorporated into it. The citizens in case of any query could also contact the Director of Metropolitan Planning during office hours at 5554043-051, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain with Parliamentary Secretary for Education, Professional Training Ms. Zeb Jaffar giving shield to participant during the closing ceremony competitions on "Inter-Board Declamation Contest".

4 injured in roof-collapse

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Four members of a family have been injured as a result of roof-collapse in the Spinghar district of eastern Nangarhar province. The incident took place in Sarkhabzhay area of the district which resulted in the injury of four members of the family, media office of the governor house said in a statement. The injured were evacuated to the hospital on timely manner and two of them shifted to the Jalalabad public hospital for better treatment.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Ramazan 15, 1444 — Thursday, April 06, 2023

Floods leave one dead

SAMANGAN (Agencies): Local officials in Samangan province say a woman died in flash floods in the province. Samangan Information and Culture Director Mawlawi Firozuddin Munib said the victim's name was Bibi Fatima, and that she drowned in the flood waters. According to sources, the flood waters raged through Kokjar village of Hazrat Sultan district in Samangan after heavy rain. More than 20 shops and hundreds of acres of agricultural land were destroyed.

Withdrawal ceiling increases in private banks

KABUL (TOLONews): The Central Bank on Tuesday announced an increase in the withdrawal ceiling in private banks from 30,000 Afs in the past to 50,000 Afs per week.

"The leadership of the Central Bank decided to provide facilities in commercial banks and commercial banks and foreign banks agencies should obey the order," said Hasib Noori, spokesman of the Central Bank. Some customers of private banks said that so far, the banks have not implemented the decision.

"I went to a bank and was told that the decision has not been implemented so far," said Enaytullah, a Kabul resident.

"After hearing yesterday's announcement of the Central Bank, I went to a private bank and they told me that they have not

received any statement," said Sanjar Ahmadzai, a Kabul resident.

The Chamber of Industry and Mines said that restrictions on baking have created economic challenges for investors.

"Relevant institutions, especially the Central Bank of Afghanistan, should bring the country's banking system to a normal state as soon as possible by formulating new policies," said Mohammad Karim Azimi, head of the Kabul Chamber of Industries and Mines.

"It's a good step and we call on the Central Bank's leadership and the Finance Ministry to provide more facilities for investors," said Omid Haidari, an investor. Currently, investors cannot send money abroad due to ongoing restrictions on the country's banking system.

Chicken meat, eggs import banned

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of the Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock of the country announced banned the imports of chicken meat and eggs out to the freezers to the country.

At the request of the country's poultry union the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and Livestock announced banned the imports of chicken meat adding that no one is allowed to carry more than 2kgs of chicken meat from outside the country, eggs out of the freezers is not allowed to be imported to the country, said a statement.

Meanwhile, the producers of chicken seeds, eggs and chicken meat were promised not to increase the prices of chicken seeds and chicken meat, which are currently set in the market, for the next three months.

Ex-US Special Envoy denounces Taliban ban on UN's female staff

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Taliban's latest ban on Afghan female staffers from working in United Nations offices in Afghanistan was condemned by US special envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, who said that the Taliban leaders committed to respecting women's rights to education and work in the "public and private" sectors during Doha negotiations.

Khalilzad said that any decision to ban women from working in UN offices is "wrong" and will increase the suffering of the Afghan people.

"The Taliban's decision to ban Afghan female staffers from working in #UN offices in Afghanistan is wrong. It will likely increase the suffering of the people as it will likely lead to reduced international assistance," Khlilzad said in a tweet.

On the other hand, the suppressive policy will undermine the international dealings with the Taliban authorities and detriment the national interests of

Afghanistan. At the same time, the rights to education and work are recognized in Islam and international conventions.

"This decision will necessarily complicate international dealings with the Taliban to the detriment of Afghanistan's interests. Afghan women have inalienable rights to education and work. These rights are recognized in Islam and international conventions," he added.

He also claimed that the Taliban leaders have committed to respecting women's rights to education and work in public and private sectors during the Doha negotiations; hence the Taliban authorities must fulfil their commitment according to the agreement.

"The Taliban leaders committed to honour these rights in public and private meetings in Doha. They should follow through on their commitments for the Afghan people," he tweeted.

This comes after the announcement by UNAMA that the Taliban authorities banned its female staffers



in the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan on Tuesday. Meanwhile, the UN expressed its concern and warned the Afghan authorities that the life-saving aid to the needy people would be disrupted without female staff.

The UN Secretary-General Guterres also called on the Taliban-led government to reverse the

women working with UN offices ban.

On the other hand, the Special Rapporteur for Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, in a separate tweet, slammed the decision to ban Afghan women UN staff from working, called it against the UN charter, and warned that it would seriously impact essential services for

Afghan people.

Bennett also asked the de facto authorities to reverse the decision immediately.

However, the Afghan interim regime has increased its impressive policy and restricted women from attending schools and universities, working in private and public sectors and public space.

UN condemns latest ban on women's employment

KABUL (Khaama Press): The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres strongly condemned the ban on Afghan females working with the UN in Nangarhar province on Wednesday.

"I strongly condemn the prohibition of our Afghan female colleagues from working in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province," Antonio Guterres said in a tweet.

He stressed that the prohibition on female workers would undermine the ability to deliver life-saving aid to the most needy people of Afghanistan, including women and children.

"If this measure is not reversed, it will inevitably undermine our ability to deliver life-saving aid to the people who need it," he added.

Earlier, the UN condemned prohibiting female workers from working and said the organization could not operate without its female staff.

"We remind de facto authorities that United



Nations entities cannot operate and deliver life-saving assistance without female staff," UNAMA said on Twitter.

On the other hand, UN officials asked the Taliban authorities to clarify a ban that prevents its female staff from working in the eastern province of Nangarhar.

"Our colleagues on the ground at the UN mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) received word of an order by the de facto authorities that bans female national

staff members of the UN from working," said a spokesperson for the UN secretary general, Stephane Dujarric.

He added, "We expect to have more meetings with the de facto authorities in Kabul, seeking clarity."

However, despite massive criticism by domestic and international organisations, the de facto authorities have increased the impressive policy on women's education and work.

Russian ready to cooperate with MoI

KABUL (Agencies): The Russian Federal Drug Control Service is ready to cooperate with the Ministry of Interior's counter-Narcotics Department.

The Deputy Interior Minister, Mullah Abdulhaq Akhund, met with Oleg Naumov representative of the Russian Federation's Counter-Narcotics Department, according to the Ministry's statement.

In this meeting, the deputy of the counter-narcotic shared details on the operations of the department with the representative of Russia.

The Russian representative of Federal service of control of drugs praised the efforts of the Islamic Emirate in the fight against narcotics and promised cooperation from the relevant department.

Water reserves dropped to 69b cubic meters

KABUL (Agencies): Afghanistan's water reserves, which were estimated at 75 billion cubic meters in the past, have now dropped to 69 billion cubic meters, the Ministry of Water and Energy said.

Ministry officials emphasized that they have many plans for the future and in the past year, in cooperation with foreign organizations, they have implemented 360 projects in the country, which include the construction of dams, canals and other water projects.

"Afghanistan's annual amount of water was estimated at 75 billion cubic meters. Due to climate changes that have negative effects on water resources, this figure has decreased to 69 billion cubic meters. We want surface and underground water to be properly managed," Mujib-ur-Rahman Omarzada, deputy minister of water and energy, said in a press conference in Kabul.

Officials also said they are committed to securing Iran's rights in accordance with the 1973 agreement, and whenever neighboring countries raise concerns about rights, they are ready to discuss the issue taking international laws into consideration. They added that they have more than 400 projects to manage the country's waters and want to increase the amount of electricity production inside the country.

"Our focus is that we can complete the 500 kV power transmission project next year and facilitate the transfer of 1,000 megawatts of electricity from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan at a low rate," Farhad Mahmoudi, head of programs of the Ministry of Water and Energy, said.

Discrimination has no place in Islamic Emirate system: Kabir

KABUL (Agencies): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, in a meeting with a number of elders and members of the Baloch Council of Afghanistan, said that discrimination and bigotry have been curb and Afghans enjoy equal rights.

The head of Baloch council, Sardar Ghulam Nabi, on behalf of their council asked the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, to address the problems of Baloch community in different sectors, mainly in the sector of



education and health.

They said that in the administration, some powerful armed people in the north of the country have usurped the lands and properties of the Baloch people, which should be delivered back to them.

For his part, Mawlawi Kabir called Afghanistan the common home of all Afghans, said that there is no place for discrimination and bigotry in the Islamic Emirate and Afghans enjoy equal rights.

The Islamic Emirate of

Afghanistan is committed to balanced development and will be rebuilt in the Baloch areas like other provinces and urgent measures will be taken to address the problems of the Baloch community in the country, he added.

57000 civilians killed, injured by landmines in Afghanistan: UN

KABUL (Khaama Press): Since 1989, about 57000 Afghan civilians, have been recorded to have been killed or injured by landmines and explosive remnants of war, according to the United National Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

On the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, the UN said in a series of tweets that mine action partners have removed over 19 million unexploded devices from the country.

"Today, on International Day for Mine Awareness & Assistance in Mine Action, we remember the lives lost and forever changed by explosive contamination. Since 1989, almost 57K Afghan civilians have been killed or injured by landmines & explosive remnants of war & mine action partners in Afghanistan have cleared over 19M items."

Moreover, the organization stressed that "more than 4,150 identified hazards remain, posing a lethal threat to communities, particularly children in Afghanistan," OCHA added.

According to earlier studies, the United Nations



estimates that 150 people are killed by land mines in Afghanistan every month. Eight out of every ten victims are children who unintentionally pick up an unexploded bomb that resembles a toy.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for broader global efforts to safeguard people from mines. "For the millions living amidst the chaos of armed conflicts, especially women and children,

every step can put them in danger's path," he said.

"Even after the fighting stops, conflicts often leave behind a terrifying legacy: landmines and explosive ordnance that litter communities," he said. "Peace brings no assurance of safety when roads and fields are mined, unexploded ordnance threatens the return of displaced populations, and when children find and play with shiny objects that explode."

Guterres added, "I urge Member States to ratify and fully implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons."

Due to decades of conflict, Afghanistan is covered in land mines and other explosive remnants of war. As a result, the country is currently among the most mines-contaminated in the world.

All ex-admn generals could live a safe life in country

KABUL (Agencies): The Chief of Army of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, in a meeting with some generals of the Ex-government, assured them that they can live a safe life with their families in the country.

The Chief of Army, Qari Fasihuddin Fitrat met with a number of generals

and officers of ex-administration at the Ministry's headquarters, said a statement.

General Afzal "Aman", the former deputy of the Ministry of National Defense on behalf of others, shared the challenges and problems of the officers of the ex-administration with the Chief of

Army, and at the same time committed that they are ready to cooperate with the Islamic Emirate.

Praising the patriotism of Ex-generals, Qari Fitrat said that the arms of the Islamic system are open to all our dear people and everyone can live a safe life in the country with full confidence.

MTN pledge to increase investment in country



KABUL (Agencies): The general director of MTN Company in a meeting with Dr. Abdul Wasea head of the Prime Minister office said that the company is ready to increase investment in Afghanistan.

The head of Prime Minister Office, Dr. Abdul Wasea, met with Ebad Reda, the General Director of MTN Company in

Afghanistan. The MTN General Director reminded saying that the company revenue is increased unprecedentedly after the rule of Islamic Emirate in the country.

He shared details about the development plan of MTN Company and said that this company will develop more in Afghanistan.

For his part Dr. Abdul Wasea said that the Islamic Emirate supports any type of positive and active investment in the country and foreign investors should take advantage of this opportunity.

He reminded that commercial companies should reflect the realities of Afghanistan and give a positive image of Afghanistan.

UNAMA head, UNESCO representative visits Bamyan

BAMYAN (Agencies): The Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN for Afghanistan and the head of UNAMA, representative of the UNESCO and educational and cultural officials of the organization met with governor of Bamyan during their trip to the province.

In this meeting, they discussed issues related to security, education, women's and human rights.

Mawlawi Abdullah Sarhadhi, the governor of Bamyan sought support of UNAMA in distribution of humanitarian aid and large and implementation of vital

projects in the field of agriculture and livestock in Bamyan province.

Meanwhile, Patricia McPhillips, the representa-

tive of UNESCO in Afghanistan, said: UNESCO in Bamyan province, while continuing its activities in the field of

vital literacy, will soon start the work of consolidating the Buddha area and the city of Ghulghula in the province.



No shortage of sugar in country: NA informed

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The National Assembly was informed on Wednesday that there is no shortage of sugar in the country despite its export.

Speaking at the Floor of the House, Minister for Commerce Naveed Qamar said we have exported 170 million metric tons of sugar to Afghanistan, Central Asian States and other countries and we have the capacity for its further export. Minister of State for Finance Aisha Ghaus Pasha regretted that the previous government did not fulfill the understanding and commitments, reached with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). She was confident that the staff level agreement would be reached with the international lender.

The Minister of State pointed out that Pakistan had already met the prior actions and now the IMF wanted us to fulfill the external funding requirements before the release of the next tranche. She informed the House that China had recently rolled over a loan while there was also progress for securing support from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

On a point raised by a member, the Chair asked the Standing Committee on Finance to seek reports from all the departments regarding the implementation of minimum wage of twenty-five thousand rupees. The National Assembly also passed the Kalam Bibi International Women Institute, Bannu bill, 2023. It was moved by Parliamentary Secretary for Education Zeb Jaffer. Minister of State for Law Shahadat Awan laid before the House the National Accountability Amendment Bill 2023.

Minister for Religious Affairs Mufti Abdul Shakoor expressed his disappointment over the Supreme Court's decision in the election related case. He said the Chief Justice of Pakistan should also respect other institutions. Minister for Information Technology Aminul Haque said that justice has not been delivered in the Supreme Court's decision in the election case. He said the next elections should be held after

the digital census and delimitations of constituencies.

Leader of Opposition Raja Riaz said PTI Chairman Imran Khan, during his term as the Prime Minister, patronized the corrupt elements and destroyed the country's institutions. He said there was a greater demand for the formation of a full court of the Supreme Court to hear the election case but this was not given ear to. Taking the floor, Minister for Power Khurram Dastagir said the Supreme Court of Pakistan should serve the interests of the people and preserve and defend the constitution of Pakistan.

He said the situation warrants that the apex court brings transparency in its matters and structure its exercise of authority which he said is nowhere to be seen in the recent judgments. The Minister expressed satisfaction that there was consensus within the parliament for the protection of the constitution. He said we do not want confrontation but will have to preserve our rights. He said it is also written in the constitution that the next elections should be held after the census.

Khurram Dastagir said the 2023 elections should be held simultaneously in a free, fair and transparent manner without any interference. Hashim Notezi of BNP in his remarks said that elections of the National Assembly and the four Provincial Assemblies should be held simultaneously saying this is important for stability in the country. Aslam Bhootani said other institutions should also respect the parliament. Abdul Akbar Chitrali said the Chief Justice of Pakistan should take suo motu notice after consultation with the full bench.

Naz Baloch said being workers of the PPP, we respect the judiciary. She, however, said had the election case been decided by a full court, it would have been accepted by all in the parliament. Syed Mehmood Shah said the apex court should deliver judgments through collective wisdom saying it is also important for the institution's own dignity.

Imposing martial law illegal: Imran

LAHORE (INP): Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan on Wednesday said the threats of martial law are unconstitutional and added that the days of invoking martial law are over now.

In an interview with DW Urdu, Imran Khan termed threats of imposition of martial law in Pakistan unconstitutional. Khan said that if the Supreme Court's decision is not accepted, it means that the law in Pakistan is over and we are moving toward the law of the jungle?

The PTI chairman said that if the elected government did not have the authority and that authority was elsewhere then no administrative system could work. Khan said that the economy would not be able to recover without political stability through elections. The ruling coalition was seeing their defeat in elections.

PTI chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan also added that Pakistan would have to undergo surgery to recover and 'big' decisions are the need of the hour. "The mandate for 'big' decisions will only come through elections." Earlier on Tuesday evening, the former premier said that the Sharif family would not accept an independent judiciary. While addressing PTI workers and supporters via video link, Khan said that the rulers think that PTI would be weakened by October and later they will go for elections. He added that PTI would never weaken in October.

ATC grants bail to Fawad, Hammad

LAHORE (PPI): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday granted interim bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders Fawad Chaudhry and Hammad Azhar in a case pertaining to violence against police and vandalism.

As per details, the anti-terrorism court ordered the PTI leaders to include themselves in the investigation. The court also summoned record from the Investigation officer on next hearing. The interim bail of PTI leaders Fawad Chaudhry and Hammad Azhar was granted till April 13 against the surety bonds worth Rs 1 lac each. The PTI counsel Babar Awan told the court that he is filing new bail pleas in the court, at this the judge said once the court hear the old pleas then the new bail pleas will be filed.

Earlier, the Islamabad police registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan and other party leaders for attacking, vandalizing, and damaging the judicial complex during former premier's appearance. According to the FIR, the leaders of a "political party" were leading the mob, adding that they provoked the people, which led to vandalism.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Islamabad police had registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan and other party leaders for attacking, vandalizing, and damaging the judicial complex during former premier's appearance. According to the FIR, the leaders of a "political party" were leading the mob, adding that they provoked the people, which led to vandalism. An attempt was made to attack the Federal Judicial Complex and the Islamabad High Court (IHC) under a plan, it said.

Balloting for hajj scheme postponed

ISLAMABAD (INP): The balloting for government Hajj Scheme has been postponed which was scheduled for Wednesday. According to a spokesperson of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, new date for balloting will be announced later.

Earlier, the federal government decided to extend the date for receiving applications under the regular Hajj scheme till Sunday while the date for sponsorship Hajj scheme was extended till April 9th. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs spokesperson, the decision to this effect was taken keeping in view the difficulties confronted by overseas Pakistanis in sending their remittances.



JERUSALEM: Israeli border police detain a woman at the Al-Aqsa compound during clashes with Palestinians.

Free food distribution KP CM takes notice of irregularities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan has taken notice of alleged illegal gratification taken from deserving families by distributors in some parts of the province for provision of free wheat flour under the Ramzan Relief Package and decided to assign special tasks to Special Branch to keep vigilant eyes on the distribution of free of cost wheat flour to the deserving households across the province.

He was chairing a high level meeting to review progress on the distribution of free wheat flour amongst the deserving families of the province under Ramzan Relief Package here on Wednesday.

The meeting reviewed in detail progress so far made on the subject matter, matters related to carry out the distribution process in a more organized manner; and other related issues. Besides Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry the meeting was attended by concerned administrative secretaries, high ups of police, commissioner Peshawar Division and other relevant quarters.

The chief minister

directed the intelligence agency to strictly monitor the distribution process at distribution points throughout the province, and report such mal-practice to the concerned district administration further directing the concerned authorities to take quick action on such reports of special branch, lodge FIRs against those involved, arrest them immediately, and give them exemplary punishment. He made it clear to all that free of cost wheat-flour was meant for the deserving households and directed the concerned quarters to make sure that only deserving families get the free of cost wheat-flour.

He further directed the relevant quarters for necessary measures to ensure the pre-determined quality of the free flour being provided to the deserving families adding that inspectors of Food department should be assigned duties to regularly visit the flour mills to have a check on the quality of flour so that action could be taken against the mill owners supplying sub-standard flour.

Expressing concern on some unpleasant incidents as a result of mismanagement during the distribution of free flour, Azam Khan directed the authori-

ties concerned for necessary steps to carryout the distribution process in a well-planned and organized manner; and to make sure that such incidents do not happen again. Moreover, the Chief Minister ordered inquiry into the incident that occurred at Sports Complex Hayatabad, Peshawar during free flour distribution the other day causing damages to the building of the Sports Complex so that responsibility of the same could be fixed.

Briefing the meeting about the progress so far made on the distribution of free flour, it was informed that so far 57 per cent of the targeted population had been provided a free flour package of three bags 10 KG each, and the set target would be achieved before the end of Ramzan. It was further informed that distribution points for purpose had been increased to double which has resulted in considerable decrease in the number of unpleasant incidents during the distribution process. The forum was told that the public complaints with regard to the distribution of free flour were taken proper care, and actions on genuine complaints are taken well in time.

Stoppage of salaries to 1109 SMIs proposed

PESHAWAR (APP): The Department of Information and Public Relations Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has asked Finance Department to stop the payment of salaries to 1109 Social Media Influencers (SMIs) recruited during the previous PTI government for its publicity at the expenses of the public exchequer, said a dispatch sent by the former to the latter here on Wednesday.

In a letter signed by the Planning Officer of the Information and Public Relations Department to Secretary Finance states that after the dissolution of provincial assembly and setup of interim government in the province, whose constitutional responsibility is to hold free, fair and impartial election the subject project titled 'Establishment of Social Media Participatory Platforms for Public Awareness & Feedback Regarding Reforms Initiatives and Encouraging Civil Responsibility' has lost its relevance.

Secondly, the Election Commission has also banned new projects and recruitments etc, therefore, the interim government is not mandated by law, rules and regulations to carry out the project objectives and thus the continuation of the project is the wastage of resources of the public exchequer.

Ambassador of Iran calls on Air Chief

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E Mr Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office today. The meeting was focused on areas of mutual interest and regional developments.

During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff shared broad contours of PAF's modernization plan which includes smart acquisitions from allied countries, upgradation of infrastructure and revamping of training. The Air Chief reiterated his unwavering commitment to enhancing the existing bilateral ties in military-to-military cooperation and the training domain. He also emphasized that Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic and defence relationship with Iran which is based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace, security and stability.

The Iranian Ambassador lauded the exceptional progress made by Pakistan Air Force through indigenization and expressed his admiration for the professionalism of PAF personnel. He pledged to play his role in further improving the existing bilateral military ties in various fields of training, emerging technologies and mutual cooperation in the aviation industry.

The meeting between Chief of the Air Staff and Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran is a testament to the deep-rooted friendship and unwavering commitment between the two nations to work towards a peaceful and stable region.

President calls for creating specific jobs for disables

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday called for the creation of specific jobs for differently-abled people (DAPs) to make them financially independent. He emphasized that DAPs needed to be trained and well-equipped with specific skill sets to make them useful and productive citizens of the country.

The president gave these remarks during a meeting with the Vice Chairman of Pakistan Foundation Fighting Blindness (PFFB), Dr Anis-ur-Rehman, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. During the meeting, the President said that society should not neglect DAPs, adding that it was the collective responsibility of the public

and private sectors to encourage and support persons with disabilities.

Dr Anis-ur-Rehman apprised the President about the steps taken by PFFB for the welfare of the visually-impaired persons in Pakistan. He said that his organization had transformed the lives of more than 50,000 visually-impaired students and persons at the national level, during the last ten years, through educational services, capacity-building trainings, awareness campaigns, career counselling, and Assistive Technology. He highlighted that the major challenge being faced by the visually-impaired children was the lack of hostel facilities, particularly for the visual-

ly-impaired girls in Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Balochistan.

The meeting was also informed that another major issue being faced by the visually-impaired students was the non-availability of writers to help them during examinations as these students were unable to write themselves. The President underscored that it was the responsibility of the Government and the private sectors to help address the issues being faced by the visually-impaired people. He also stressed the need for raising awareness about the rights and issues of persons with disabilities to bring positive behavioural change towards them.

SC hints at forming judicial commission in Arshad case

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday hinted at forming a judicial commission in the murder of senior journalist Arshad Sharif. As per details, the Supreme Court has issued the written verdict of last hearing of the Arshad Sharif murder sou motu case. The written verdict stated if the court is not satisfied with the investigation, then a judicial commission will be constituted.

The counsel of Arshad Sharif's family Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui has raised objections to the court proceedings, he said that the Supreme Court can monitor and investigate matter cases related to basic rights but

cannot monitor the investigation of JIT. The court said that Attorney General informed the court about the bilateral cooperation from the Kenyan side but they did not respond on the legal cooperation with the Pakistani officials. The written verdict further stated that the court has granted three more weeks to JIT to conduct the investigation abroad.

Supreme Court can constitute a judicial commission, as the murder of prominent journalist Arshad Sharif is a matter of basic human rights as well. Furthermore, the court has received more than 5000 letters for the investigation of the Arshad Sharif Murder case. The case will

now resume in the month of April. Earlier, the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) regretted over no-progress in the Arshad Sharif murder case. CJP said the SC took suo moto notice of the matter after five weeks. "We are not supervising the probe, but facilitating the probe."

The JIT was not being provided with funds for Kenya, and UAE visits to probe, the government released the funds on SC's intervention, the CJP added. It is pertinent to mention here that the senior journalist and former ARY News anchor, was killed in the Kenyan capital Nairobi on October 23 where he was living in self-exile.

PTI moves LHC against JIT in rioting cases

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has moved the Lahore High Court (LHC) against a joint investigation team (JIT) formed to investigate cases registered against its party leaders over alleged murder of Ali Bilal alias Zille Shah, attack on police officials and riots outside the Zaman Park residence of the party chief last month.

As many as 11 PTI leaders, including Imran Khan and Fawad Chaudhry, have filed a petition through their lawyers Sikandar Zulqarnain and Zafar Iqbal Mangan. They have made the Punjab government and Home Department respondents in the case. The PTI bigwigs argued that police registered ten baseless and fake cases against them, adding that the Punjab home secretary made the JIT on the directives of the provincial government.

They said they were totally unaware of details of the cases registered against them. They contended that they had evidence and witnesses in the case related to death of Zille Shah and pleaded the high court to void the notification regarding constitution of the investigation team. The development comes a day after the JIT summoned Imran Khan, Fawad Chaudhry, Musarrat Jamshed Cheema, Farrukh Habib, Mian Mehmoodur Rasheed, Mian Aslam Iqbal, Dr Yasmin Rashid and others to record their statements in the cases.

All the leaders were asked to appear before it on Wednesday at the Lahore CCPO office. Last time, no PTI leader, except Asad Umar, appeared before the JIT when they were called to record the statement. SSP

Imran Kishwar has been appointed convener of the six-member JIT whereas SP Aftab Phulawan is also part of it. Three members of the team belong to the Intelligence Bureau, the Inter-Services Intelligence and the Military Intelligence. The cases against the PTI leaders are registered at the Racecourse and Shadman police stations.

Imran not to appear before JIT probing: Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan has decided not to appear before the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) set up to investigate the cases against the PTI on Wednesday.

Instead, a lawyers' team will represent the former prime minister before the JIT which is investigating cases against PTI leaders for rioting and violence against police.