

Marriyum flays PTI Chief
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb while criticizing PTI Chief has said that Imran's lies and conspiracies have been exposed to the public and they will not come out for his support. In a tweet on Tuesday, she said Imran should be arrested for committing crime of foreign funding, Toshakhana theft and not revealing the identity of his daughter Tyrian White.



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NAB arrests Imran in Al-Qadir Trust case



ISLAMABAD: Rangers personnel arresting former prime minister Imran Khan at High Court, in corruption case of Al Qadir trust.

PM calls out PTI chief for maligning state institutions

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called out the politics of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan, saying his blatant lies were all about maligning army without proof, running a media campaign against martyred troops and using religion for political gains. "I have no doubt that your [Imran Khan's] politics is defined by blatant lies, untruths, U-turns, and vicious attacks on institutions," he said in a detailed tweet where he put counter-questions to Imran Khan against his earlier tweet. PM Sharif said Imran Khan while on a trial for corruption was claiming legitimacy to overturn the legal and political system. "Bending the judiciary to your whims and behaving as if rules don't apply to you," he said.

He pointed out that maligning Pakistan Army as an institution was a recurring pattern in Khan's politics after his ouster from power. "Did you not resort to constant mudslinging of the leadership of the army & intelligence agency much before the Wazirabad attack?," he questioned. The prime minister said the PTI chief refused the offer of cooperation from the federal government and boycotted the legal proceedings.

He said Imran Khan was never interested in finding

the truth about the attack but used the condemnable incident for petty political objectives. "What legal route did you adopt other than hurling threats & making baseless allegations almost on a daily basis?," he said. Sharif questioned at whose behest the savaging social media campaign against the martyrs of the armed forces launched after the helicopter crash. "Which party did the troll brigade belong to that mocked the martyrs, which was a new low and unimaginable in our politics and culture? With these subversive and treacherous acts on your part, do we need an enemy?," he said.

He said, "Who used religion for political purposes by describing the political agitation in religious terms, a cunning and self-serving attempt at exposing political opponents to violence at the hands of your supporters." He recalled that Khan's party leaders condoned, justified, and even celebrated the incident of harassment and intimidation of an official delegation including a female minister in the courtyard of Prophet's Mosque (Peace be upon Him) by disregarding all norms of reverence and devoutness. "As for your assertion of Pakistani becoming a 'jungle', I advise you not to go there, for the facts are often bitter and disastrous. Let us keep this for another day," he said.

NAB arrests Imran in Al-Qadir Trust case: Sanaullah

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan on Tuesday said the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had arrested former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

"NAB is an independent institution which is neither under the control of the government nor the latter tries to control it," he said while addressing a press conference. The minister categorically clarified that he did not meet the NAB chairman or any official and that the government had nothing to do with the arrest of Imran Khan as the Bureau had already issued several notices to the PTI chief in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

There were 'dozens' of other cases of corruption

registered against Imran Khan, which were under trial in courts, he added. The minister said in the Al-Qadir Trust case, about £190 million (approximately Rs 60 billion) of a "property tycoon" transferred through money laundering were caught in the United Kingdom. The UK government contacted the Pakistani authorities regarding the amount's return.

He said as per law, the amount belonged to the Pakistani nation and should have been deposited in the national exchequer. Instead (the then advisor to the prime minister) Shehzad Akbar acting as a frontman, got formed the Al-Qadir Trust under a deal executed by him, he claimed. The minister said some 458 kanal of land in Sohawa and another 240

(Continued on Back Page)

Karachi police arrest Ali Zaidi

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh chapter President Ali Zaidi was taken into custody by the Karachi police on Tuesday after protests erupted in the metropolis following the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan in Islamabad in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

Although the police haven't provided the reason behind the detention, a video of the arrest circulating on social media showed that police forced Zaidi into a white-coloured Toyota vehicle near the city's Kala Pul area. PTI's leadership has asked the workers to take to the streets against Khan's arrest and an "emergency committee" — which was formed in case of his arrest — is set to announce the next course of action.

Imran says he stands by his accusations

LAHORE (PPI): Reacting to the ISPR statement, former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan has said that respect should not be accorded to only one institution, it should also be accorded to an individual.

In a video message, he released on PTI Twitter handle before leaving to Islamabad on Tuesday, Imran said that he is the leader of the biggest political party of Pakistan and he too holds esteem.

The military on Monday warned the PTI chairman of legal action over "mala fide statements and propaganda" and advised him to "make a recourse to legal avenues" soon after Imran Khan once again accused a senior intelligence official of his involvement in the plot to assassinate the former prime minister. In its statement, the ISPR said: "Chairman PTI has levelled highly irresponsible and baseless allegations against a serving senior military officer without any evidence. These fabricated and malicious allegations are extremely unfortunate, deplorable and unacceptable. "We ask the political leader concerned to make a recourse to legal avenues and stop making false allegations. The institution reserves the right to take legal course of action against patently false and mala fide statements and propaganda." In his video message today, Imran Khan repeated his allegation that a senior military official tried to assassinate him twice. He claimed that whenever an investigation will be held, he would prove that the same military official (whom he dubbed Dirty Harry) along with his team was involved in the plot to eliminate him.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB)'s officials and Islamabad police on Tuesday arrested Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI)'s Chairman Imran Khan from Islamabad when he arrived from Lahore to appear before the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

As per the NAB sources, Chairman NAB had issued arrest warrants against Imran Khan in Al-Qadir Trust case on May 1. The Bureau had arrested former prime minister under section-9A, 34A, 18A and 24A of the NAB Ordinance 1999. Imran Khan was accused of corruption and corrupt practices. He would be produced before the relevant court for physical remand by the bureau, Inspector General of Islamabad Police Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said PTI chief had been arrested in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

In a tweet the IGP said that the situation of the federal capital was normal and as per the routine. Dr Nasir Akbar said that the Section 144 was already imposed in the federal capital and action would be taken in case of any violation. "No violence has been done against any

What next after Khan's arrest

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individual during the arrest of PTI chief," adding that the Police had created a cordon around the vehicle of Imran Khan to ensure his safety.

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said that Imran had failed to appear before the court despite being issued several notices. "The arrest has been conducted by the National Accountability Bureau for causing losses to the national treasury," he said on his social media handle, adding that Imran was not tortured. Earlier in morning Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said masses would not come out in support of Imran Khan if he was arrested.

Giving her reaction on Imran Khan's statement through her twitter handle, she said Imran would be arrested in connection with prohibited foreign funding case, Toshakhana gifts theft case and for not revealing his daughter. Many cases against Imran Khan were registered and he was guilty in all of them, she maintained. It may be mentioned here that PTI's chairman Imran Khan had arrived Islamabad to appear before the IHC in his interim bail cases in FIRs pertaining leveling allegations against the officers of a state institutions and vandalizing in judicial complex Islamabad. Meanwhile, the parliamentarians has denounced Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's alleged accusations against senior officers of the security institutions and termed his conduct as unprecedented in the country's history.

Talking to APP outside the Parliament House, Member National Assembly (MNA)

PTI chief held as per law: IHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court here on Tuesday ruled that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf' Chairman Imran Khan was arrested as per law. The National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) officials arrested the PTI chairman when he arrived in the Federal Capital from Lahore to appear before the IHC in connection with his bail petitions.

The NAB Chairman NAB had issued Imran Khan's arrest warrants in the Al-Qadir Trust case on May 1 under sections 9A, 34A, 18A and 24A of the NAB Ordinance 1999. Imran Khan was accused of corruption and corrupt practices. He would be produced before the relevant court for physical remand by the Bureau within 24 hours.

Earlier, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq took notice of the arrest of Imran Khan when he was doing his biometric verification before his court appearance, and summoned the Inspector General of Police Islamabad, Secretary Interior and Additional Attorney General to appear within 15 minutes. The IGP and the Additional Secretary Interior appeared before the court. Later, the court held a recess of 30 minutes and also summoned NAB Director General and Prosecutor General to answer in the arrest matter of Imran Khan. During the course

of the hearing, the chief justice asked whether anyone could be arrested from the court premises. The accused would have to be released if the court find any illegality in the arrest of the PTI chief. NAB Director General Rawalpindi Irfan Baig and Prosecutor General Sardar Muzafar Abbasi appeared before the bench following the court directives.

Justice Aamer Farooq asked what was the procedure for the execution of NAB warrants. Whether NAB adopted the same procedure in every case as the court's prime concern was whether the arrest was legal or not, he added. Sardar Abbasi said no accused could be arrested from the courtroom due to the respect of the court.

He said the Bureau had conducted the investigation of the Al-Qadir Trust case in detail. The inquiry was converted into an investigation as per the law on April 28 and then the NAB chairman issued arrest warrants for the PTI chief, he added. He said the accused did not appear before the NAB investigators at the inquiry stage. Imran Khan would be produced before the relevant court within 24 hours, he added.

The Additional Secretary Interior said the Rangers personnel were already on alert to arrest Imran Khan. The Inspector General of Police Islamabad said the execution of the arrest warrants was in

his knowledge. He said it would also be in the knowledge of the police if the deployment of Rangers was required. The Rangers personnel used to be deployed under the command of the police.

Imran Khan's lawyer Khawaja Haris said NAB should be asked when the inquiry was converted into an investigation, and it was necessary to inform the defence when it was converted. He said they were going to file an interim bail petition in the Al-Qadir Trust case. The NAB chairman could issue arrest warrants during the investigation of the case, he added.

Khawaja Haris said NAB had served one notice which was answered by his client. An accused could be arrested only when he did not respond to the NAB questions even after repeated notices. Additional Attorney General Munawar Dogal questioned whether the bar room and the parking area would also be considered court premises. Khawaja Haris adopted the stance that no one could be arrested from the court premises and access to justice was the basic right of his client. Naeem Panjutha Advocate prayed to the court to issue orders for the production of Imran Khan before the bench. The court subsequently reserved its judgement and later announced it declaring Imran Khan's arrest as per law.

Ramesh Lal of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) said the remarks of Imran Khan for sitting army officers were regrettable, whereas he had been disrespecting state institutions for the past one year and should be taken to task. MNA, Tahira Aurangzeb of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) said Imran Khan should respect the state institutions and should stop hurling concocted accusations against the institutions.

MNA, Qadir Khan Mandokhail of PPPP said the great sacrifices rendered by the armed forces of the country have been esteemed throughout the country's history. But Imran Khan, he said was reluctant and fighting to get his power back by reprimanding the national institutions. Mandokhail said Imran Khan should not be given more compensation for his baseless accusations and allegations against security institutions.

MNA Usama Qadri of Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) said the security institutions that are responsible for the protection of the country could not be ridiculed as it was similar to "enmity with the nation". He added that the PTI's criticism of security institutions was regrettable and jeopardizing national security. Qadri said Imran Khan's allegations had no precedent and were a breach of national security. MNA, Shakila Luqman of PML-N said it was very unfortunate that Imran Khan was using disrespectful language against the state institutions. She alleged that Imran Khan was perpetrating a false narrative based on his self-assumed allegations against the state institutions. MNA, Waheed Alam Khan of PML-N said the politicians and institutions should remain within their constitutional limits to avoid confrontation for smooth running of democracy.

Protests erupt after Khan's arrest

Ikram Ullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: The workers of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf on Tuesday staged protest demonstrations in different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa against arrest of party chairman Imran Khan. The protest rallies were staged across the country. Scores of activists of PTI held demonstrations in Peshawar, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Khyber, Bajaur, Buner, Nowshera, Mansehra, Mardan, Kurram and other areas of the province.

The protestors chanted slogans in favour of their leader Imran Khan and vowed to stand with him till their last breath. In Peshawar, PTI workers gathered outside the building of Peshawar Press Club. After demonstrating at the press club, they marched on different roads of the city. The protesters also blocked the busy Khyber Road outside Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, which resulted in suspension of vehicular traffic in the nearby areas. Long queues of vehicles were seen in the area.

In Mansehra, the PTI workers staged a demonstration in Shinkhari. "Today's protest has proved that nation stands by Imran Khan," the local leader said while addressing the charged workers of the party. He said that the PTI workers would continue their efforts till getting 'release of their leader'. He added they couldn't be discouraged with the excessive use of police force.

In Kohat, scores of PTI workers staged a demonstration at Kutichery Chowk. They chanted slogans in favour of Imran Khan. The protestors chanted slogans against the government. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers are holding countrywide protests as they await the announcement of a six-member committee for the next course of action following party chairman Imran Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

PTI workers also hold protests in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan and Mardan. In Karachi, demonstrators clashed with the police near Nursery. They threw stones at and set fire to police vehicles, tore down street lights and damaged a bus. There were reports that police fired teargas shells at the protesters. Police also fired teargas shells at protesters on Rawalpindi's Murree Road.

The PTI chairman was arrested as part of the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) investigation in the Al-Qadir Trust case ahead of his appearance before the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to seek bail in multiple FIRs registered against him. Rangers personnel driving a black Toyota Hilux Vigo shifted Imran Khan to NAB's Rawalpindi office.

In a statement, PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi said a meeting of the central leadership and members of the emergency committee formed by the party chief has been convened to mull future course of action in view of the arrest. The future course of action will be announced after assessing the situation, he added. PTI leaders Saifullah Niazi, Azam Swati, Ijaz Chaudhary, Murad Saeed, Ali Amin, and Qureshi are part of the emergency commit-



LAHORE: A PTI worker throwing stone on police personal, against the arrest of Imran Khan at Mall Road.

tee. Qureshi also condemned the "attack" on the IHC and the alleged torture of the party chief during the arrest. He slammed the law enforcers for taking Khan into custody during biometric verification and storming the court. The senior party leader said the IHC chief justice has taken notice of the arrest and added that the party would continue to fight a legal and political war with full determination.

Activists of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf here on Tuesday held protest demonstration in College Square against the arrest of PTI chairman Imran Khan who was taken into custody in relation to the Al-Qadir Trust case. The protesting workers were led by ex-PTI lawmakers including Mujahid Khan, Iftikhar Ali Mashwani, Malik Shaukat, and Abdus Salam Afridi. The protesters burnt tyres and were chanting slogans against government for arrest their party chief.

Addressing on the occasion, the PTI leaders vowed that they would continue their protest till release of the party chairman Imran Khan. However, the protesters dispersed peacefully from college chowk after the party leaders delivered their addresses.

Later, some PTI workers moved towards the Punjab Regiment Center's entrance located on Mardan-Malakand road and broke statues installed in middle of the road in front of the PRC gate. They also hurled stones on the entrance gate. However, a big contingent of police personnel rushed to the spot and disperse the violent protesters by carrying out shelling over them. Besides, sounds of areal firing were also heard from the surrounding areas.

The Imran Khan arrest news spread like forest fire that triggered protest demonstrations on roads across the district and the leaders ship with tigers came on roads and almost all of main squares and roads blocked. The major demonstration was held at district headquarter

Daggar where in front of district circuit house the main road to Swat blocked.

The leadership with tigers staged demonstration and sett in on the roads and suspended traffic till our going to the press. The worst affected were the commuters both out districts and the locals and most of them have to walk on feet to reach destinations before falling night.

The marble loaded trucks in hundreds have to parked on road sides and the worried drivers complained of heavy damages to costly vehicles and tyres under the burden of heavy loads. The district chapter president ex aide to CM KPK Riaz Khan in his first speech condemned the arrest and demanded early release of I.K.

He blasted PDM joint government for worst treatment with the PTI leadership and repeated Khan was red line and the government crossed it adding now fighting would erupt on roads. He directed tigers to bring their baggages and stay for night and vowed the sett in would be continued until I K is released. However, the district administration was yet to mobilize forces and to exercise as per government directives to deal with the protestors as a list of about 25 rank leaders were already prepared to be detained for maintaining law and order to let locals live with peace, a security agency head confirmed.

Like other parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf workers took to the streets in different parts of the district to protest the arrest of their party chief Imran Khan in Islamabad here on Tuesday. The charged workers blocked the main grand trunk road for all kind of vehicular traffic at Balambat, Timergara, Talash, Chakdara, Munda, Mayar and Kumbhar Maidan creating hurdles for motorists. The protesters also blocked the Maidan road in front of the Dir Scouts' Fort and chanted slogans against the government.



Heat wave after three days

LAHORE (APP): The Met office has predicted a heat wave after three days and temperature is likely to cross 40 degrees Celsius with no chance of shower during the next 15 days.

Chief Meteorologist Lahore Dr Khalid M Malik told APP that seasonal mean temperatures were expected to remain above normal over most parts of the country with chances of heat wave episodes in most parts of the country, including the provincial capital, and plain areas of Punjab.

Day temperatures are likely to remain 03-05°C above normal in South Punjab, 02-03°C above normal in upper and central Punjab while mercury level is likely to cross 40 degrees Celsius after the weekend, he added.

The chief meteorologist said that growing mercury levels were also likely to scale up water stress for the agricultural and domestic needs during this season so farmers were advised to manage the watering of crop accordingly.

He also directed the public to avoid unnecessary exposure to direct sunlight and judicious use of water.

Two criminals injured, held with arms after encounter

KARACHI (INP): Two criminals were injured and held with arms after exchange of fire with police here in the metropolis on Tuesday. The police on a tip-off regarding presence of wanted criminals launched crackdown in Kala Pani Fishery area of Karachi.

The outlaws present in the area started firing at police and tried to flee. In retaliatory firing of police, both criminals including Younas alias Double Roti and Javed were injured and held with two pistols and ammunition.

The injured criminals were shifted to hospital and police was investigating into the incident.

IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, I-11/1, I-11/3, Metro, Anguri, NCP, Mangyal, Shahdara, Shahpur, Khaban Iqbal, Peer Suhawah, Quaid-e-Azam University, Punjab House, Bari Imam, Mandala, Athal, NIH Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Nogzi, Bajnyal, Nust Road, F-17/1, F-17/2, Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Chahan, Chontra, Rajar, Chakri, SPD, SPF, 22 No. Chongi, Park View, Pindi Board, Jail Park, 1, Car Chowk, Mehboob Shaheed Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Garmala, Baba Shaheed, Chhappar Sharif, Kallar City, Doberan Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Daulatala, Adi, Dera Muslim Feeders.

Afghan Minister discusses trade, commerce with CM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Afghanistan Minister for Commerce Nooruddin Aziz in their meeting at the CM House have agreed to work together to promote peace in the region so that trade and commerce can be boosted for the prosperity and welfare of the people.

The Afghan Commerce minister was accompanied by Deputy Minister Transport Sadiqullah Abid, Senior Afghan government officers of Trade, Transport, and Aviation, and Pakistan Ambassador in Afghanistan Mr Ubaid ur Rehman Nizamani. Provincial Ministers Sharjeel Memon, Nasir Shah, Jam Ikramullah, Chief Secretary Sohail Rajput, and PSCM Fayaz Jatoti also attended the meeting.

The CM welcomed the delegation and discussed various issues including Afghan settlers in Karachi, the promotion of peace and tranquillity, and the promotion of trade and commerce.

The CM said that both the countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan, were two brother countries and Pakistan, particularly Karachi has become another home of Afghanistan nationals.

The Afghan minister, Mr Nooruddin said that this Eidul Fitr was the only Eid

during the last many years that no untoward incident took place in Afghanistan.

"Our people celebrated Eid with religious fervour and moved freely for recreation," he said and added that the peace was returning to Afghanistan and this peace would bring prosperity to the people. The Afghanistan Commerce minister said that Pakistan was like their home which has been hosting their people for a long time. "Our people mostly visit Karachi for medical treatment, social and business activities," he said and added that their Foreign Minister Mr. Amir Khan Muttaqi in his meeting with his counterpart in Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari discussed various outstanding issues and agreed to explore common ground to work together to promote peace.

The chief minister said that Karachi port was one of South Asia's largest and busiest deep-sea water seaports, handling 60 percent of the nation's cargo. "It is the best trade route for Afghanistan," he said.

At this, the Afghan minister said that they were visiting Karachi and Gwadar ports to carry out their trade. Murad Ali Shah presented Ajrak, and Sindh caps to the visiting delegation and conveyed best wishes for the people of Afghanistan.

Famous juice and dry fruit outlet ceased

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Punjab Food Authority (PFA) continued its drive against food outlets. A famous juice and dry fruit shop was seized and fined for violating sanitation, cleanliness, and hygiene standards. The shop found using rotten fruits for making juices with expired milk.

During inspection cockroaches were found in the kitchen while food items were placed on the floor, in the presence of flies

along with expired food products. Heavy fine was imposed.

Director General PFA Raja Jahangir Anwar said that Punjab Food Authority would never compromise on the standard and hygienic principles and added that the teams of Punjab Food Authority would pay surprise visits to different food outlets to check sanitary conditions and materials used in the preparation of food because such practices by food outlets are health hazardous.

Amir Muqam strongly condemned the vandalism on the arrest of Imran Khan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam strongly condemned the vandalism on the arrest of Imran Khan.

He said that the support of the corrupt Imran Niazi is tantamount to support for corruption. He further said that Imran Niazi used to say that even he himself should be arrested if

found guilty of theft. The adviser said that Imran's supporters should respect Islamic laws and the law of the land.

Engineer Amir Muqam said that PTI miscreants should stay within the ambit of law.

He further added that a notice was issued to Imran Niazi on May 1 but he did not appear. He said that we, our sisters, mothers, sons, daughters were imprisoned by NAB. He further said

that if Imran Niazi had not committed theft worth more than 60 billion, looted the public exchequer, had not taken bribes of diamonds and lands, he would not have been facing NAB today. The adviser said that if Imran Niazi had responded to NAB's call at the right time, he might not have been arrested. He added that the miscreants who are taking law into their own hands will have to be dealt with with iron hands.

Rs 3500 maximum burial fee be charged in model cemetery Kahana Kacha

LAHORE (APP): Local Government (LG) Secretary Dr Irshad Ahmad has said that maximum fee of Rs 3500 should be charged in Model Cemetery Kahana Kacha. He was visiting Model Cemetery Kahana Kacha along with Additional Secretary Development Maria Tariq and Deputy Secretary LG on Tuesday.

The Secretary reviewed the collection of fees, the capacity of graves and other arrangements during the visit to the model cemetery. The LG Secretary directed the officials of Shahr-i-Khamoshan Authority (SKA) to place the tuff tiles at the entrance of cemetery, plant trees and prepare the infrastructure of the four model cemeteries under construction in Lahore on the same model. He issued further instructions and

said that necessary instructions should also be displayed at conspicuous places in the Model Cemetery Kahana Kacha.

On this occasion, a briefing was also given by the SKA authorities, in which, it was stated that a total of 9,000 people were buried in the Model Cemetery till the date.

"There is a capacity for graves and the SKA is providing all facilities under one roof including burial," told in the briefing. The LG Secretary was briefed that the mortuary in the cemetery had the capacity to keep 40 dead bodies at the same time besides the excavator for excavating graves. "The facility is available round the clock and all the graves are being made of the same size and style", he was also briefed.



LAHORE: A laborer placing large blocks on Pico link Road during construction work.

Korean Mission of UN-Habitat for Pakistan meets Administrator Karachi

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Korean Mission of UN-Habitat for Pakistan met Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saifur Rahman in his office and reviewed the measures taken for the construction and development of the city. According to a KMC statement on Tuesday, the Korean delegation discussed the provision of street lights in different areas of Karachi, improvement of slums and infrastructure. Administrator Karachi assured them to provide complete data regarding all these issues and said every kind of assistance will be provided to the Korean Mission.

He said the construction

and development of the city is topmost priority for which the cooperation of organizations working at the international level is valued.

The quality of life of the residents of these slums will be higher by developing the infrastructure of the city and the means of transportation and the network of roads and parks and recreational areas will be improved.

Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saif-ur-Rahman said KMC is fulfilling its responsibilities in this regard and every possible effort is being made to provide better municipal facilities to the citizens, it is also important to

keep the street lights on the roads active and bright as this would reduce accidents and crimes and citizens will be able to travel safely on the roads even at night.

In this regard, the technical and other support offered by the Korean Mission will be carefully evaluated and decisions will be taken in the wider interest of the city. During the meeting, the Korean Mission said that Karachi is an important city of Pakistan. and is a commercial hub, the basic infrastructure should be developed according to the needs of the city.

Operation against kite flyers

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Police and Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) have successfully conducted a large-scale operation against kite flyers.

The joint operation resulted in the arrest of 4 kite sellers and six kite flyers from various locations across the city. Due to vigilant surveillance of PSCA cameras, 15 calls reporting illegal kite-flying and the monitoring efforts of the Lahore Police and Dolphin Force, a total of 1140 kites and 19 twine rolls were recovered. The operation utilized the Safe Cities cameras to track the location of kite flyers, leading to arrests in the Sadar Cantt, Barkat Town, Barki, and Shahdara areas. Cases have been registered against all arrested individuals according to the applicable rules and regulations.

13 get govt jobs after Ombudsman office involvement

LAHORE (APP): After the involvement of Punjab Ombudsman's office, 13 deserving individuals have been provided regular government jobs under Rule 17-A of the Punjab Civil Servants (Appointment and Conditions of Service) Rules, 1974.

In a statement released here on Tuesday, the spokesman mentioned that the district education authority in Dera Ghazi Khan had appointed Dilawar Aman as a junior clerk in grade-11, Ishfaq Ahmad as a lab attendant, and Nadir Hussain and Ghulam Siddiq as naib qasid, after the ombudsman's office intervened on the complaints of the applicants.

Similarly, Hamza Khan s/o

Shahida Parveen from Chakwal has been appointed as a junior clerk by the health department, and Farhan Ali has been recruited as a naib qasid by the district health authority Multan, the spokesman said and added that the district education authority in Jhang had hired Haseeb Agha, the son of a deceased lady health worker, as a ward servant.

The spokesman went on to add that Muhammad Ibrahim Khalid of Laalian tehsil had been appointed as a lab attendant by the district education authority Chiniot, and Amir Salim had been hired as a junior clerk by TEVTA in Lodhran.

Meanwhile, the irrigation depart-

ment has recruited Hasan Raza Jafri of Bahawalpur as a computer operator, and the livestock department of Bhakkar district has hired Inayatullah as a cattle attendant, he added.

The spokesman further said that the municipal committee Sangla Hill had appointed Ms Naheed Eric as a sanitary worker, and the excise department of Sahiwal district had employed Faizan Ali Khan as a junior clerk after the mediation of the ombudsman's office.

These individuals were entitled to these employment opportunities, and the intervention of the ombudsman's office ensured that justice had been served, concluded the spokesman.

Robbers deprive family of Rs5.6m cash, other valuables

KARACHI (INP): Armed robbers deprived a family of millions of rupees cash and other valuables during a dacoity inside a house here on Tuesday.

Police said that armed robbers barged into a house in Defence Phase V near Khyaban e Moman, Gizri police station jurisdiction in Karachi and took the family hostage at gunpoint. The robbers took away 5.6 million rupees cash, mobile phones and other valuables from the house. The police after registering a case into the incident at concerned police station have started an investigation.

Machine operator killed

KARACHI (INP): An unidentified persons opened fire and killed a machine operator during an anti-encroachment operation in Karachi's Surjani Town. According to the details, during the anti-encroachment operation in Surjani Town Sector 8, the machine operator was killed by unknown person's firing after which additional police force was called to control the situation.

Police officials stated that the alleged land grabbers opened fire and started pelting stones on the KDA Anti-encroachment team before the operation even started, resulting in killing one machine operator.

During an anti-encroachment operation, the armed suspects and anti-encroachment police exchanged fire. The police attempted to push back the agitated individuals.

DG LDA directs to develop online bidding system

LAHORE (APP): Commissioner Lahore and Director General Lahore Development Authority Muhammad Ali Randhawa on Tuesday directed to formulate an online bidding system for auctioning plots and commercial properties. He said that under "Ease of Doing Business" initiatives, LDA will provide special support to investors on the lines of private sector by providing facilitation in getting necessary documentation related to commercial properties.

He said that Lahore development authority will provide attractive investment opportunities in the provincial capital for investors. LDA will take initiatives on the lines of the private sector to enhance the resource generation.

He said this while presiding over a meeting of LDA's officers here at commissioner office. Muhammad Ali Randhawa said that the purpose of this initiative is to protect investors from delaying tactics and unnecessary actions / practices. He further

said that bidding process for the auctioning of plots and other commercial properties should be developed on modern lines. Online bidding process should also be adopted along with the traditional bidding process, he directed.

The Commissioner Lahore and DG LDA issued instructions to the IT Directorate and said that an online bidding system should be developed as soon as possible. He said that the purpose of online bidding is to reach maximum possible investors from within country and abroad as well. Chief Engineer Israr Saeed Khan, Additional DG Headquarters Imran Ali, Additional DG Housing Syed Munawar Bukhari, Director DG Headquarters Asif Hussain, Director Finance, officers of Punjab Finance Department, Director Development Lahore Division Javed Chauhan and other relevant officers participated in the meeting.

Minister for Education pledges to resolve SMIU Model School's problems

KARACHI (NNI): Syed Sardar Ali Shah, Minister for Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh has said that problems of Sindh Madressatul Islam School will be resolved on priority basis, especially it will be provided a separate budget from Sindh Madressatul Islam University's budget to ensure its smooth working. He said this on Tuesday when Vice Chancellor Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai called upon him at his office to apprise him particularly about the issue of separate budget for SMIU Model School.

Syed Sardar Ali Shah said Sindh Madressatul Islam being an Alma-Mater of

Founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah is a most important for all of us, this is why its development and progress according to the challenges of the new era is obligation to the government. Vice Chancellor Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai presented some pertinent problems of SMIU Model School before the minister and requested him to get these resolved as soon as possible. "We are bearing all expenditures of SMIU Model School from the budget of Sindh Madressatul Islam University since the last ten years, as a result the development of the university as well as of the school is

not being carried out accordingly," the vice chancellor said added due to the historic character of SMI School its issues should be resolved.

On the invitation of the vice chancellor Dr. Mujeeb Sahrai, Syed Sardar Ali Shah said that he shall visit the SMIU in the end of the current month of May and shall inaugurate Taj Sahrai Corner and Dr. Hameeda Khuhro Corner established by SMIU. Syed Sardar Ali Shah also agreed to deliver a lecture to SMIU students on the subject of "Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai: A Universal Poet," in the series of Popular Lectures Series, started by SMIU.



LAHORE: Pakistan Railway workers busy in repairing railway tracks during maintenance work near Railway Station.



Governor accuses previous govt for improper utilization of Rs5b beautification’s fund



PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Tuesday accused the previous government for improper utilization of Rs5 billion funds taken on the name of beautification of Peshawar City.

“The previous government did not correctly use the Rs5 billion funds, which were taken on the name of beautification of Peshawar City,” the Governor claimed during his visit to City District Government College for Women here, says an official statement.

Caretaker Provincial Ministers, Sawal Nazir advocate, Salma Begum,

Mayor Peshawar Zubair Ali and administrative secretaries of Education, Local Government, Finance and Social Welfare Departments were present.

The faculty members and girls students warmly received the governor upon reaching the city district government college Peshawar.

The governor said that he felt immense pleasure while remaining among people everywhere including bazaars, colleges and schools. He said he came here to know about college problems. He said that every possible effort would be made for the resolution of the college’s problems.

The governor announced provision of buses for the city district government college and invited the girls’ students to visit Governor House where buses would be handed over to them.

Governor visits Shahi Bagh girls college, announces five buses: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Tuesday visited municipal inter girls college Shahi Bagh and announced five buses for the college.

The Governor was warmly received by the faculty members and female students there.

Caretaker Provincial Ministers, Sawal Nazir advocate, Rehmat Salam Khattak, Salma Begum, Mayor

Peshawar Zubair Ali and administrative heads of Higher Education, Local Government, Social Welfare and others attended.

The faculty members, students and administrative officials expressed joy after seeing the governor among them.

The Governor said efforts should continue for resolution of problems. Mayor Peshawar, Zuabir Ali and principal of the college highlighted the educational achievements, demands and problems of the college. The mayor announced five water coolers for the college.

Minister Sawal Nazir announced Rs one lakh cash for construction of laboratory for the college.

The governor said the joint visit to the college with ministers and administrative secretaries were aimed to bring improvement in it.

The Governor said that he always made efforts for overall development and progress of the municipal girls’ college and efforts should continue for its resolution.

The governor said he considered it a responsibility being a citizen of Peshawar and holding an important office for solving problems, difficulties and announced five buses for the college. The governor has also invited girls students to visit Governor House, Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant on Health and Tourism Dr. Riaz Anwar meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan.

Flour situations in province: Commissioners, DCs asked to regularly inform CS

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary has directed all the commissioners and deputy commissioners to monitor the flour situation regularly in their respective divisions and districts.

Presiding over a meeting here to review flour distribution and supply from Punjab, the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa asked the commissioners and DCs to submit a report to him about the flour situation after every three days so that timely measures could be taken to facilitate people.

He directed them to regularly monitor the supply and transportation of flour throughout the

province and take strict action against hoarders and profiteers.

The meeting was informed that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was working on an application regarding the flour delivery system to track the transportation of flour and its transparent distribution.

The meeting was also briefed on the latest situation of flour prices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the measures taken by the district administrations to control prices and matters related to the supply of flour from Punjab.

On the occasion the representatives of the flour mills association and flour dealers, Secretaries of Food, Home and Industries,

Commissioners, Deputy concerned officials were Commissioners and other present.

FO lauds KP govt for implementing prison reforms

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has lauded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for taking pragmatic steps to improve prison conditions under its prison reforms. In a joint meeting with Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary here at the CS office, he said that the commitment shown by the provincial government towards the improvement of prisons in the province was commendable, said an official communique issued here on Tuesday.

Earlier, both the ombudsmen and KP CS jointly chaired a review meeting to discuss the implementation status of Federal Ombudsman recommendations on Prison Reforms. A briefing was given on the initiatives taken in KP to improve prison conditions, such as providing access to clean drinking water, health and education services, legal aid, skills development programs, waiting rooms, and separate facilities for women and juvenile prisoners. Secretary Home, IG Prisons, AIG Police and other relevant officials attended the meeting.



PESHAWAR: PPP Central Secretary Information and Federal Minister Faisal Karim Kundi addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Imran trying to destabilize country after his politics became irrelevant: Kundi

PESHAWAR (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi Tuesday said that PTI Chairman Imran Khan was trying to destabilize the country after his politics became irrelevant.

He said ill designs of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf Chairman Imran Khan to drag state institutions into politics in a bid to raise his dwindling popularity was bound to fail as the people of Pakistan knew about his politics of U-turn and baseless accusations.

Addressing a press conference here, Faisal Karim Kundi said that the PTI Chairman was trying to make the state institutions disputed and controversial after losing popularity in masses.

He said PTI’s foreign funding, BRT, Billion Trees Afforestation Project and Malam Jabba scandals had exposed Imran Khan anti corruption slogans.

The minister said the PTI leadership had tried to hide behind stay orders in corruption cases and demanded speedy investigation of these scandals.

He said if PPP leadership including former President Asif Ali Zardari, Faryal Talpur and Syed Khurshid Shah could appear in courts and face jail then why not Imran

Khan in Tosha Khana and others corruption cases.

Faisal Kundi said that the PPP strongly believed in dialogue and wanted a solution of all problems through negotiations.

However, PTI did not positively reciprocate to the government dialogue offer, and that the attitude and approach of PTI members that negotiated with the government team for elections was not serious and irrational.

The minister said that the PPP wanted elections on the same day in all provinces and centres for political and economic stability, adding the country could make rapid progress if all state institutions work under its constitutional domain.

He said the PTI government in its last nine years had failed to deliver in KP and addressed people’s problems.

The PTI government closed its own established Ehtasab Commission at Peshawar that exposed Imran’s anti corruption slogans, he added.

Kundi said that the successful diplomacy of PPP Chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, sister of Aafia Saddiqui would soon meet her in the US after she was granted a five years visa.

He said about 1,000

trapped Pakistanis in Sudan were evacuated safely and brought back to the country.

The minister said that PPP would continue efforts for supremacy of constitution and parliament, adding democracy was the only system that could address masses’ problems.

Arrest of Imran is not big issue, says Kundi

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Information PPP, Faisal Karim Kundi has said that the arrest of PTI chairman Imran Khan is not such a big issue as he has been arrested on the orders of the court.

Commenting on the arrest of the PTI Chief here on Tuesday, he said that in the past the top leadership of PPP including its Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto were also arrested and faced the courts.

He said that after the martyrdom of Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari has raised the slogan of ‘Pakistan Khappay’ (we want Pakistan) to save the country and had not issued negative statements like that of Imran Khan.

He said that the arrest of Imran Khan does not mean that the workers of PTI come out on roads and damage public and private properties.

ANP announces party tickets

PESHAWAR (INP): The Awami National Party (ANP) on Tuesday announced party tickets to candidates for seven more provincial and two national assembly seats.

According to Bacha Khan Markaz here, from NA-11 Shangla, Aurangzeb Khan has been allotted the party ticket while from NA-19 Swabi, Khanzada Shahnawaz Khan will contest on the ticket of ANP.

The party has allotted the tickets for provincial assembly seats PK-7, Swat to Ifitikhar Ahmad, PK-9 Swat to Zahir Shah Khan, PK-22 Malakand to Irshad Momand, PK-48 Swabi to Sikandar Irfan, PK-49 Swabi to Tauseef Ejaz, PK-50 Swabi to former district Nazim Muhammad Zahid and PK-93 Hangu to former MNA Pir Haider Ali Shah. Chairman of Provincial Parliamentary Board, Aimal Wali Khan after consultation with other members of the board formally announced the Names of candidates for the party.

Redressal of grievance demanded Kashifullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: The leaders of the class four Association of the Agricultural University Peshawar (AUP) requested Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht to resolve their demands on priority.

Class-IV association is hopeful that the Vice Chancellor would solve our problems and basis in the future. Will do he said that Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht has set the university on the development and we as a Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht for the development and welfare of the University and assure him of their full cooperation.

Congo virus alert issued

PESHAWAR (APP): The authorities have issued an alert to hospitals across the province in the wake of threats of Congo virus spread.

According to the authorities of Health Directorate on Tuesday, after the deaths of four people in Quetta and Karachi, all the district health officers and medical superintendents of the hospitals in the province have been directed to make coping arrangements for coping with any Congo situation.

The health authorities have also been directed to issue guidelines for the general public, especially for those working at slaughterhouses.

The instructions said that after the death of four people including two women and two men, of whom one was a helper at the butcher shop, an advisory and guidelines were must for sharing with the general public.

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Minister for Excise, Haji Manzoor Afridi on Tuesday visited the Directorate General Excise where he deplored the arrest of Excise officials by the Chamkani police.

The Minister visited the Excise General Office to console the officials who were protesting and condemning the arrest of their fellow colleagues by the Chamkani police. He also met with the affected

employees and said the arrest and confinement of Excise officials who were busy in performing duty, was deplorable.

The Minister assured the Excise staff of the provincial government’s stern action against the In-charge and personnel of Chamkani police and said the Excise officials have the right to go far legal action against the police officials involved in illegal action against them.

He said the Excise

Department also has the right to take action against narcotics dealers across the province adding that no other department could interfere in their actions.

The successful actions of the Excise officials were evident to all and such incidents would not deter their resolve to eradicate the menace of narcotics from the society.

He said he totally supports the concerns and regret of the Excise staff in the wake of this incident.

The Minister also thanked the general public and Excise officials for making a walk against narcotics a successful event.

WSSCM employees hold protest

PESHAWAR (APP): Employees of the Water and Sanitation Services Company (WSSCM) in Mardan on Tuesday staged a protest against the delay in the release of their salaries.

The president of the WSSCM, Akhtar Munir, addressed the protesters and stated, “The employees have not received their salaries for the last two months, causing severe financial difficulties for them and their families.”

He said, “The children of the employees are being forced to go hungry due to the non-payment of salaries.”

The protesters demanded immediate release of their due salaries, failing which they vowed to continue their strike.

Certificate of appreciation demanded



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Civil Society members and politicians belonging to Yaka Toot area argued competent authorities to award appreciation certificates to polio volunteer worker Bushra Tariq for her services against the viral disease.

The political activists said that Bushra Tariq is serving humanity as volunteer polio worker for last 8 long years.

She is symbol appreciation and hope for volunteers to serve humanity and also secured thousands of children the disease.

Moreover, Bushra Tariq also continued her services for serving humanity during Covid-19 pandemic which is also appreciable while the locals demanded from competent authorities to award her with prizes and certificates.



PESHAWAR: Workers of PTI protesting against arrestment of party Chairman Imran Khan. — F.P. photo

Nation’s prosperity lies in quality education

PESHAWAR (APP): City’s Mayor Haji Zubair Ali here on Tuesday emphasized that the key to a nation’s prosperity lies in providing quality education to students.

He stated this during a ceremony held at Municipal Inter College for Girls Shahi Bagh and City District Government Degree College, which was attended by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and other officials.

Haji Zubair Ali said that to support the cause of quality education, the metropolitan government would allocate a substantial amount in the upcoming budget for the education sector.

The mayor informed that three educational institutions run by the metropolitan government have already received Rs 60 million and City District Degree College has been provided with 20 computers to impart

students with education and information technology.

Furthermore, he directed concerned authorities to upgrade the laboratory and revamp the school building to provide students with the practical experience they need to prepare themselves in their respective subjects.

Zubair Ali also assured that the demands of both the boys’ and girls’ municipal inter-colleges would be resolved on a priority basis.

Installation of fire extinguishers ordered

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar district administration has issued a directive to all business centres to install fire extinguishers within seven days to ensure public safety.

This decision was taken in a meeting chaired by ADC Peshawar, Sania Safi, with the participation of various government

departments and representatives from the business community.

During the meeting, it was discussed that most fire incidents in Peshawar occur due to the non-existence or expiration of fire extinguishers and the failure of fire extinguishing staff.

Therefore, the district administration has directed

all business centres, including shops, restaurants, hotels, filling stations, and CNG stations, to install fire extinguishers within the given time frame.

This initiative is aimed at preventing fire incidents and accidents in the provincial capital of Peshawar and ensuring the safety of the public.



PESHAWAR: JI’s District Naib Ameer Haji Muhammad Aslam participating in walima of Hikman Din Khan nephews. — F.P. photo



In brief

Bokhari flays PDM policies

ATTOCK (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s EX- Federal Minister for environment Syed Wajid Hussain Bokhari along with former Punjab provincial minister Syed Yawar Bokhari lashing out the undemocratic policies of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) alliance, said that the inordinate delay in the conduct of general elections would be proved a political death of the imported government. Expressing their views while addressing a special ceremony at the agro farm of Pakistan-origin American businessmen Syed Arif Naqvi here in Attock, Syed Wajid Bokhari further said that the imported government of PDM is manipulating the system to engineer the general elections by using their evasive tactics as they are afraid of their sure defeat due to the increasing popularity of PTI leadership Iman Khan in the masses. The former provincial minister Punjab Syed Yawar Bokhari speaking on this occasion said that the imported government has been wasting public funds to restrain the elections instead of incurring the well fare of its people who are hungry for a single bite of bread. He blamed that the corrupt rulers have concealed million of dollars in the foreign bank accounts through money laundering. Yawar Bokhari said that the burden of debt could not be reduced without the earning of dollars. He said the powers of NAB were also terminated by the imposed government of PDM to get clean chit of their corruption cases even the investigation officers were removed or killed which arisen serious questions on the credibility of NAB.

Two children die of measles

KHAIRPUR (INP): Two more children died and 10 others affected of measles in Goth Faiz Muhammad Rajpur of Khairpur, health department said on Tuesday. According to local residents, measles has gripped the area claiming lives of two and affecting 10 others. Medical experts said that measles spread from coughing and sneezing of the affected person. Symptoms of the measles appear in any person, three weeks after living in atmosphere affected of the disease.

Mother dies, son injured

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): A woman died and son injured when roof of a under construction cattle shed collapsed here on Tuesday. Rescue sources said that the incident took place in Dera Lodhian near Chachoo stop of Sheikhpura where roof of a under construction cattle shed suddenly came down. A woman identified as Mussarat Bibi 45, was killed on the spot while her 18-year old son Usman was critically injured. The local people on self help basis pulled out the body and injured from rubble and shifted them to hospital.

Hashish recovered

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Local police here on Tuesday foiled a bid of narcotics smuggling and recovered 9.92 kilogram hashish from two smugglers near Marai Check Post. According to details, police started checking following a tip regarding smuggling of contraband. During checking, police recovered 9.92 kilogram hashish from possession of two smugglers. The smugglers were identified as Hanif and Afzal. Case has been registered and investigation is underway.

KKKU awards proctorial board with badges



F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak (KKKU), awarded badges to the proctorial board here Tuesday for their outstanding service and commitment to maintaining a safe and secure environment on campus.

The proctorial board plays an essential role in ensuring the implementation of rules and regulations on the university campus, and they have done an excellent job in

maintaining discipline and order among the students. Their efforts have made a significant impact on the overall academic experience of the students.

To recognize their hard work and dedication, Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak has decided to award badges to the new members of the proctorial board. These badges will serve as a symbol of their contribution and commitment to the university's goals and values.

The Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, congratulated the proctorial board. He emphasized that their efforts have helped to create a safe and secure environment for the students, which is essential for their academic success.

The proctorial board expressed their gratitude for the recognition and reiterated their commitment to continuing their efforts to maintain discipline and order on the campus.

Violating sanctity of girl's schools shouldn't be tolerated

F.P. Report

TANK: District Education Officer female Uzra Bibi has said that she will not tolerate the violation of girls' school's sanctity. She expressed these views while talking to media representatives in her office. She said if anyone has a complaint related to girls' schools, the doors of her office are open for everyone, file a complaint here and it will be resolved.

DEO said that there has been a lot of improvement in girls' schools compared to earlier and all the schools have been made functional, adding that the presence of teachers in every school was ensured. She said that yesterday some local people violated the sanctity of Girls Middle School Gomal, against which a written application has been given to DPO Tank.

While the school guard has been suspended on charges of allowing media representatives in school boundary wall. She also demanded that Deputy Commissioner Tank Muhammad Shoaib and District Police Officer Waqar Khan should take notice and action against the people involved in it.

Monsoon Contingency Plan 2023 meeting held

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In the light of the orders issued by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and the Department of Relief, Rehabilitation and Resettlement regarding Monsoon Contingency Plan 2023, an important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Mardan Captain (R) Abdur Rehman.

On this occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief and Human Rights Lubna Shah Zaman, Assistant Commissioner Mardan Ayesha Tahir, Assistant Commissioner Taktbhai Gul Nawaz Afridi, Additional Assistant Commissioner Garhi Kapura Attaullah, Tehsil Municipal Officers, Department of Health, Education, Irrigation, representatives of the departments participated. According to the findings, the Deputy Commissioner held a consultation meeting with all the stakeholders to prepare the Monsoon Contingency Plan 2023.

The Deputy Commissioner said that planning on the Monsoon Contingency Plan 2023 is being done keeping in mind the technical and past disasters. He said that we have started the process of Monsoon Contingency Planning 2023 by involving all the stakeholders and this series of consultations will continue till the contingency plan is finalized.

Farmers demand opening of Balambat irrigation channel

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Due to closure of Balambat Irrigation Channel for more than one-year agricultural land including orchards have shrunk, causing losses of crores of rupees to farmers and landlords.

Nominated candidate and chairman of Dir Aman Jirga, former Member of National Assembly Sahibzada Muhammad Yaqoob Khan said that the multi-purpose project, Balambat Irrigation Channel, is not releasing water simply on the basis that only 50 feet of it has been flooded at one point, on which the department asked for a month's time to rebuild, but despite rains for more than a year, the flooded part has not been rebuilt and no water is being released in the channel, due to which the agricultural land has shrunk.

At the same time, cultivated crops and dozens of fruit gardens are suffering severe damage while the wells of the area have dried up. The irrigation channel has been closed for a long time, he said that in this regard, he has held many meetings with the Secretary Irrigation and Deputy Commissioner Lower Dir, but there was no hearing. If left, Jamaat-e-Islami along with the residents of the

area will stage a protest outside the office of DC Lower Dir.

Sultan Khel elects new cabinet: The well-known tribe of Sultan Khel Pinda Khel, Tehsil Lal Qila and Tehsil Balambat meeting was held. The Sultan Khel, Pinda Khel Cabinet was formed according to which Haji Khushkhal Khan was appointed as President, Ashiq Hussain and Shireen Khan as Vice Presidents, Haji Nasrullah Khan as General Secretary, Muhammad Zahir Shah as joint Secretary, and Inamullah as Information Secretary.

Elected President Haji Khushal Khan, General Secretary Haji Nasrullah Khan, Principal Bakht Rawan, Retired Police Officer Noor faraz Khan, and others while speaking said that their tribe does not have ambitions against anyone. To be united on the platform and live with respect and honor with other tribes, however, he said that no one will allow cruelty and injustice to Sultan Khel and Pinda Khel clans if someone has harmed the people of their community. He said that a grand meeting of the Sultankhel and Pinda Khel tribes will be called soon in which important decisions will be taken regarding the problems and difficulties

faced by the community.

PPP observes 10th martyrdom anniversary of Zahir Shah: The tenth anniversary of the martyred leader of Pakistan People's Party, Zahir Shah bhaijan, was celebrated with great devotion and respect at their residence. Peoples party leader and Former MPA Muhammad Zamin Khan, Muhammad Hanif Khan, Qasim Yousafzai, Zarak Yousafzai and a large number of workers and officials participated on this occasion, Quran was recited for the martyr Zahir Shah bhai Jan and prayers were offered to him. The leaders Muhammad Zamin Khan Advocate, Muhammad Hanif Khan, Qasim Yousafzai, Zarak Yousafzai and others said that the sacrifices of Shaheed Zahir Shah bhaijan for the country, nation and party are not hidden from anyone and he gave his life for the country, nation and party.

The participants of the anniversary paid tribute to the services of Shaheed Zahir Shah bhaijan in strong words and vowed to carry forward his mission. They stressed that they should start preparations for the general elections because there are few months left for the general elections. At the same time, it will take the country out of all crises.

Labour Day

Abdul Qadir Solangi

AS is the case every year, May 1, or the International Workers Day, was celebrated this year, too, as the Labour Day even though there was little, if anything, to 'celebrate'. While the workers enjoy better benefits in other parts of the world, labour in Pakistan still faces exploitation and apathy of the authorities concerned.

The number of children being used as labour in Pakistan is increasing day by day due to lack of checks and balances on the small and medium indus-

tries. Moreover, workplaces are not safe for the labour as per the International Labour Organisation (ILO) guidelines. Also, the labour force in Pakistan is not registered with the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI), which was established to facilitate the workers.

It is important to provide an environment conducive to the needs of both the employees and the employers at the workplace. However, in Pakistan, labour laws are not being enforced and workers face health, safety, economic and sanitation

issues at the workplace.

In Pakistan, no safety measures are taken at the workplace, like the availability of safe drinking water, water tanks, fire extinguisher, fire exit, etc., owing to which we see tragic events, such as fire incidents, in which several people keep losing their lives.

There is also an acute shortage of labour inspectors who may carry out daily inspections of factories and other workplaces. It is time the government gave the workers their due rights which will also increase the productivity and be beneficial to the economy.

Button-Button

Malik Muhammad Adnan Shafi

A small apartment in a bustling city a timid woman named Lily. Lily receives a mysterious button box in the mail and is offered a large sum of money to push the button inside. The consequences of our actions and the importance of clear communication.

Lily had always been a shy and reserved person. She had just moved to the city and was struggling to make ends meet. One day, she received a small package in the mail. Inside was a small button box with a note that read "Push the button, and receive

\$50,000."

At first, Lily was hesitant. It all seemed too good to be true. But the money would help her pay off her student loans and start a new life. She decided to push the button. Immediately after pushing the button, Lily regretted her decision. She had no idea what the consequences would be. A man named Steward appeared at her doorstep and explained that the money was hers, but that someone she didn't know would die as a result of her action.

Lily was horrified. She had never intended for anyone to get hurt. She tried to explain to Steward that she had no idea what the button

would do, but he simply told her that she had made her choice. As the days went by, Lily couldn't shake the guilt she felt. She tried to track down Steward to see if there was anything she could do to undo what she had done, but he was nowhere to be found.

In the end, Lily learned a valuable lesson about the consequences of our actions. She realized that communication is key and that she should have asked more questions before making a decision that would impact someone else's life. She vowed to always be more thoughtful and intentional in her choices moving forward.

Condolence reference held

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A condolence meeting of the class 10th Hujra Digital whatsapp Group Fellows Session of the year 2001 was held in Shergarh Bazar under the chairmanship of Salahuddin Safi in Prof. Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Kamal Hajra Muhammad Arif Farzand Muhammad Sani late Beyad Master Gulzada.

Classmates of Whatsapp Group attended the meeting in large numbers. On this



occasion Professor Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Kamal, Abdullah Hameedullah Khan Khattak Saeed Anwar, Muhammad Arif? Mujahid Ferooz Alamgir Hamid Khan, Arif

Muhammad and others expressed their views. In the meeting, the deceased were services were discussed and the various aspects of his life were highlighted.

Rising inequality or inflation paradox

Mariam Afzal

WE all are familiar with the term that Karl Marx coined "haves not" that highlights the rather unfortunate group of the society. Every society is divided between the haves & the haves not, creating a polar economy, the phenomena we casually call "inequality".

Here we are not discussing about the gender or other inequalities that the nation is plagued with, rather the class differences among the people. We feel no hesitation in saying that Pakistan is a highly unequal society and the disparity between the society's classes is only increasing. The Gini coefficient for Pakistan is 29.6 index points, latest available for year 2018.

Since the time Covid-19 has struck the globe, inflation has been on rise. Pakistan is one of the worst hit countries in terms of inflation to say the least. Globally, despite the inflation, we observe a rise in demand for many commodities, specially the luxury ones. Strangely, we see the same for Pakistan as well. Although the term luxury may differ from person to person, the essence is same. The reason why we call it a paradox is how people are still managing to maintain the lifestyles, rather

investing more in luxuries despite being a victim of a soaring inflation and apart from the overall class disparity; we are observing a significant disparity among the middle-income group of the country.

There is a term that we do not get to hear more often-revenge spending, which refers to a sudden increase in spending after the consumers are denied the opportunity to shop for longer period of time. This term became quite popular during and post covid-19 recovery period. Contrary to the expectations, many luxury brands around the world experienced a sharp increase in sales. While we do not deny that revenge spending is one of the reasons behind it, it cannot be the sole reason either. Moreover, the prerequisite for revenge spending is being able to spend and have enough purchasing power.

Pakistan is a developing as well as a poverty-stricken economy. Every day, we see people ranting and blaming sitting governments for their situation. However, we see a large fraction of society who despite being facing inflationary pressures, is able to spend on commodities that are on a pricier side. While a large number of people belonging to the middle income are cutting their expenses because of the shrunken pur-

chasing power, a large number of people have also observed to be multiplying their expenditures and seem to remain indifferent of the soaring prices.

Evidence to support our notion of rising inequality is the recent past event- Eid. While the local markets seem to have drastically hit by the back breaking inflation, buyers seemed to throng the shopping malls and willing to pay whatever they are charged. To our surprise, the brands were struggling to keep up with the demand and their P&L statements show no signs of inflation impact for this year.

The current spending behaviors are still evolving and challenging basic economic theories about rational behavior. Substitution affect accentuates that consumer would spend on a cheaper substitute while Income effect emphasizes that increase in income leads to higher demand that may lead to complete shift of demand curve. However, the current spending behaviors are rather contrary. Becoming more brand conscious has induced an irrational behavior where despite the perfect substitute being available in market, consumers prefer to buy a luxury which would cost them a lot higher. Moreover, even if we take income effect into consideration, the ratio to increase in income and demand shift is

disproportionate. There are quite a few reasons that may explain this paradox.

The rise of platform economy is emerging that has brought radical changes in how consumers create value for the business owners. Digital framework, owing to their diverse structure and function, have expanded the reach where people are exposed to the commodities from all over the world. Brands are excessively spending in social media which has increased their sales manifold. The term "social media influencers" has never caught greater attention where they influence buying decisions of the masses. Luxury brands that were only a part of the elites lives then, has now integrated themselves in the life of the society's middle class as well. Moreover, the luxury brands have now completely changed their rationale as well. A few decades ago, luxury brands would deliberately function this way where they used to serve the elites only. However, there business strategies have completely evolved.

Considering the fact that a normal middle class buyer may not be able to afford to a very high priced commodity, they have diversified their items by offering a wide range of products priced at different levels that are still costlier than the regular

substitutes. In other words, we can say that have created a demand for their supplies by creating a brand conscious market where consumer would pay a higher price to own a luxury. The shift in behavior is massive. If we go by the rational behavior, a regular increase in purchasing capacity may lead a person to afford a few more items, however, today they try to portray a complete class shift. They would cut a fraction of their necessities to save and buy a luxury. This overall scenario is leading to a more brand conscious society which is unfortunately unhealthy.

While the lower income class of the economy is being grinded more than ever and could barely meet ends, middle class is rather finding ways to be a part of class they do not belong to, creating a more polar society and that makes us wonder is there really any inflationary pressure that loom over people's heads or it's just a paradox. In my view, we are unconsciously becoming a part of an agenda where elites are trying to trap consumers in a viscous pit for their own good which is a means of destruction for the economies.

It is not a hidden fact that inflation, debt, financial crises and economic stability are also a product of high of level income inequality in a society. After a

comprehensive interval of quasi neglect, economic inequality has become a topic of policy debate worldwide. For Pakistan, curtailing inequality will be a bandage to rising poverty as well along with economic development. A more effective and higher tax for the higher income group would help in raising funds for the poor. Generalized use of credit and debit cards and bank accounts makes it easier to control tax evasion and monitor personal incomes.

Moreover, it will lead developing economies to put more stress on direct taxation. Reliance on indirect taxes is regressive since it focuses on consumption rather than income, ignoring the fact that higher income groups have larger capacity to save as well. Lowering overall taxes on basic goods, such as food items would do little to redistribution since they are consumed by the wealthy. Same argument goes for subsidies on items such as fuel. Hence, income transfers through taxes are preferred over subsidies since they are targeted. However, Pakistan's administrative capacity and political opposition may remain a major obstacle in doing so.

The writer is a development economist and graduated from PIDE, Islamabad.



Meet N Korea’s ‘crown princess’ and possible heir to Kim

PYONGYANG (Agencies): There is nothing arbitrary in how North Korea presents itself to the outside world, or to its own people. North Korean propaganda is so manicured that analysts monitor its output for the smallest adjustments to national narratives seeking insights into the machinations of one of the world's most secluded, nuclear-armed states. Those analysts went into overdrive late last year when one of North Korea's biggest non-nuclear secrets was revealed: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's daughter, believed to be about 10 years old.

Some considered the public presentation of Kim Ju Ae - who has featured extensively in photographs and video footage from the state's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) - as the first steps in a potential succession plan by her father. Others view her appearance as something more mundane: An attempt by Kim to leverage his image as a family man to shore up support when the North Korean economy is faltering and he is spending lavishly on a ballistic missile programme and developing nuclear capabilities.

While the timing of Ju Ae's public debut is still being debated, the photogenic youngest is now the closest Pyongyang has to a "crown princess", says one expert. Author of "North Korea before Kim Il Sung", Seoul-based historian and leading North Korea scholar Fyodor Tertitskiy believes the revealing of Ju Ae's existence was designed to send different messages - one for an international audience and the other for the North Korean public. The timing of the daughter's introduction and place of unveiling was also highly symbolic, appearing hand-in-hand with her father at the test launch of North Korea's ballistic missiles in November.

"The main message is that [she is]



sort of like a symbol of power because the first time she appeared was near missiles, and missiles are probably the biggest symbol of North Korea's military," Tertitskiy told Al Jazeera. "The idea is, look how stable we are. No one can attack us because we have these missiles ... and our system can last for another generation," said Tertitskiy, who compared Ju Ae to a "crown princess" - a presumptive heir to her father's kingdom. But Tertitskiy believes that the daughter has yet to be anointed as Kim's successor. Although North Korea's reputation for secrecy is almost bottomless, hiding a "full-blown succession campaign" would be near to impossible - even in Pyongyang, he says. Kim appears to be considering his daughter as a future successor, but he has not made up his mind yet. Revealing his daughter now might be a way to test elite opinion in North Korea - a nation whose Politburo membership is almost entirely made up of men. While Kim is an "entrenched autocrat" and could "theoretically" appoint anyone as his successor, there are still risks if Kim chooses poorly.

"Whoever he puts, they will be unaniously endorsed. But if his success is very unpopular ... the regime might not survive. And I guess that's what might be concerning for him," Tertitskiy said. South Korea's spy agency, the National Intelligence Service (NIS), reported in March that Ju Ae was home-schooled and she enjoyed horse riding, skiing and swimming. The service also believed that Kim had not yet anointed her as heir, pointing out his young age - 39, although her growing public profile appeared to emphasise that succession would be a Kim family affair, South Korean media reported.

Ju Ae is believed to have an elder brother - possibly with a disability - and a younger sibling whose gender is not known, the NIS reported. According to Tertitskiy, Kim may be waiting for opinions to surreptitiously seep back regarding his daughter, and based on that unofficial feedback "it's possible that he'll make a final decision based on what he hears". What appears unusual is that Kim is still relatively young and yet he seems concerned with who will continue the Kim family line, he said. "It's quite

early for him to be concerned" about succession. There is a theme to the young girl's public appearances and the propaganda generated, notes Rachel Minyoung Lee, a former North Korea analyst for almost two decades with the US Central Intelligence Agency's Open Source Enterprise. Ju Ae has appeared primarily at military events and alongside the country's ballistic weapons arsenal, including the fearsome Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), said Lee, who is now a non-resident fellow at the 38 North programme with the Stimson Center think tank in Washington, DC.

Those appearances convey the "powerful message" that "continued weapons development is essential for the security of future generations", Lee says. "At the reception on the army founding day, also attended by the daughter, Kim Jong Un gave a speech where he emphasised the importance of having a powerful military 'generation after generation', again emphasising the security of future generations," Lee told Al Jazeera. "We may view her other two appearances - touring a missile facility and watching the military parade - in the same vein."

For Lee, more evidence is necessary to view Ju Ae's appearances as signalling a succession plan. More likely, the father has unveiled the daughter for his own propaganda benefits as the current leader, rather than for Ju Ae's benefit as a possible future successor. "North Korean television showed the daughter laughing with her father and stroking his face. No North Korean will see those images and think of her as the next in line to the Kim family throne. In short, I believe the photos and videos of the daughter were part of the Kim Jong Un leadership propaganda, not the daughter's propaganda," Lee says. For more than a decade, North

Korean propaganda has focused on Kim's "pragmatism and realistic leadership" style, portraying him as a good family man, and a fatherly figure. In short "a normal human being" to which "the people can relate", she says. Public displays of affection between Kim and his daughter reinforce those themes. Yet the wider political and economic context needs to be considered to better understand Ju Ae's entrance onto the political stage now, Lee says. North Korea has shifted quietly in the past few years from what Lee describes as a policy of "all efforts on the economy" to the prioritising of national defence. Kim's diversion of scarce resources to spending on North Korea's military has occurred despite a deteriorating economic situation in the country.

In March, South Korea said Pyongyang appeared to be dealing with a "grave" food situation. The Stimson Center's 38 North also said the country's 2020-21 harvest had "probably failed to satisfy minimum human needs" and that "food availability has likely fallen below the bare minimum with regard to human needs, and on one metric, is at its worst since the country's famine in the 1990s". Extreme weather and border closures with China due to the COVID-19 pandemic had hit the country's food sector. Food insecurity is not uncommon in North Korea where a devastating famine in the 1990s is believed to have led to the deaths of almost a quarter of a million people, according to conservative estimates. Some say 3.5 million people might have died. With Kim's promises to improve the economic conditions of his people going unfulfilled, he is probably looking for a new propaganda strategy to improve his image while spending on weapons, when in fact it is agriculture that needs booster rockets. "What could be more persuasive and power-

ful than to mobilise the supreme leader's daughter to represent future generations?" Lee asked. Can Ju Ae's posing with her father and flanked by military generals and missiles really take North Koreans' minds off their material problems? Does propaganda work that way?

Propaganda in North Korea is quite unlike anywhere else, says the University of Auckland's Ethan Plaut, an expert on media and communications who has taught courses on political propaganda. North Korea is probably unique in the amount of propaganda produced, coupled with the lack of alternative information due to suppression of almost all other media, a feat which few - if any - authoritarian regimes have achieved, Plaut tells Al Jazeera. "Looking at North Korea, we're really talking about decades-long combination of very strict censorship combined with a kind of flood of propaganda media," Plaut said.

"So I think that it is in some ways really quite different from what we experienced in a lot of the rest of the world." Though Ju Ae's role might be primarily a propaganda prop for her father as he moves ahead with costly military spending, Seoul-based historian Tertitskiy says that being a model father fits comfortably "within the norms of the North Korean ideology". The Kims as hereditary rulers have been hailed as the Great Fathers of North Korea's people, and the apparent affection between Kim and his daughter may not simply be a highly-refined propaganda image. Tertitskiy says it is quite possible that there is a genuine closeness between the daughter and her father - the absolute ruler of one of the world's harshest dictatorships. "Kim Jong Un, at least, he projects an image of a very loyal husband to his wife ... and now also as a good father," Tertitskiy said. "The best ... we can say about this man is that he loves his family."

UN chief hopes Syria's return to AL helps end war

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The UN chief expressed hope that Syria's return to the Arab League and its engagement with regional powers could spur progress in resolving the 13-year Syrian civil war, as Damascus faced pressure to be transparent about chemical weapons. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he believes the region "has a vital role to play in the search for settlement of the conflict," which began with an uprising against President Bashar Assad's rule in 2011 that was met with a violent crackdown. The civil war has killed nearly a half million people, and displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million.

Syria was reinstated in the 22-nation Arab League after a 12-year suspension. It was a symbolic victory for Assad, who can join the group's May 19 summit, though Western sanctions will continue to block reconstruction funds to the war-battered country. Guterres' comments challenged regional players to take a leading role in trying to get the Syrian government and opposition to negotiate an end to the war - something that succeeding UN envoys have been

unable to do. The secretary-general said current special envoy Geir Peterson will "continue to work closely with all key actors," according to his spokesman. At the same time, Syria's chemical weapons program remains a serious and contentious issue. A majority of the world's nations and the global chemical weapons watchdog accuse Damascus of hiding activities, while its close ally Russia defends Assad's actions.

Syria joined the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, or OPCW, in 2013 after being threatened with US airstrikes in response to a chemical attack on the outskirts of the country's capital, Damascus. In an unprecedented vote in April 2021, members of the OPCW voted to suspend Syria's voting rights as a punishment for the repeated use of toxic gas. Investigations by the OPCW twice blamed Syrian government forces for chemical attacks and found "reasonable grounds to believe" it was responsible for another attack. At monthly UN Security Council meetings on Syrian chemical weapons, UN dis-

armament chief Izumi Nakamitsu said Syria has failed to address "identified gaps, inconsistencies, and discrepancies" in its original declaration on its chemical program. Russia's deputy UN ambassador Dmitry Polyanskiy, whose country is a veto-wielding member of the Security Council, accused the OPCW of being an "instrument" of the West and manipulating its investigations to blame Syria.

US deputy ambassador Robert Wood criticized Damascus' failures to answer the OPCW's questions and "Russia's shameless shielding of Syria's defiant behavior," which he said is leaving the Syrian people facing the prospect of further chemical weapons attacks. He said Russia supported the Security Council resolution adopted in 2013 strongly condemning any use of chemical weapons in Syria and ordering it not to use, develop, produce, acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons. But now, he said, instead of supporting it, "Russia has chosen to attack the credibility and professionalism of the OPCW - undermining the UN Charter in the process."

Former UNDP chief and Turkish minister dies

ISTANBUL (AP): Turkish economist, politician and former head of the United Nations Development Program Kemal Dervis died at the age of 74, Turkish news outlets reported.

He was being treated for an unspecified illness in Washington D.C., state-run Anadolu Agency reported, as did BBC Turkish and i24, which first reported the news.

In early 2001, amid the worst economic crisis in Turkey's modern history, Dervis left his job at the World Bank, where he had worked for more than two decades, and joined the government at the invitation of then-Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. Inflation was soaring and the stock market had crashed. As minister of economic affairs, Dervis was largely responsible for the successful three-year economic recovery plan launched that year, which included major structural changes and bank reforms. He also negotiated loans from the International Monetary Fund, a highly unpopular move as deep spending cuts were required. However, they would lead to rapid economic growth resuming in 2002 and a significant reduction of inflation by 2003.

He resigned his ministerial position in August 2002, and was elected as an MP for the main opposition Republican People's Party, known as CHP, in the general elections which took place later that year. In 2005 the United Nations General Assembly unanimously confirmed Kemal Dervis as the administrator of the United Nations Development Program. The post is the third highest in the UN following the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General. He did not seek a second term in 2009 when his four-year term expired. "I learned of Kemal Dervis' passing with great sadness," tweeted academic and Sabanc? University finance chair Ozgur Demirtas. "He is a very important economist and minister. He was the architect behind the recovery from the 2001 crisis. If the reforms Kemal Dervis had wanted not been implemented, Turkey would have been stuck in the 2001 crisis. Condolences." "I am very saddened by the loss of our esteemed minister Kemal Dervis, whose work I valued deeply and who represented our country successfully on the world stage," tweeted former minister and current opposition politician Ali Babacan. Born January 10, 1949, Dervis received his bachelors and masters degrees from the London School of Economics in 1968 and 1970 respectively, and his PhD from Princeton University in 1973.

Turkey's opposition denounces fairness of vote under Erdogan

ISTANBUL (AP): As Turkey heads for presidential and parliamentary elections at the weekend that are shaping up to be the strongest challenge to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in his 20 years as leader, complaints are growing about the fairness of the vote. Turkey's opposition has long said that the country's elections are played out on an uneven playing field, claims often backed by international observers.

Media coverage stands out as the most obvious example of where Erdogan enjoys an advantage over his opponents, but factors such as the use of state resources while campaigning and the questionable interpretation of electoral law also feature. Some 90% of Turkey's media is in the hands of the government or its backers, according to Reporters Without Borders, ensuring overwhelming airtime for the president. Only a handful of opposition newspapers remain in print, most having transitioned to online-only editions. During April, Erdogan received nearly 33 hours of airtime on the main state-run TV station, according to opposition members of the broadcasting watchdog. His presidential opponent, Kemal Kilicdaroglu, received 32 minutes. The main opposition party, the Republican People's Party, or CHP, last month launched legal action against broadcaster TRT for failing to screen its campaign video.

"Unfortunately, the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation has moved away from being an impartial and objective institution and has turned into the Tayyip Radio and Television Corporation," CHP lawmaker Tuncay Ozkan said. The remaining independent media also face increasing restrictions. Last month, broadcasting authority RTUK fined independent channels

Fox News, Halk TV and TELED? over news and commentary deemed a breach of regulations. Ilhan Tasci, an opposition-appointed RTUK member, said in all three cases the stations had been accused of criticizing or questioning ruling-party actions. In a statement following the last presidential and general elections in 2018, observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe noted that Erdogan and his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) enjoyed "an undue advantage, including in excessive coverage by government-affiliated public and private media outlets." The government's reach has also been extended over social media, where many opposition voices have retreated. A "disinformation" law introduced in October allows a jail sentence of up to three years for spreading false information "with the sole aim of creating anxiety, fear or panic among the public."

Sinan Aygul, the only journalist to be prosecuted under the new law, was handed a 10-month prison term in February. He is currently free while appealing the case. "The real aim is to silence all dissident voices in society," said Aygul, chair of the journalists association in Bitlis, southeastern Turkey. It is "a law that targets anyone who expresses an opinion."

It targets not only individuals but also media organs," he said. The ill-defined law creates crimes from "basic journalistic activities," Aygul said, adding that it could be used during the elections to target groups seeking to protect ballot box security who use social media to highlight abuses. "If there is going to be fraud in the election, all opposition channels will be silenced by using this law," he said.

The imposition of a state of emergency over the 11 provinces hit by February's earthquake has also raised concerns about how the polls will be conducted in the region. A UN report published April 11 said at least 3 million people had relocated from their homes in the quake zone, many of them heading to other parts of Turkey. However, just 133,000 people from the earthquake region have registered to vote outside their home provinces, the head of the Supreme Election Council said last month. Ahmet Yener added that election officials are overseeing preparations, including polling stations at temporary shelters. In 2018, a nationwide state of emergency imposed following a 2016 coup attempt was in place until shortly before the election, which the OSCE said restricted the media and freedoms of assembly and expression. Erdogan has stepped up his public appearances, which are closely followed by most TV channels, and uses these official duties to attack his rivals.

Attending a ceremony month to mark renovations to Istanbul's Blue Mosque, he accused the opposition of "working with terrorist groups." The previous evening, the leaders of four political parties allied to the AKP were present for an event to launch the delivery of Black Sea natural gas, despite none holding any government position. Other large projects that were rolled out ahead of the vote include Turkey's first nuclear power reactor built by Rosatom, the Russian state nuclear energy company, and several defense developments. Critics also point to the bending of election law to allow government ministers to stand as parliamentary candidates while remaining in office, despite legal requirements to the contrary.

After two mass shootings, Serbians rally against violence

BELGRADE (Agencies): Tens of thousands of Serbians rallied in the capital Belgrade, demanding better security, a ban on violent content on TV and the resignation of key ministers, days after two separate mass shootings. Crowds in numbers not seen in the Balkan country for years solemnly marched through the city centre behind a banner that read "Serbia Against Violence". "We have gathered here to pay our last respects, to do our best so this never happens again, anywhere," said Borivoje Plecevic from Belgrade.

A schoolboy who brought two handguns to his school killed eight pupils and a security guard. Six other pupils and a teacher were wounded. The following evening, a 21-year-old man, brandishing an assault rifle and a pistol, killed eight and wounded 14 people in central Serbia. Both shooters surrendered to the police. Protesters and opposition supporters demanded a shutdown of TV stations and tabloids they accuse of promoting violent and vulgar content. They are also demanding a ban on pro-government newspapers that regularly stoke tension with articles targeting political dissidents. "We demand an immediate stop to further promotion of violence in the media and public space, as well as responsibility for the

long-standing inadequate response from competent authorities," the leftist Let's Not Let Belgrade Drown party said in a statement.

"We are here because we can't wait any longer. We've waited too long, we've been silent too long, we've turned our heads too long," Marina Vidoevic, an elementary school teacher, told the crowd. "We want safe schools, streets, villages and cities for all children." Opposition parties and some rights groups accuse President Aleksandar Vucic and his ruling Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) of autocracy, oppressing media freedoms, violence against political opponents, cronyism, corruption, and ties with organised crime. Vucic and his allies deny this. Protesters also called for the resignations of Interior Minister Bratislav Gasic and Aleksandar Vulin, the director of the state security agency, and the dismissal of the government's Regulatory Authority for Electronic Media (REM) within a week. The country's Education Minister Branko Ruzic stepped down, citing the "cataclysmic tragedy" caused by last week's school shooting in his resignation letter. Demonstrators also demanded an emergency parliamentary session and a debate about the overall security situation. "[This is

an act of] solidarity against ... violence in media, in the parliament, in everyday life ... solidarity because of lost children," said Snezana, a woman in her 60s who declined to give her last name. Similar protests were held in several other Serbian cities. Vucic's SNS slammed the demonstrations, calling the opposition groups participating in the rally "faceless evil ... that dares to use a national tragedy for their own interest", according to local media.

Following the shootings, Vucic vowed to "disarm" Serbia with an ambitious plan that would crack down on legal and illicit firearms in the country. Police started a one-month amnesty for surrendering illegal weapons. It said more than 1,500 were handed over on the first day. In addition to existing gun laws, Vucic announced police checks of registered gun owners. Serbia has the highest level of gun ownership in Europe, with roughly 39 of 100 people owning firearms, according to the Small Arms Survey research group. Serbia has a deeply entrenched gun culture, and along with the rest of the Western Balkans is awash with military-grade weapons and ordnance in private hands after the wars of the 1990s that tore apart the former Yugoslavia.

Canada expelling Chinese diplomat over alleged legislator threats

TORONTO (Agencies): Canada is expelling a Chinese diplomat after Zhao Wei was accused of being involved in a campaign to intimidate a Canadian opposition legislator critical of Beijing. In a statement, Foreign Minister Melanie Joly said the Canadian government has designated Zhao, a diplomat based in Toronto, "persona non grata." "I have been clear: we will not tolerate any form of foreign interference in our internal affairs. Diplomats in Canada have been warned that if they engage in this type of behaviour, they will be sent home," Joly said.

The Chinese government has rejected the allegations that it interfered in Canada's internal affairs, saying last week that it has "no interest whatsoever in doing so". The Chinese embassy in Ottawa released a statement on its website, condemning the expulsion and reiterating its position that Beijing has never meddled in Canada's domestic affairs. The statement also added that the embassy had lodged a formal complaint with the Chinese government. "China will resolutely take counter-measures," the statement warned. "If the Canadian side acts recklessly, China will definitely fight back resolutely and forcefully." Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government has been under pressure to take action after the Globe and Mail newspaper reported earlier this month that China had sought infor-

mation about any relatives of a Canadian legislator "who may be located" within its borders. The move was likely part of an effort to "make an example of this MP and deter others" from taking anti-China positions, the newspaper said, citing Canada's spy agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). While the CSIS report did not name the lawmaker, the Globe said a national security source identified the targeted politician as Michael Chong, a member of the opposition Conservative Party of Canada.

China sanctioned Chong in 2021 after he spearheaded a Canadian parliamentary motion condemning Beijing's treatment of its Uighur Muslim minority as a "genocide" - a charge rejected by the Chinese government for years. "It shouldn't have taken this long," Chong said during a news conference, responding to Canada's announcement that it was blacklisting Zhao, the Chinese diplomat. "We have known for years that the PRC [People's Republic of China] is using its accredited diplomats here in Canada to target Canadians and their families," Chong said. "I hope that this makes it clear to not just the PRC but other authoritarian states that have representation here in Canada that this crossing the line of diplomacy into foreign interference threat activities is utterly unacceptable here on Canadian soil." The accusations this month have led

to renewed tensions between Ottawa and Beijing. The two countries have had frosty relations for several years over a range of issues, including human rights, trade, and the arrests of Canadian and Chinese citizens. Canada summoned the Chinese ambassador to the country over the allegations of intimidation against Chong, stressing that it was mulling all necessary measures to defend its sovereignty. Mao Ning, a spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, hit back by accusing the Canadian government of advancing a "groundless smear" against China's diplomatic and consular mission in Canada. "A handful of Canadian politicians and media have hyped up a fabricated story of 'China targeting a Canadian lawmaker', which is nothing but a political stunt that grew out of ideological bias," Mao said during a news conference last week. "I want to stress that the Chinese diplomatic and consular personnel in Canada always abide by relevant international conventions and perform their duties in accordance with the law. The Chinese side will take necessary measures to firmly safeguard its own interests." Joly, Canada's foreign minister, said that decision to blacklist Zhao came "after careful consideration of all factors at play". "We remain firm in our resolve that defending our democracy is one of the utmost importance," she said.

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What next after Khan’s arrest

PAKISTAN Tehreek-e- Insaf (PTI) Chief, Imran Khan had been arrested by the LEAs from inside the premises of Islamabad High Court yesterday afternoon when Khan appeared before the court in connection with the cases previously registered against him on various grounds. Media reports and images circulating over social media show that Imran Khan, a former Prime Minister was dragged and pushed into a vehicle by the LEAs and transferred to an undisclosed location. Khan himself and his security guards were beaten by the Police and their bleeding injuries were caught by the cameras and broadcasted by media around the globe. According to a press statement issued by National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Imran Khan was arrested by the NAB authorities in a corruption case involving Al Qadir Trust. Meanwhile, the Chief Justice Islamabad High Court expressed annoyance over the arrest of the PTI Chief from the premises of the court and censured the Inspector General Police Islamabad and Secretary Interior over extreme violation of the code of conduct and sanctity of the court's jurisdiction.

Currently, the state of Pakistan was witnessing extreme violence and anarchy after the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) arrested the PTI Chief on alleged corruption in the Al Qadir Trust case involving misappropriation worth \$ 190 million. The PTI workers and followers of the popular leader came to the streets and blocked the busy roads and highways across the country. Meanwhile, violent protestors burnt down private vehicles, damaged public properties and government buildings, and a furious mob attacked the military installations GHQ, Corp Commandar Residence in Lahore, and multiple other installations in the country. There is still an atmosphere of fear, insecurity, and uncertainty, while schools, public offices, and private firms announced a holiday on Wednesday due to the poor law and order situation in most parts of the country. Amid heightened unrest and anarchy, the Federal Minister for Interior held a press conference to give an overview of the situation. According to him, Imran Khan was arrested on charges of corruption related to Al Qadir Trust and property tycoon Malik Riaz. Sanaullah rudely suggested that Khan should be transferred to a rehabilitation Centre and that's where the investigation should be done for him. While apprising the nation about the events leading to the arrest of the former Prime Minister and the situation thereafter, the Interior Minister blatantly correlated this arrest with the prosecution and conviction of the former Prime Minister and PML-N supremo Mian Nawaz Sharif by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the Panama Leaks case, that gave the bad impression and further incited violence in the already furious protestors and PTI's sympathizers.

Realistically, Pakistan fell prey to the egoistic politics of its leaders, and political groups, along with the biased policies and decisions of the institutions that mostly played on behalf of the ruling elite instead of performing their constitutional duties and upholding the rule of the law. Currently, the entire government system and public institutions including the LEAs are dysfunctional due to the ongoing political tussle and divided on the party lines instead of sticking to their constitutional role. The incumbent coalition government used this situation tactfully and steered things in its favor. Although, the conduct of the PTI Chairman mostly remained controversial, particularly on the issue of social media defamation campaigns against the state institutions and accusations against serving military officers from the premier Intelligence service, the ISI. However, the government and state institutions can handle this issue tactfully by obliging Mr. Khan to provide proof of his claims regarding state involvement in his failed assassination bid last year and multiple other issues. While the government's Ministers must not offer media statements and jubilate the arrest of the PTI Chief while disassociating themselves from the NAB's actions and courts' decisions.

Realistically, insane politics and egoistic leadership have pushed the country into a civil insurgency, a state of chaos and confusion. The enemies of Pakistan are celebrating the triumph that Pakistani leaders played on their behalf and sunk the country into a grave situation, which was otherwise not possible. At this point, political leaders across the spectrum must observe restraints, and sense must prevail as ego, and hostility will fulfill the goals of the enemy and strength the nondemocratic forces in the country. The government must ensure the safety and security along with the basic human and legal rights of the former Prime Minister during his detention and onward legal process, while the PTI leadership must be kept on board during the complete legal process so the situation could be brought under the control and public life come to normal at the earliest.

Ukraine’s fate rests on its imminent counteroffensive

THE war in Ukraine is approaching a tipping point. Russia's army has struggled to make meaningful advances after months of trying, unable even to capture the ruined town of Bakhmut. A persistent inability to establish air superiority, low troop morale, and equipment shortages all suggest President Vladimir Putin's military machine will soon be incapable of mounting meaningful offensive operations.

One key to successful military planning lies in reliably identifying new ways to derive the greatest strategic benefit at the lowest overall cost. Ukraine's decision to vigorously defend Bakhmut is an excellent example of this, even though it runs contrary to the logic that there was little strategic value in doing so. By throwing its own forces into Bakhmut, Ukraine has tied up a large proportion of the Russian military, inflicting heavy losses. Its approach is both a strategy of corrosion - the gradual attrition of the invader - and absorption, soaking up repeated Russian assaults while taking the pressure off other

parts of the conflict zone. This has led to several important payoffs for Ukraine. First, Moscow's commanders have been unable to shift forces to another axis of advance.

Second, the loss of personnel and materiel means Russia has fewer bodies and less equipment available for its war effort. Third, it has created a buffer to construct Ukrainian defensive fortifications once Bakhmut finally falls. Finally, it has bought time to train and equip its forces for its own counteroffensive operations. One of the most important decisions President Volodymyr Zelensky will have to make is the timing of the counteroffensive. Ukraine's forces will want to advance under optimal conditions to liberate as much of its territory as possible before winter closes in again. Failure to do so will not only weaken Kyiv's hand in any peace negotiations but also potentially leave large swathes of Ukraine under Russian control for the foreseeable future. Russia's forces are aware the strategic momentum will shift once Ukraine counterattacks and have been constructing tank

traps, trenches and other defensive fortifications to arrest its momentum. Put simply, it's absolutely crucial for Ukraine that its counteroffensive succeeds. If it doesn't, the international coalition that has kept Ukraine in the fight with arms, training, and aid may well come to favor a negotiated settlement.

Domestic politics will inevitably play a role in shaping the United States' thinking as its election season gains momentum. While both sides of US politics are fairly solidly behind continuing to send weapons and equipment to Kyiv, that may change. Indeed, the surest way to encourage US populist isolationists will be a stalled Ukrainian advance. And since a multinational coalition is only as strong as its weakest link, Ukrainian planners will likewise be anxious not to give Berlin or Paris cause to waver. Besides the need to maintain international support for the full restoration of Ukrainian sovereignty, planning for offensive operations rests fundamentally on Kyiv's ability to conduct them. Attacking is

Matthew Sussex

far more costly than defending. A counteroffensive launched before Kyiv has had the chance to recruit, prepare, arm, and assemble the necessary personnel would peter out quickly. Such a failure would deal a harsh blow to Ukrainian morale, hand momentum back to Russia, and lead to a pointless loss of life. Much discussion of Ukraine's war needs has centered on tanks and air power. Of course, these are very important, yet neither can hold territory. For that, you need ground forces - and lots of them.

What's more, many of the likely lines of Ukrainian advance will feature choke points and vulnerable terrain. The retreating Russian army can be counted on to use mines, ambushes and scorched-earth tactics to funnel viable routes for the Ukrainians into impenetrable and risky ones. That means Ukrainian forces will also need specialized equipment and personnel, from bridging units to those specializing in clearing terrain. It's widely believed that the Ukrainian counterattack will occur

around the southeastern Zaporizhzhia region (made famous by its regularly besieged nuclear power plant). But war is about trying to gain strategic surprise, at which Ukraine's armed forces have shown themselves to be adept. Crimea will remain one of the thorniest problems in the war's eventual resolution. The official position of the Zelensky government is clear: there can be no peace with Russia until Ukraine is fully restored, which includes the Crimean peninsula seized by Russia in 2014. This is understandable. Any hint of willingness to concede territory signals weakness domestically, to the Kremlin, and internationally. Importantly, Ukraine retains agency. It will ultimately decide on the scope and location of its counteroffensive. But several factors make Crimea a potentially special case. It's well-defended and hard to assault. There are only about 10 roads linking the peninsula to the Kherson region and Western supporters of Ukraine remain concerned that Putin's deep personal and political investment in Crimea would make a Ukrainian

attempt to recapture it one of the Kremlin's "red lines" for further escalation. The lead-up to Ukraine's imminent counteroffensive has so far been patient and careful, focusing on maximizing operational success. With more than a year of evidence to go by, we can expect Ukraine's armed forces to perform better than their Russian adversaries. Time and again, Kyiv's approach has been nimble, creative and efficient given limited means. Ukraine's commanders have also sensibly followed the maxim of not interrupting your enemy while they are making a mistake (perhaps the sole thing Russia's forces have excelled at).

But the stakes for Ukraine are no less than its national survival. Its success or failure will determine whether its future will revolve around rebuilding a damaged but restored state, or the pain of fashioning an existence in a shattered and partial one. And the repercussions outside Ukraine will be no less solemn, teaching dictators either that expansionism is rewarded, or that it's a catastrophic mistake.

The Moscow Times

A safe distance is key following the settlement of international disputes

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

FOLLOWING the resolution of any long-simmering regional or international dispute involving two major regional geopolitical states, both of which wield massive influence over regional and even international affairs, the leaderships and elites in both states long to present visions and proposals to maximize their gains and interests in the post-settlement era.

The models of politics and governance determine each party's perceptions, as well as the degree to which each is devoted to observing the rules and norms and upholding international legitimacy. Furthermore, the contentious issues, the extent to which they intersect, the duration of the dispute and the extent of its recurrence over successive periods of time impact and shape the perceptions of each disputant party.

Previous resolutions of various regional and global conflicts suggest that, when a party to the conflict complies with laws and norms and maintains international legitimacy, its strategy in developing a workable proposal for managing an effective post-conflict relationship with the other party - a party that has prioritized a sectarian policy, embraced a sectarian geopolitical outlook buttressed by constitutional

provisions and whose record confirms that it never pays any heed to laws or to international legitimacy - must be guided by a vision based on, among other features, the creation of a safe distance. The institutions of this party should adopt a balanced and carefully calculated approach that encourages and even creates opportunities, but at the same time is not heedless to the negative practices of the other party.

A safe distance would allow the state to preserve its credibility and maintain a neutral position toward regional and global issues, especially since such a conscientious party and its political, cultural and media institutions, in compliance with international law, played a major role in the preceding decades of regional and global mobilization against the party whose compliance is questionable based on its historical record. This first party, in compliance with international laws and norms, has succeeded to a great degree in providing countries and their institutions with irrefutable proof and articles of evidence confirming the dangers posed by the opposing party's policies in a way that enabled this complying party to gain the confidence of several international entities.

The focus placed by this law-abiding party on keep-

ing a safe distance and ensuring the adversarial party's compliance with international laws gives the latter the impression that the policies of exerting pressure, imposing isolation and enforcing further restrictive sanctions would be reinstated if it continues its usual failure to comply with the pledges and promises made in the settlement agreement. The law-abiding party, which already complies with international laws, should not concede all the levers of power at once. On the contrary, any concessions should be carefully considered, calculated and based on the extent to which the opposing party responds positively to the outstanding issues, as long as it does so in a way that does not adversely impact the future of their relationship. Maintaining such a safe distance therefore allows the compliant state to act as an acceptable intermediary in resolving several disputes, maximizing its regional and global role and status.

Any failure to maintain such a safe distance in the post-settlement era would negatively impact and undermine the party that has spent years building an excellent global reputation with friendly nations and partners. This would also have the unintentional

effect of confirming for the party whose compliance is questioned that there is some truth in its accusations against the opposing, law-abiding party, which it accuses of having sought over the years to demonize it to achieve political objectives that serve no interests but its own.

Hence, the party whose compliance is in question would claim that all of the proof, research studies and media reports issued by its adversaries were biased and politically motivated. This could have negative consequences if the law-abiding party and its institutions were prompted to act in case the doubts about the other party's intent not to honor its commitments and obligations in the future proved true. This scenario is still very likely. As a result, a strategy should be developed that accounts for the possibility of the party whose compliance is in question breaching its commitments and obligations at any time. There are a host of motives and incentives that demonstrate and underline the necessity of maintaining a safe distance, including the worldview, well-established principles and tenets of the regime ruling the party whose compliance is questioned, along with its lengthy record of noncompliance

with laws and norms and its failure to attain international legitimacy. All of the aforementioned make a safe distance not only prudent but essential, along with a keen awareness of the questionable party's ideology and pragmatic strategies - depending on the extent of the gains and the nature of the phase - to achieve the objectives of its ideological and geopolitical policies as defined by the constitution.

This is especially true if the assessments of the responsible party suggest that the noncompliant party's shifts are tactical and driven by expediency and the circumstances dictated by the current stage, as well as by the huge impact of the pressures and embargo placed on it. Also, the need for a safe distance is a must even if the law-abiding party possesses no solid proof that such shifts indicate a strategic transformation in the behavior of the party whose compliance is questioned. In conclusion, the tempo of regional and global geopolitical shifts has significantly gathered pace, driven by the complex intersections of issues, competing agendas and the contest of regional and global wills, particularly in light of the exacerbation of crises and the emergence of unexpected regional and global disputes ignited primarily by

world powers vying for global leadership. As a result, it is necessary to foresee and plan for scenarios and eventualities that may arise as a result of the current geopolitical scene and equations.

Lastly, the question that arises is: What will be the response and reaction in case of potential shifts that favor the party whose compliance is questioned, especially if it again pushes to abandon its commitments, particularly if we link such an abandonment to its well-established tenets and long history of noncompliance with its international commitments? A solution certainly exists that presents multiple visions for managing the new era in a way that maintains interests and maximizes gains by keeping a safe distance. This will create a tool of constant pressure on the party whose compliance is in question, since it will feel that there is always a possibility that the policies that imposed pressure and siege on it could be reinstated, with the same previous degree of credibility, impartiality and international mobilization against it in case it reneges on its obligations. This would form part of an interim, flexible and watertight national strategy well suited to the circumstances dictated by each stage and in accordance with the positive progress made on the thorny issues of priority.

As the Ukraine war grinds on, Russia is becoming a cultural wasteland

William Fear

didn't care about the novels written in Russia, because literature was no longer where people got their news and ideas. The second reason for Putin's historically tolerant stance towards Russia's writing community was that, when he came to power, he was trying to create a different kind of dictatorship. Rather than controlling every aspect of people's lives as the Soviets did, Putin wanted to deceive the world - and indeed the Russian people themselves - into thinking that the country was a European democracy.

When questions were asked about the legitimacy of Russia's democracy, the Kremlin could point to regular, free elections, a free press and a thriving literary culture. It was in fact in Putin's interest to allow writers - even, and especially, political dissidents - to write freely. I recently spoke to Mikhail Shishkin, a renowned Russian novelist and dissident now living in Switzerland. During the late 90s and early 2000s, the Russian Federation worked to support and export its writers, Shishkin said. This was an official project of the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Media (???????? or Rospechat), and an organisation called Institut

Perevoda gave financial support to publishers so Russian books could be translated and read outside the country. The purpose was to create a dignified facade; a human face for what was then a crypto-authoritarian regime. "You have to understand that the new hybrid dictatorship pretended to be a free country, and worked with writers in a different way [to the Soviets]," said Shishkin. But by 2013, Shishkin had had it. He refused to represent Russia at an international book fair in New York, and wrote an open letter to Rospechat lambasting the political class of his country. He stated that the Russian government had "created a situation in the country that is absolutely unacceptable and demeaning for its people and its great culture", that he was "ashamed" to be a citizen of Russia.

Of course, everything changed last February. When the tanks rolled across the Ukrainian border, the era of pragmatic tolerance under Putin ended. Rospechat was dissolved in 2021 and its role was absorbed into a different agency: the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor). This is a

truly sinister organisation that is responsible for monitoring and policing internet traffic in Russia. A data leak from Roskomnadzor obtained by the Belarusian hacker group known as Cyber Partisans revealed that Roskomnadzor is working to censor undesirable content online in both Russia and in Belarus, as well as compiling a list of individuals who may be designated "foreign agents". Arguably, the danger involved in speaking out against Putin is greater now than it has been in the recent past, but so is the need for people to do so. Writers, of all people in society, have a duty to speak the truth, and to choose silence is to commit creative suicide. This is why so many of Russia's greatest cultural figures live in Europe and the United States: exile provides a level of safety and freedom not possible in Russia. This situation is deeply paradoxical. Part of Putin's justification for the invasion of Ukraine was to save the Russian culture and language from a supposed neo-Nazi persecution in Ukraine, but all the war has done is accelerate the flight of the brightest and best from Russian soil. Evgeny Kissin plays the piano in Prague, Vladimir Ashkenazy in Switzerland. Boris Akunin now writes from London, Lyudmila

Ulitskaya from Berlin. The more artists leave, the more homogenous Russia will become culturally, leaving only the pro-Putin types behind. A few notable artists and writers still work under Putin on the Presidential Council for Culture and Art. By being on this council, all these figures are overtly expressing support for the Putin regime and, by extension, the war in Ukraine. Taken to its extreme, Russia risks becoming a cultural Potemkin: immaculate plasterwork on the outside, crumbling masonry within. Many in the west have suggested a boycott of Russian culture in response to the war. But this tactic plays precisely into Putin's rhetoric: that the west hates Russia and always has. On the contrary, it is vital that thinking people everywhere support Russian dissidents: by buying their books, going to their concerts and attending their exhibitions. But this said, people must also remember to make the distinction between Russian dissidents and Kremlin loyalists. In a sense, the war has split Russia cleanly in two: between those with moral conviction and those without. A war is not just being fought on the steppes of Ukraine, but in the psyche of one of the world's greatest cultures.

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



PSX's 100-index loses 455.68 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) declined by 455.68 points on Tuesday, showing a negative change of 1.09 per cent, closing at 41,373.81 points against 41,829.49 points the previous day.

A total of 203,054,036 shares were traded during the day as compared to 79,050,431 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 5.847 billion against Rs 4.761 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 350 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 82 of them recorded gains and 255 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 13 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 31,001,582

shares at Rs 1.16 per share, National Bank XD with 10,607,500 shares at Rs 21.08 per share, and K-Electric Ltd with 8,268,206 shares at Rs 1.99 per share.

Rafhan Maize XD witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 39.75 per share price, closing at Rs 8249.75, whereas the runner-up was Siemens Pak, with a Rs 33.51 rise in its per share price to Rs 634.

Fazal Cloth witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 10.76 per share closing at Rs 135.91, followed by Mari Petroleum with a Rs 9.58 decline to close at Rs 1550.74.

Rupee gains 99 paisas against Dollar

Pakistani rupee gained 99 paisas against the Dollar in the interbank trading on Tuesday as it closed at Rs 284.84 against the previous

day's closing of Rs283.85.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of Dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 287 and Rs 289.5, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 94 paisas to close at Rs 312.68 against the last day's closing of Rs 313.65, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen gained 01 paisa to close at Rs 2.11, whereas a surge of 18 paisas was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 358.98 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 358.80.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal went up by 27 paisas each to close at Rs 77.56 and Rs 75.95, respectively.

Gold prices up by Rs3200 to Rs230,100 per tola

The per tola price of 24-karat gold increased by Rs 3200 and was sold at Rs 230,100 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs 226,900 the previous day, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also increased by Rs 2744 to Rs 197,274 from Rs 194,5330, whereas the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold went up to Rs 180,834 from Rs 178,319.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs 100 to close at Rs 3000 and that of ten-gram silver also rose by Rs 85.72 to close at Rs 2572.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$ 09 to close at \$2031 against the sale of \$2022, the Association reported.



WASHINGTON, DC: Minister of State for Petroleum Musadik Masood meeting with Regional Director for Indo-Pacific USTDA Verinda Fike and Country Manager for Indo-Pacific Region at USTDA Tanvi Madhusudan.

Wheat price jumps to Rs5,100 per 40kg in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Despite of boom season of wheat crops, the price for a 40kg bag of wheat has jumped to Rs. 5,100 in Lahore against the government's fixed rate of Rs. 3,900, according to media reports on Tuesday.

The flour mills association representative said the government's rate is not being implemented in the market as per 40kg wheat being is being sold at Rs. 5,100 in Lahore against the government's fixed rate of Rs. 3,900.

He added that due to the increase in the wheat price, the rate of 20kg flour bag has jumped to Rs. 2,750 against the govt's rate of Rs. 2,316.

The Flour millers said they cannot sell the wheat at the lower rates after getting the wheat at an exorbitant rate from the open market.

Last month, the officials of the Punjab Food Department foiled an attempt to smuggle wheat and flour to Afghanistan. Over 70 containers loaded with wheat and flour were being smuggled from Islamabad Motorway. District food authority officials said 46 containers loaded with wheat and 16 containers of flour were seized during checking.

The wheat and flour were being smuggled from Punjab to Afghanistan. The containers were sealed while 16 people were booked. It may be noted that there is a ban on the transportation of wheat from the province.

Pak-US agree to develop roadmap for pursuing new businesses

WASHINGTON, DC, (INP): Pakistan and United States have agreed to develop a roadmap for pursuing new businesses in green and renewable energy sector both in public and private sector. The US side would provide financial and technical expertise for undertaking feasibility studies for mutually agreed projects.

A delegation of Pakistani businessmen would be visiting the United States along their counterparts from Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand to study methane abatement technologies and conversion of bio-methane into fertilizers during the first quarter of the next year.

During the meeting of Minister of State for Petroleum, Musadik Masood Malik with

Verinda Fike, Regional Director for the Indo-Pacific for the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and Tanvi Madhusudan, Country Manager for the Indo-Pacific Region at USTDA, the two sides discussed in detail ways and means to enhance productivity in the energy sector and plugging Pakistan into global value chain through innovative technologies and creative business models.

Various ideas surrounding ensure energy security, affordability and sustainability in wake of various challenges including the phenomenon of erratic climate change and its socio-economic impact on Pakistan.

The US side showed great interest in pursuing

projects related to green ammonia, green hydrogen and renewables in Pakistan.

Musadik Malik reiterated that Pakistan in collaboration with the US would like to trail blazer the transition towards clean and green energy in the developing world.

He invited US side to visit Pakistan at the earliest to explore possibility of undertaking joint ventures and projects in energy sector including exploration and tapping of its onshore and offshore energy assets.

The Minister assured that his office would serve as facilitator for US investors for expeditious implementation of new business ideas. "Red tapism would be turned into red carpet," he concluded.

Charge'd Affairs, Embassy of China calls on Finance Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Charge'd Affairs, Embassy of the People's Republic of China Pang Chunxue on Tuesday called on Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and conveyed best wishes and greetings from Qin Gang, the State Councillor and Foreign Minister of China.

The two sides discussed various avenues, especially

available for both countries in order to enhance the existing cooperation to unprecedented levels. They also discussed the progress on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects and programs in Pakistan, said a press release.

The minister also highlighted the deep-rooted historical bilateral relations between Pakistan and China and commended the

Chinese support to Pakistan on multiple fronts. He also underscored the need to deepen bilateral relations further in the economic, trade, and financial sectors.

Senator Ishaq Dar said that with the support of China, Pakistan would become a growing economy in the region as well as the world soon.

Pang Chunxue reciprocated the sentiments and

admired the friendly relations between the two countries. She guaranteed the continuous support of the Chinese government to the people of Pakistan.

She praised the huge potential of Pakistan in agriculture, Industry, IT, and services sectors. Chunxue said that China wishes to work together with Pakistan to bring economic prosperity to the region.

LCCI Standing Committee on International Fairs meets

LAHORE (APP): The LCCI Standing Committee on International Fairs, Exhibitions and Delegations, held a meeting with its Convener Rao Khurshid in the chair here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Tuesday.

Chaudhry Khadim Hussain, Mian Jabbar Khalid, Mudassar Masood Chaudhry, Anser Saeed Butt and others attended the meeting.

On this occasion, the Convener Rao Khurshid said that due to Corona out-

break, the exchange of trade delegations at international level had decreased during last few years, which created a lot of problems for Pakistani importers and exporters also.

He said, "With the end of Corona pandemic, the world is now returning to normal routine, so we also have to look ahead and activate the LCCI Standing Committee for International Fairs, Exhibitions and Delegations."

Rao Khurshid said that the committee was plan-

ning to send trade delegations to Europe, Middle East, Far East, Korea and Japan with the objective of exploring new opportunities for trade and investment and joint ventures.

He said that trade delegations were very important in finding new markets and buyers, and increasing exports.

He also emphasized the need to participate in international exhibitions and trade fairs.

Rao Khurshid said that as a Convener, he wished to

send more trade delegations abroad but due to the prevailing economic conditions, the business community was not able to avail such best opportunities.

He also called upon the government to resolve problems of high markup, low exports, devaluation of rupee, high production cost, cumbersome taxation and stuckup containers at the ports.

Rao added that there should also be special focus on import substitution and increase in exports.

Asian markets mostly down as US inflation moves into focus

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets struggled Tuesday as investors eyed the release of US inflation data later in the week that could play a key role in shaping the Federal Reserve's interest rate plans.

While the region enjoyed a healthy start to the week, there remains plenty of nervousness on

trading floors after last week's upheaval in the US banking sector that hampered financial stocks.

The turmoil saw the sale of the embattled First Republic Bank to JPMorgan Chase and came just two months after the collapse of three other regional banks and the takeover of Credit Suisse by UBS.

Still, while a much-anticipated Fed survey of banks showed tighter lending standards in the first few months of the year, which they see lasting through 2023, analysts said the reading was not as bad

as feared.

Asked about their outlook for lending standards over the rest of 2023, "banks reported expecting to tighten standards across all loan categories", the central bank reported.

National Australia Bank's Rodrigo Catril said: "The survey revealed a modest deterioration in lending standards to business at a rate that was slightly higher than in January.

"But, after concerns over the health of US regional banks, the good news is that the survey did not (yet)

reveal evidence of a major credit crunch."

Focus is now on Wednesday's consumer price index report for April and the following day's wholesale prices data.

A drop in the inflation reading in recent months has fanned hopes that the Fed will soon pause its tightening campaign and even begin cutting by the end of the year, with the banking crisis reinforcing that view.

After lifting borrowing costs last week, officials hinted at a possible hold at their June meeting.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Razaq Civil Judge-VI, Bannu, Suit No. 47/I institution 20.03.2023 Next date of hearing is 31.05.2023 Title: Sifat Ullah Khan etc. Vs Naimat Ullah Khan etc. To: 28, Kifayat Ullah Khan 31. Sawed Khan Sons Khanzada Khan R/o Sokari Hafizan Tehsil & District Bannu, presently Abroad. The defendants are informed through this notice to appear in this court on 31.05.2023. After this no excuse would be accepted and ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Kiran Noor Judge Family Court, Tehsil Matta, Swat, Case No. 326/FC institution 2022. Hearing date 27/05/2023. Saima Bibi Vs. Muhammad Ayaz etc. Notice to: Defendant No. 1. Muhammad Ayaz s/o Muhammad Qayum r/o Wenai Tehsil Matta, Swat, presently, Saudi Arab. Whereas, Respondents cannot be served in ordinary manner. It is proclaimed in this Court on 27/05/23 at 8.00 am ex-parte proceeding will be taken against you. Seal of the Court.

Mufti Asad Gul

Fintech has a history which goes back many centuries. It is not something new. Technological advancements, in whichever form, have always refreshed the way finance and money management have worked in previous centuries. Finance and technology have been inextricably intertwined since the very beginning. If we look at the earliest days of finance dating back thousands of years, the initial impact of technology was in the context of building systems for keeping records of government finances or payments for taxes and agricultural production. Bartering is said to be a common practice in earlier times, but the innovation of money as a medium of exchange redefined transactions.

Money is a form of technology that allows us to physically handle the ideas embedded in finance. Hence, financial technology has a very, very long history indeed. Caliph Abdul Malik ibn Marwan intro-

duced the first Islamic dinar and dirham in the year 76 Hijrah. During the Mamluk dynasty (872-922 A.H/1468-1517 CE), Ful's (copper coins) came into existence to use in small commercial transactions. Its purchasing power was very limited, being for common daily needs of life. In the Ottoman empire, money was further developed. The Ottomans produced the currency named Qaimah in the form of paper money.

In 1914, the Ottomans officially declared that paper money was the only legal tender for the medium of exchange. Similarly, cheques and debt certificates allowed for the flow of funds at a faster rate than ever before. Cashless transactions were another financial technology breakthrough which increased market efficiency.

In the early Islamic era, the Islamic literature makes references to the word Sakk, meaning certificate or order of payment. Sakk was another form of technology; papers representing financial obligations origi-

nating from trade and commercial activities.

Other technologies which have reshaped finance include the evolution of the joint stock company or the corporation, forms of financing like banking, or, more recently, stocks. Although the positive and negative impacts of these technologies are debated, they have changed the landscape of the financial system.

The 19th century flourished with the technological creation of financial infrastructure. In this age, new systems like the telegraph, transatlantic cables, steamships, and railroads assembled financial inter linkages between countries, allowing for the rapid transmission of trades, transports, and money transfers worldwide.

1838 saw the development of the telegraph. Giovanni Caselli invented the pantelegraph in 1865. This technology is most famous for the method in which banking transactions verified signatures. Not so long after, in 1866, the first transatlantic cable was

The tale of Islamic Fintech

devised. This transatlantic cable facilitated the first cross-border financial transaction in the late 19th century.

It allowed financial centers such as New York, London, and Paris to communicate and exchange data. Towards the end of the 19th century, Barclays Bank launched its Cairo branch to process financial transactions related to the construction of the Suez Canal. This led Sharia Scholars to object and declare the conventional banking system as non-compliant with Islamic principles.

This was a major catalyst in developing the Islamic financial system. Most of the underlying development to support Islamic Fintech occurred in the 20th century. Of course, no century's development can be negated; every previous century has supported the development of the subsequent century.

The 20th century's development would not have been possible if the people of the 19th century did not innovate and push

themselves. History works in layers. One generation passes its legacies to the next and each of them build on top of their ancestors' technologies.

During the Second World War, countries exerted all their efforts in developing codes for secure communications, especially in military and intelligence operations. Not only were countries looking to develop encrypted methods to communicate - their endeavors to crack and break codes increased too. Encoding and decoding led to the development of computer technologies and artificial intelligence, too. The 1950s saw the development of credit cards with Diners Club and American Express launching their cards.

The 1960s witnessed Quotron Systems introduce the Quotron in 1960, the first electronic system to provide selected stock market quotations to brokers through desktop terminals. The global telex network was established in 1966, which played a crucial role in providing the communications necessary for the

next stage of financial technology development. It was during the 1960s that an operational Islamic bank was developed in Egypt by Ahmed El-Nagar.

In the same period, Malaysia saw the establishment of the Muslim Pilgrims Savings Corporation, which helped pilgrims in Malaysia perform Hajj. This corporation was later renamed Tabung Hajj and helped pilgrims invest their Hajj savings in a Sharia-compliant manner.

Tabung Hajj led to the development of Bank Islam Malaysia. Meanwhile, code-breaking tools were being developed by International Business Machines (IBM), whilst the first calculator was produced by Texas Instruments in 1967. The first handheld calculator was transformational in the way that finance operated on a day-to-day basis.

The calculator can be considered the parent of the smartphone, perhaps the most transformative technology in the context of Fintech. Barclays Bank introduced the first auto-

mated teller machine (ATM) in 1967, calling it a "robot cashier," which allowed customers to get cash around the clock. The ATM and the calculator arguably mark the commencement of the modern evolution of today's Fintech.

That ATM allowed, over the next several decades, for a transformation in the relationship that people had with money and with finance. 1967 thus marks a period where we begin to see a process of digitisation. Digitisation is taking analogue processes and systems, such as handwriting or the physical calculation of money, and digitising them: transforming them into a digital environment.

The 1970s and 80s saw other countries follow with the establishment of Islamic banks in their countries, such as Dubai, Kuwait, Sudan, and Saudi Arabia. However, one major establishment of the 70s was the Islamic Development Bank.

(To Be Continued)



In brief

PTBF to feature in 4 int'l tournaments

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation (PTBF) would feature in four international tournaments revealed the national body's sports calendar for the year 2023-24. According to President, Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation, Ijaz ur Rehman announced the players to feature in four international tournaments between August to November. Pakistani players would participate in the 22nd Asian Junior Tenpin Bowling Championship in Singapore from August 19 to 26 while in Storm Lucky Larsen Master Bowling Tournament at Helsingborg, Sweden from September 1 to 10. Pakistan's participation would also be seen in IBF World Bowling Championship at Kuwait from October 3 to 18 and in 6th Indoor & Martial Arts Games at Bangkok, Thailand from November 17 to 26. Meanwhile PTBF would hold four national tournaments including Azadi Cup Tenpin Bowling Championship 2023 Leisure City Bowling Club Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi (August 9 to 14); 8th PTBF Ranking Tenpin B o w l i n g Championship 2023 Arena Bowling Club, Karachi (October 25 to 30); Pakistan Open Tenpin Bowling Championship 2023 Royal Rodale Bowling Club Karachi (December 25 to 31); 16th National Tenpin B o w l i n g Championship 2024 Leisure City Bowling Club Jinnah park Rawalpindi (March 25-30, 2024).

Paret-Peintre wins Giro's 4th stage

LAGO LACENO (AP): Aurélien Paret-Peintre won the fourth stage of the Giro d'Italia on Tuesday for his first Grand Tour stage victory, while Andreas Leknessund took the leader's pink jersey from pre-race favorite Remco Evenepoel. Leknessund, who rides for Team DSM, became only the second Norwegian cyclist to hold the pink jersey and the first in 42 years. The 23-year-old Leknessund attacked from a break-away at the end of the 175-kilometer (109-mile) route from Venosa to Lago Laceno, as the Giro hit the mountains in a stage with hardly any flat sections. Paret-Peintre was the only one who could follow the Norwegian on the second-category climb up Colle Moella and, after catching him, the Frenchman crossed the summit slightly ahead of Leknessund. They rode together toward the finish but Paret-Peintre launched his sprint with 150 meters remaining and had time to sit up and raise his arms over his head as he crossed the line two seconds ahead of Leknessund.

Strycova wins 1st singles match

ROME (AP): Barbora Strycova won her first singles match since returning from maternity leave, beating Maryna Zanevska 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 in the opening round of the Italian Open on Tuesday. The 37-year-old Strycova returned to the tour two weeks ago at the Madrid Open after more than two years away following the birth of her son, Vincent. After beating Zanevska, Strycova was handed her 1-year-old son, who she told to "wave to daddy" in front of a TV camera. In Madrid, Strycova lost her opener in singles and reached the quarterfinals in doubles with partner Hsieh Su-wei. Strycova, who will next face ninth-seeded Maria Sakkari, is planning to retire after this year's U.S. Open.

Najam Sethi in Dubai to sort out Asia Cup issues

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The next 48 hours have been declared important for a major progress in Asia Cup 2023. According to sources, PCB Management Committee chairman Najam Sethi is in Dubai where he will meet the members of the Asian Cricket Council today (Tuesday). Sources say that the Asian Cricket Council has not yet announced the final meeting. Najam Sethi will be having an informal meeting with the officials of the council which will not be attended by the representatives of the member countries of the council. Asia Cup is scheduled

to be held in September in Pakistan. The PCB is linking all the rumours about Asia Cup with the propaganda of Indian media. Because of India's refusal, the PCB has presented a hybrid model of the Asia Cup. Under the hybrid model matches with India will be played at a neutral venue and the remaining matches will be played in Pakistan. Sources say Pakistan is not willing to play the Asia Cup at a neutral venue and the hybrid model has been rejected by the ACC. On the other hand, regarding the Asia Cup, the PCB has started backdoor diplomacy. The PCB is in contact

with Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lankan cricket boards. Bangladesh and Sri Lankan cricket boards have not rejected the Asia Cup hybrid model so far. The PCB will also take advantage of the remaining matches with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in the current FTP through diplomacy. On the other hand, because of the previous Afghanistan series, the PCB is hopeful of the support of the Afghanistan Cricket Board. However, the situation will become clear after Najam Sethi's meeting with the members of the Asian Cricket Council today (Tuesday).



LAGO LACENO-BAGNOLI IRPINO: Aurélien Paret-Peintre of France and AG2R Citroën Team celebrates at finish line as stage winner ahead of Andreas Leknessund of Norway and Team DSM during the 106th Giro d'Italia 2023, Stage 4 a 175km stage from Venosa to Lago Laceno 1059m.

34th National Games to kick off from May 12

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Sports and Culture Minister of Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Hazara on Tuesday said that the 34th National Games would kick off in Quetta from May 12. Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Qudus Bezinjo would be the chief guest at the occasion and formally inaugurate the Games for which all arrangements had been made, he told APP over the phone. Secretary Sports Ishaq Jamali, DIG Quetta Azfar Mahesar, when contacted, told media men at Ayub Stadium Quetta that they had made all-out efforts for the smooth conduct of the Games. DG Sports Balochistan Dara Baloch was also present. Abdul Khaliq Hazara said that since 2004, national games had not been organized in Quetta, "but since 2019, after the arrival of our government, we have started efforts to hold the National Games in

Quetta with tireless efforts". He added that after hard work, they had managed to organize a mega event in a befitting manner. The 34th National Games, he said, would be organized in two phases because the province did not have sufficient resources of accommodation for the players. The second phase would continue from May 22-30, he added. 7000 athletes, including officials would be coming to participate from across Pakistan in the Games, he said while expressing hope that the event would turn out to be memorable. Hazara said arrangements had been made well in time with mega sports infrastructures developed of international standard so that the players would enjoy playing different games. In response to a question, he said that 32 sports would be organized in Quetta, while four games including swimming, cycling, rifle shooting and softball competitions

would be conducted outside the city due to the lack of swimming pool in Quetta. Hazara further informed that the provincial government was spending Rs. 400 million on the Games, which includes the cost of repairing the grounds, beautification, construction of roads, guest accommodation, food and drink, security transport, prizes and other matters. DIG Quetta Ghulam Azfar Mehsar said that foolproof security arrangements had been made for the mega event with more than 2500 Police and FC personnel would be deployed, while the Pakistan Army had been kept on standby for those coming from outside. Full security had been provided to the officials and athletes at the places where the competitions will be held, whereas security would be made to other distinguished guests coming to Balochistan from all over the country, the minister concluded.

Legendary Dutch hockey coach calls on DG, SBP

LAHORE (APP): Legendary Dutch hockey coach and newly-appointed consultant of Pakistan junior hockey team Roelant Oltmans called on Director General sports Punjab Dr Asif Tufail here at National Hockey Stadium on Tuesday. The promotion of hockey among Pakistan youth was discussed in detail during the important meeting. Director Sports Nadeem Qaiser, Director Admin Ijaz Munir, Deputy Director Planning Rauf Bajwa and Assistant Director Zahooh Ahmed were also present on this occasion. Speaking on this occasion, Dr Asif Tufail appreciated the rich experience and valuable services of veteran Dutch coach Roelant Oltmans for the promotion of hockey in Pakistan. "We are quite upbeat that Pakistan junior hockey team, under Roelant Oltmans, will offer satisfactory performance in the upcoming Junior Asia Cup scheduled to take place from May 23 to June 1 in Salalah, Oman".

He urged the Pakistan junior players to fully exploit this opportunity and learn modern hockey techniques from world class coach Roelant Oltmans. "It is an honour for us that Roelant Oltmans had coached our young hockey players in a coaching programme organized under the arrangements of Sports board Punjab". Seasoned international hockey coach Roelant Oltmans, who had also coached Pakistan men's hockey team, Netherlands men's and women's hockey teams, India men's and Malaysia men's teams in the past, said that Pakistan has a golden history in men's hockey. They have won several World Cup, Olympics and Champions Trophy titles in the past. "Pakistan has been blessed with plenty of hockey potential and still they have the ability to regain the lost hockey glory by adopting modern hockey techniques," he added.

Fakhar bags ICC Men's Player of the Month award after stunning ODI streak

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Some recent scintillating performances by Pakistan's opening batter Fakhar Zaman have bagged him the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's Player of the Month award for April 2023, the cricket governing body announced on Tuesday. The in-form batter had been named the ICC Men's Player of the Month after a stunning month in April. "He [Zaman] beat out tough competition from Sri Lanka spin wizard Prabath Jayasuriya, and emerging New Zealand batter Mark Chapman," a press release by ICC stated. The ICC said that Fakhar led the charge for Pakistan as they pulled off their second-highest ODI run-chase in Rawalpindi late in the month. The opener smashed an unbeaten 180 to help Pakistan chase down a target of 337 against the visiting New Zealand side to go

2-0 up in the series. Fakhar's knock came with 17 boundaries and six massive sixes as Pakistan won with 10 balls to spare in a high-scoring contest. This was the left-hander's second ton in as many matches during April with his 117 off 114 balls helping Pakistan chase down 289 in the first game at the same venue. Fakhar led the run-chase from the onset, only being dismissed in the 43rd over, by when Pakistan were well on their way to chase down the winning score. He won the Player of the Match award for his efforts. The left-hander started the month with a rapid 47 in the first T20I in Lahore against New Zealand, playing a part in the home side's thumping 88-run victory. While he didn't click in the next two T20I matches, Fakhar stormed into form in ODIs, a format he has always thrived in Fakhar

now has 3,148 ODI runs at an average of 49.71 and a strike-rate of almost 95 during his 67-match career and the Pakistan opener said it was a great thrill to claim the coveted award. "Truly an honour" "It is truly an honour for me to be named ICC Player of the Month for April," Fakhar said. "This month has been one of the highlights of my career and it was an amazing feeling to play in front of my own people in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Karachi," he said. Sharing his personal favourite: the hard-hitting batter said: "I really enjoyed scoring back-to-back centuries in Rawalpindi, but my favourite was the 180 not out in the second match. "I hope to continue the momentum leading into the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, and make Pakistan cricket fans happy and proud with my performances."

Lionel Messi's father denies Saudi Arabia move

PARIS (Agencies): Lionel Messi's father, Jorge Messi denied reports of the 35-year-old agreeing to sign a lucrative contract to play in Saudi Arabia next year. Reports of Paris Saint-Germain star Lionel Messi signing a deal to play in Saudi Arabia next season are false, the player's father said via statement. "There's absolutely nothing agreed with any club for next season," Jorge Messi, who also represents his son, said. "We will decide at the end of the season. Nothing is signed, agreed or verbally agreed. Only fake news using Leo's name." Earlier, a Saudi source close to the negotiations told AFP that the deal was agreed on lucrative terms. "The contract is excep-

tional. It is huge. We are still finalising some details," the source added, without revealing the name of the club concerned. Messi is already under contract with Visit Saudi and frequently promotes the Kingdom's tourist destinations. The 35-year-old was recently suspended by his current club Paris Saint-Germain for visiting Saudi Arabia, missing the club's training. Messi apologised to his teammates and the club following his suspension and is now back in training for the league leaders. When contacted by journalists, PSG stated that Messi's contract runs until June 30. According to Fabrizio Romano, Messi will hon-

our the end of his contract as planned and will only decide on his future at the end of the football season. Recent reports have put Saudi club Al-Hilal at the front of the race to sign the World Champion with an offer valued at 400 million per year. Messi's transfer to Saudi Arabia will pit him against Cristiano Ronaldo once again, after sharing a longstanding rivalry. The Portuguese attacker is currently with Al Nassr after arriving from Manchester United last December. "The negotiations did not take as long as with Ronaldo," said the Saudi source, adding that as with the latter, the financial package came from the Saudi sovereign wealth fund (PIF).

Walker leads Lakers to 3-1 play-off advantage

LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Lonnie Walker was the unlikely hero for the Los Angeles Lakers as they defeated the Golden State Warriors to leave the NBA champions on the brink of elimination from the play-offs. Walker scored 15 points in the fourth quarter as the Lakers completed a dramatic 104-101 victory. It puts them 3-1 up in the best-of-seven series. The Miami Heat also moved 3-1 up in their series against the New York Knicks after a 109-101 win. Jimmy Butler led the way with 27 points and 10 assists for Miami, who had five players in double digits, and the eighth seeds can clinch the series with a win on Thursday (00:30 BST) in New York. The Golden State, with Stephen Curry to the fore yet again, were 84-77 ahead going into the fourth



quarter of their match in LA. But the introduction of 24-year-old Walker, who has struggled to establish himself since joining the Lakers on a one-year contract last year after battling a series of injuries, changed the game. The Lakers went on to outscore their opponents 27-17 and Walker was mobbed by LeBron James and other Lakers teammates on the buzzer. James, who scored 27 points in the victory, said he

Thursday (03:00 BST) with the Warriors, who were led on Monday by Curry's 31 points, 10 rebounds and 14 assists, needing a win to keep the series alive. Meanwhile, the Denver Nuggets centre Nikola Jokic has avoided a suspension after Sunday's incident involving the Phoenix Suns owner Mat Ishbia. During the game, the ball went out of bounds and ended up in the hands of Ishbia, sitting in the front row. As Jokic tried to get the ball back, Ishbia held on to it and, after it came loose, the Serb pushed Ishbia with the outside of his forearm, sending the 43-year-old back into his seat. Jokic was given an unsportsmanlike technical foul and has been fined \$25,000 (£19,818) by the NBA "for making improper conduct with a spectator sitting courtside".

‘Australia should consider moving Warner down the order’

SYDNEY (Agencies): Australia should split up the opening pairing of David Warner and Usman Khawaja for the Ashes series as England seam duo James Anderson and Stuart Broad would exploit a left-handed partnership in home conditions, Michael Vaughan said. Opener Warner has managed just one hundred in more than three years in the modern format but was retained for the World Test Championship final against India next month and the first two Ashes matches. Former England captain Vaughan said Australia, who won 4-0 at home in the last Ashes series in 2021-22, should consider having

Mitchell Marsh open with Khawaja. "Why would you want to throw out two lefthanders to Broad and Anderson?" Vaughan, who helped England end their 18-year Ashes drought in 2005, told the Sydney Morning Herald. "... looking at the way that those two bowl at lefthanders, particularly in English conditions, why would you give those two great bowlers exactly what they want at the top of the order to get themselves up and running?" Vaughan added that Marsh's ability to bowl a few overs made him a good option. "I would honestly look at someone like Mitchell Marsh to open the

batting because it gets him in the team. He's done all right against England." Vaughan said there could still be a place for Warner lower down in the order. "The one thing with David Warner, I know England fear him," Vaughan said. "He's such a good player when the ball that's not moving. The ball won't move after 30-odd overs in English conditions. Could they find a place for him at five or six? "I wouldn't be against looking at him down in the middle of the order to get him in the team because I think (what) others will want is his kind of tenacity and his mentality and his aggressive way."



In brief

IRSA releases 138,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 138,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 136,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1437.99 feet and was 39.99 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 37,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1122.00 feet, 72.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 41,200 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 60,800, 58,000, 40,600 and 10,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 35,600 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 15,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

RDA seals two shops on Faisal Colony Road

RAWALPINDI (APP): R a w a l p i n d i D e v e l o p m e n t Authority (RDA) sealed two shops on Faisal Colony Service Road, near old airport road, here on Tuesday. According to RDA spokesman, the RDA enforcement squad on the directives of Director General (DG), Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa carried out an operation against unauthorized and illegal buildings and also demolished the shed of an under-construction house on Faisal Colony Service Road. He said that on a complaint which was registered by a citizen namely Sajjad Haider Abbasi, the RDA enforcement squad conducted an operation against the illegal construction. The enforcement squad including the Deputy Director of Building Control, Incharge/Assistant Director of Building Control, Building Inspectors, and others carried out the operation. He said that the DG had directed the relevant authorities to take stern action against encroachments, illegal and unauthorized constructions, and commercial activities without any discrimination. He said that the DG had also directed the Building Control Wing to conduct a survey to identify illegal residential and commercial buildings. "The citizens are also advised to remove encroachments on their own to avoid any legal action, not to invest in illegal and unauthorized projects, and check their status before investment from the office, he added.

Dry weather expected

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mainly dry weather is expected in most parts of the country, while hot in plain areas. Met Office on Tuesday predicted that day temperature is likely to rise gradually in most parts of the country. According to the Synoptic Situation, continental air is prevailing over most parts of the country. During the past 24 hour, weather remained dry in most parts of the country. However, rain-thunderstorm occurred in Murree 06, Bagrote 04 and Gilgit 02. Today's Recorded Highest M a x i m u m Temperature's (°C): Mithi, Chhor, Turbat 44, Shaheed Benazirabad, Dadu, Hyderabad, Jacobabad and Lasbella 43.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs, Attaulah Tarar addressing a press conference.

Sherry Rehman issues Heatwave Guidelines for Southern Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday advised provincial and local institutions to take necessary precautions to safeguard public health and minimize the impact of extreme weather on vulnerable communities amid predicted heatwave in the Southern parts of the country. Minister Rehman's call to action comes in response to the latest weather forecast from the Pakistan Meteorological Department's (PMD) for May, which predicts a higher likelihood of heatwaves starting from the second week of the month, particularly in the southern half of the country, a news release said.

To mitigate the potentially disastrous consequences of heatwaves, she is calling on institutions to follow the ministry for Climate Change's recently issued 'Heatwave Guidelines – Urgent Preparatory Measures'.

These guidelines offer a proactive approach to prevent the spread of heat-related illnesses and provide critical information on how to prepare for and respond to extreme heat events.

Key short-term measures specified in the Guidelines, included, "the activation of Union Council level heat wave response units (HRU) and establishing provincial level control rooms for coordina-

tion to protect vulnerable segments of the urban population." The minister also outlined several medium to long term measures to address the underlying causes of heatwaves such as climate-induced disaster management to school curriculums, increasing green spaces by planting more trees in urban areas, establishing 'Cool Centers' at easily accessible public locations, and developing an early Heat-Health Warning System (HHWS).

These steps, she emphasized, would help build the country's resilience to extreme weather events and protect the health and safety of its citizens in the long run.

The minister elaborated, "The effects of climate change, especially with increasing greenhouse gas emissions globally are contributing to more frequent, highly severe, and longer lasting heatwaves across the region and the country.

Pakistan is a negligible emitter yet our most vulnerable pay the price for the overheated climate.

It is not easy to switch to a resilient development model, which costs four times as much as regular reconstruction, while you are still rebuilding from the last shock, but we have to try,"

She highlighted that "Pakistan is listed among the ten most vulnerable countries to climate change in

the world, experiencing frequent climate induced disasters. Over the past decade, the frequency of hot days has been three times higher than the frequency of cold days at the global scale. Pakistan has recorded the hottest temperatures on the planet consistently for the last three years, and with El Niño expected to return this year which could push global temperatures past the 1.5°C mark with devastating impacts on ecosystems & vulnerable countries.

The extreme temperatures and heatwaves that are expected to hit the south of the country this summer will put vulnerable populations at the forefront of another climate crisis."

The minister further stated that the responsibility for responding to the damaging impacts of heatwaves rested primarily with the districts, the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), Health Departments, and local administration, and that the guidelines had been distributed to the chief secretaries of all the provinces and relevant authorities in Islamabad.

She underscored the importance of the authorities utilizing the guidelines to take necessary and timely measures to protect vulnerable communities and mitigate the impacts of extreme heat.

Kundi urges Imran to face cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): State Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi, while reacting to Imran Khan's arrest on Tuesday, said that Pakistan People's Party believed in the equality of all before the law.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that if Imran Khan believed that he was innocent, he should pursue legal ways to prove it. Pakistan People's Party has stance against political victimization he said however, we believed in the equality of all before the law.

"We have raised our voice against political persecution in the past and will continue to oppose such actions in the future," Kundi said.

When asked about the impact of Imran Khan's arrest on future negotiations, he emphasized that negotiations were focused on addressing national issues and must not be influenced by any individual's personal circumstances.

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Google, in partnership with TechValley and the Institute of Rural Management (IRM), officially launched Google Career Certificates 2.0 in Pakistan at a prestigious event attended by key figures from the government and the IT sector. The event was graced by Federal Minister for IT & Telecom Syed Amin Ul Haque, Mr. Fahd Haroon, Minister of State/Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Public Communication and Digital Platforms, and Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, SAPM on Youth Affairs and Senior Google representatives from the region. Mr. Fahd Haroon emphasized the need for training and skills development as priority areas, highlighting the significant gap in digital skills within the Pakistani workforce. He underscored the importance of digital skills in today's economy and called for a collaborative approach between stakeholders, includ-

ECP restores membership of Sindh MPA

ISLAMABAD (NNI): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has restored the membership of Naeem Ahmed Kharal, a member of the Sindh Assembly, allowing him to function as a member of the Provincial Assembly.

The membership of Kharal, an MPA, PS-31, Khairpur-VI, had been suspended earlier due to his failure to submit his asset details in accordance with the relevant election laws.

However, after submitting his statements of assets and liabilities, Kharal has now fulfilled the legal requirement as mandated by the Election Rules, 2017. As per the rules, every member of an assembly and Senate is required to submit a copy of their statement of

assets and liabilities, including those of their spouse and dependent children, by December 31 each year.

The election rules further state that if a member fails to submit their statement of assets and liabilities by January 15, the ECP may suspend their membership by January 16.

The ECP had suspended the membership of 271 parliamentarians for non-submission of their asset details.

With Kharal's membership now restored, he can resume his duties as a member of the Sindh Assembly. This incident highlights the importance of adhering to election laws and fulfilling the necessary requirements to avoid any suspension of membership.

HEC, ACT Int'l join hands to provide counselling facilities to youth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Aiming Change for Tomorrow (ACT) International Tuesday signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to extend counselling facilities to the young people on problems linked to adolescence, particularly related to psychological issues, career advancement and reproductive health challenges.

The young people will access authentic information and get support through the toll-free National Youth Helpline 0800-69457, an initiative

launched under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme. The helpline was launched in November 2022, and HEC, United Nations Family Planning Association, and Rahnuma Family Planning Association of Pakistan (FPAP) had partnered to support the youth facing multifarious challenges regarding mental health. Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail and Chief Executive Officer ACT International Mubashir Banoori signed the LoI during a ceremony held at HEC. The ceremony was attended by Adviser (Global

Engagement), HEC, Awais Ahmed, Adviser (Academics, Accreditation and National Academy of Higher Education) Engr. Muhammad Raza Chohan, Director General (Scholarships) Ms. Aayesha Ikram, Director General (Quality Assurance) Nasir Shah, Director General (Research & Innovation) Hazrat Bilal and other officials of the partnering organizations. In her remarks, Dr. Shaista Sohail expressed satisfaction with the utility of the helpline as it offers services in two shifts to ensure maximum assistance around the clock.

Govt committed to increase spending on knowledge production, institutional development: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said the government was committed to increase spending on infrastructure, knowledge production and institutional development. He stated this while inaugurating the Research & Development Block at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML). Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Rector NUML Major General Muhammad Jaffar HI (M) and others also attended the ceremony.

The minister said NUML was a bridge between Pakistani youth and international community through language learning, skill development and knowledge produc-

tion. He emphasized the need of providing higher education facilities for the youth and lauded the efforts being done by NUML as a national cause and for the future of Pakistan.

The minister suggested that NUML being the only institute of language learning should establish "Darul Hikma" for translation of all knowledge material produced at international institutions into Urdu and other local languages.

Earlier, Rector NUML Major General Muhammad Jaffar (Retd) highlighted that NUML had achieved X-Category in research (top 25) and Business Incubation (top 6) as ranked by HEC.

He thanked the continuous support of the minister and chairman HEC in various projects of the university.

Punctuality of trains reach to 90 percent in three months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The overall punctuality ratio of trains has improved from 76 to 90 per cent in three months owing to close monitoring and stern measures taken by Pakistan Railways at the divisional and ministry levels.

"With the punctuality of trains and concrete measures taken by the present government in last three months, the number of passengers has increased by over 20 million, which is ample proof of the department's achievement," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He said the punctuality of passenger trains was now improving day by day on the directives of

Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique.

The official said the present government had taken several steps to end the deficit of the department including the introduction of RABTA, an initiative towards enhanced customer facilitation. "RABTA platform lets customers plan the trip, check train status, choose and purchase seats, order car rental, meals and refreshments, and book hotels," he added.

To facilitate passengers, he said a mobile application 'Pakrail live' had been launched for real-time tracking of trains.

The official said the high-capacity/high-speed

hopper trucks had been inducted in the current fleet for movement/unloading of coal and new high-capacity high-speed rolling stock coaches and wagons were being procured.

He said online e-ticketing through Jazz Cash, UBL Omni and credit cards had been introduced to facilitate passengers at their doorstep and attract more passengers through outsourcing of non-core activity. "A policy for transfer of technology is being pursued in collaboration with the People's Republic of China for indigenization of Railway Rolling Stock in Pakistan Railways facilities," he added.

Google Career Certificates 2.0 official launch in Pakistan

ing Google, TechValley, IRM, the government, and educational institutions, to advance Pakistan's digital workforce together. Mr. Haroon expressed his gratitude to Google for creating 44,500 new scholarships, with a special emphasis on offering 50% of these scholarships to the female population in the country. He also acknowledged Google's commitment to Pakistan's digital growth by launching three new courses - Business Intelligence, Advanced Data Analytics, and Cyber Security.

Farhan Qureshi, Country Director, Google Pakistan, said, "We are proud to introduce digital skills along with soft skills courses for Pakistani talent to rise into this new world of technology, with a particular focus on women and youth." Pakistan has a working-age population of approximately 85.75 million, with a significant portion of the population under the age of 30. This young and growing workforce requires access to quality education and training

opportunities to realize their potential and contribute to the country's economic development.

Google Career Certificates 2.0, a program designed to make (aspiring) professionals job-ready in six months, was introduced at the event. The program aims to provide targeted skills training to help participants rapidly qualify for in-demand jobs. Industry experts and thought leaders also attended the launch, discussing strategies and initiatives for advancing Pakistan's digital economy collectively.

During the event, Google presented various case studies and shared success stories of recently graduated professionals from the Google Career Certificate program in Pakistan. The program has already made a significant impact on the lives of many Pakistani professionals, equipping them with the necessary digital skills to excel in their careers and contribute to the country's digital economy.

PGGA organizes certificate distribution ceremony to recognise students' hard work

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Girl Guides Association (PGGA) Tuesday organized a Certificate Distribution Ceremony to recognize the hard work and dedication of university students who participated in its Project "Stay Safe".

As many as 170 students participated in the ceremony.

The event celebrated the completion of Community Service by students from Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST), Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU), Akhuwat College, Pak Turk Maarif International Schools and Colleges, and COMSATS Attock. The students and completed the project by cascading it in various public schools in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Ambassador for Girls Education, Wajihah Qamer was the Chief guest.

She shared her views on the importance of such structured projects and how they could positively impact the society.

She also praised PGGA's efforts to make joint efforts with universities and empower the girls. "We are proud of the university students who participated in the Project 'Stay Safe' and demonstrated their commitment to work in tackling the challenges being faced by girls," Wajihah Qamer said. Certain topics were considered taboos or not given much importance by families and academia, through Project 'Stay Safe' girls learned and discussed real issues they faced in daily life, which were rather ignored, she added.

Wajihah said, "We hope this initiative will inspire more young people to get involved in community service and contribute to the betterment of society."

The ceremony was attended by Vice-Chancellors and Representatives of Fatima Jinnah Women University, COMSATS, Capital University of Science & Technology, the Principal Akhuwat College, and representatives of Pak Turk Maarif International Schools and Colleges. National Commissioner PGGA, Maria Maud Sabri also recognized the students' hard work and dedication and also acknowledged the principals of the schools in which the university students completed their cascading.

She said that it was PGGA's vision to empower girls and young women to become responsible citizens of the country. The Project 'Stay Safe' has been particularly designed to take this vision forward and collaborations have been made with universities to tackle today's challenges being faced by girls and women.

During the event, the students from various universities shared their experiences during the training of the project as well as while cascading it with girls in the schools.

"The holistic and well-rounded experience has been appreciated by all of us which not only helped to get training on the core areas of the project but also developed life skills in us", a University student said, "During the cascading, the most interesting part was being a role model and answering the questions being asked by juniors", a student said while sharing her experience in a school. The event provided an opportunity to encourage more university students to participate in similar programs and make a difference in their communities.

Second trade route opened

KANDAHAR (Agencies): In the border town of Spin Boldak, local officials announced that a second commercial route has been opened for the transportation of goods between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The route was established in order to address issues between the two neighbors in the commercial and transportation sectors. Locals and business owners see the initiative as a positive step for enhancing trade and enabling easy travel between the two neighbors.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Shawwal 19, 1444 — Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Tourists visited Bamyan

BAMYAN (Agencies): The Information and Culture Department of Bamyan province said that many foreign tourists have visited natural and archeological sites of the province in the last week. According to officials, 38 tourists from France, Italy, America, Taiwan, China, India, Pakistan, and England visited this province. 38 foreign tourists have visited the historical and archeological sites of Bamyan, including Buddha figures and Band Amir National Park.

Afghanistan's inclusion in CPEC important for economic growth: Ministry

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Economy (MoE) said that the participation of Afghanistan in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will benefit the country.

The MoE called on China to include Afghanistan in economic projects, especially the China-Pakistan corridor. "The economic project of the China-Pakistan corridor or so-called CPEC is one of the biggest projects of China in the region," said Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy.

The economists said that

Afghanistan needs to be part of CPEC to boost trade with China. "CPEC, which has access to a good market, can facilitate a major opportunity for our exports," said Mahbobullah Mohammadi, a trader.

"The presence of Afghanistan in major regional economic projects can play an influential role in creating job opportunities, increasing trade exchanges, and in general in the improvement of economic conditions," said Mir Shikib Mir, a trader.

This comes as the Chinese Foreign Ministry

said, as reported by CGTN, that the foreign ministers of China, Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in economy, trade, agriculture, poverty reduction and people-to-people exchanges.

They will advance the Belt and Road Initiative cooperation and extend the CPEC cooperation to Afghanistan, so as to promote connectivity, improve cross-border trading, enhance the economic integration of the three countries and achieve sustainable development, according to CGTN.

Daesh leader killing in IEA operation in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies): Reports have emerged of operations by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's intelligence forces in Bagrami and Shakardara districts of Kabul against Daesh hideouts.

The media outlet, claimed that Daesh's second in command was killed in a clash with IEA forces in Shakardara district of Kabul province.

Express Tribune reported on late Monday night that the Daesh leader killed has been identified as Engineer Omar.

According to this report, Omar first worked as the leader of the central section of the Daesh group, and was later appointed as deputy to Sanaullah Ghafari, the leader of Daesh in Afghanistan.

Reports meanwhile emerged on Monday night of heavy clashes in the Shekardara district of Kabul. Sources said they heard light and heavy weapons being fired off.

Almirsad website meanwhile also reported the gunfight and said the IEA's intelligence unit had carried out an operation against two Daesh hideouts in the district.

The IEA has not yet commented.

Mine blast kills three children in Kandahar

KANDAHAR (Khaama Press): According to provincial police spokesman Hafiz Saber, three children, all from the same family, were killed when a mine exploded in the southern province of Kandahar, Afghanistan.

The incident occurred in Haji Aziz area of Kandahar City when the children found the mortal mine which had been left from the past wars.

The official said the siblings were playing with the mine, which suddenly detonated, and all three were killed on the spot.

A similar incident occurred in the province, one child was killed, and another was injured.

On the other hand, another incident occurred in the eastern province of Afghanistan, Ghazni, Nahoor district, killing two children.

Unexploded bombs from prior conflicts have recently become more common in various parts of the country, killing and hurting men, women, and even children.

Since last November, contributions have been made to support demining in the nation by international organizations, including Australia, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

Due to the detonation of unexploded bombs left over from the forty-year civil war, Afghanistan is allegedly still one of the countries with the highest concentration of mines, killing dozens of people each month, including children.

"We all will collect the budget for this center, God willing. We will build the hospital with this budget," said Afghanistan's national cricketer Mohammad Nabi.

Some children who are suffering from this illness asked the Ministry of Public Health and the citizens to cooperate in donating blood to the patients.

"I ask the Ministry of Public Health to provide medicine and a well-equipped laboratory for thalassemia patients in the hospital," said Rafiullah, a patient.

The Ministry of Public Health of the Islamic Emirate also marked World Thalassemia Day by holding a meeting on May 8.

In the meeting, health institution officials said they do not have the precise numbers of thalassemia patients in the nation.

medications.

"We ask the international organizations, especially the World Health Organization or departments that work in the health sector, to pay serious attention to these children," Sadiq noted.

The Ministry of Public Health's spokesman, Sharafat Zaman Amarkhail, said the ministry is working to build hospitals with the assistance of businesspeople in order to treat cancer patients.

"The first meeting with the deputy has begun, and during the discussion, all the issues have been discussed, including how we might build a well-equipped center. How many human resources are required... God willing, the Ministry of Health will collaborate in all areas, the spokesman added.

IEA dismisses UNAMA report on enforcement of Sharia as baseless

KABUL (Agencies): Zabiullah Mujahid, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) spokesman, on Tuesday dismissed claims made in the latest report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) about the functioning of courts and the enforcement of Sharia in the country.

Mujahid said in a series of tweets that UNAMA's allegations are baseless and do not reflect the reality on the ground. "The judicial system in Afghanistan has become stronger than before, and justice has been ensured, while the rights of the citizens are being respected in accordance with Islamic rules," Mujahid stated in his tweet.

Mujahid said the judicial system in the country has been established on the



basis of transparency and that efforts to further strengthen it are ongoing.

He also stated that the achievements of the Afghan judiciary system have contributed to global security.

"If the progress and achievements are still

ignored and there is disbelief, then it is unfair," Mujahid tweeted.

The UNAMA report documented various human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and restrictions on freedom of

expression and assembly. The report also raised concerns about the IEA's enforcement of certain Sharia provisions, such as punishments for alleged moral crimes, which have been criticized for being inhumane and discriminatory.

UN urges Taliban to end floggings and executions in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations has called on the Taliban to halt flogging and execution in Afghanistan.

Fiona Frazer, the Human Rights Chief of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, said in a statement that the Taliban's corporal punishment is against international law.

She urged the Taliban leadership to halt all executions immediately.

"Corporal punishment is a violation of the Convention against Torture and must cease," said Fiona Frazer, the agency's human rights chief. She also called for an immediate moratorium on executions.

In response, the Taliban's foreign ministry said that most Afghans adhere to Islamic rules and guidance



and that Afghanistan's laws are based on Islamic principles. "In the event of a conflict between international human rights law and Islamic law, the government is obliged to follow the Islamic law," the ministry said.

On the other hand, A UN report released on Monday strongly criticized the Taliban for carrying out

execution, floggings and stoning since gaining control of Afghanistan. It urged the Taliban leaders to put an immediate end to such practices.

According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) report, 274 men, 58 women and two boys were publicly flogged in Afghanistan during the past six months.

The first public execution since they came into power, the Taliban authorities executed an Afghan man found guilty of murder in December 2022, according to the report.

In front of hundreds of spectators, including senior Taliban officials, the victim's father executed him in the western province of Farah using an assault rifle.

Meanwhile, the Taliban authorities have increasingly increased restrictions on women and banned them from public areas like education, university, parks and gym.

The restriction has caused a global uproar, deepening the country's isolation at a time when its economy is in freefall and worsening the humanitarian crisis.

Banned from schools, universities; female students start businesses

KABUL (TOLONews): Following the closure of schools and universities for female students in the country, some girls have started their own businesses.

They said that after being denied access to education, they began starting new businesses in order to support their families and themselves. Kobra, a student of law and political science faculty at one of Kabul's universities, said that she has opened a clothes and cosmetics shop.

"We work here, but our employment cannot replace our studies. To ensure our future and the future of our nation, as well as its development, we must study to become professionals," Kobra told TOLONews.

The women who came to Kobra to buy expressed happiness and said that buying from a woman is much more convenient and simple.

"We are happy to see that our sister are working under the rule of the Islamic Emirate. We can easily buy what we need from them," said Atefa, a resident of Kabul.

"Universities and



schools are closed to girls. We see that girls are selling things here, and we buy our necessary things from them easily," said Madina, another resident of Kabul.

In the meantime, some female students asked the Islamic Emirate to immediately open schools and universities for girls.

"Personal business is good. Through this, I can be a good financial support-

er for myself and my family. But I can't develop my personality here. That's why I need to go to university," Ruqia, a student told TOLONews.

This comes as the acting foreign minister of the Islamic Emirate said at the Institute of Strategic Studies of Pakistan that women's education is not forbidden, and this ban is not permanent.

"We have never said that women's education is forbidden, we have never said that women's education is prohibited forever, but what has been said is that it will be suspended until further notice," Muttaqi noted.

Nearly 140 days have passed since females were prohibited from attending universities, but there has been no word on their reopening.

Kabul traffic announces new taxi color

KABUL (Khaama Press): On Tuesday, the General Directorate of Kabul Traffic introduced a new colour for urban and rural taxis in Afghanistan.

The Taliban traffic police chief, Hasibullah Mukhtar, announced the Taxi color change during Tuesday's press conference held at the Government Media and Information Center (GMIC).

Mukhtar said that Kabul Traffic is making this change as part of its attempts to develop a safer and more uniform transportation system for the country.

The General Directorate of Kabul Traffic developed

a three-month procedure for taxi owners, and it will be implemented across all of Afghanistan's provinces.

The colour of urban and rural cabs was changed to blue and white in accordance with the International Convention on Road Traffic, according to Kabul Traffic officials.

Taxi owners are also likely to be biometrically registered in addition to the colour change. This plan aims to reduce the criminal activity that has plagued Afghanistan's taxi industry, including kidnappings and theft.

"The taxis shall be segregated from other vehicles that transfer the goods and



shipments," Mukhtar added.

Private cars also carry people in the city with

taxis, and these cars have increased in Kabul during the previous two years.

However, it is still being

determined how the Taliban's initiative would be practical and effective for the country.

Investment on economic, uplift projects begins



KABUL (Agencies): Investments on some big economic and development projects have practically been started in the country, Office of the Deputy of Prime Minister of IEA for Economic Affairs said in a

statement Tuesday.

Some major foreign companies that showed their interest to invest worth over 10 billion U.S. dollars in various sectors, in which some of the investments have practical-

ly begun in the country, the statement said.

Pointing to the achievements of the last solar year, Office of the Deputy of Prime Minister of the IEA for Economic Affairs said that country's commodities exports reached to 2 billion US dollars in 1401, as well as the influence level has significantly been downed, according to the statement.

On the other hand, Official of the country's central bank, said in a statement that the Representatives of Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) have recently attended the 43rd meeting of SAARCFINANCE Governors' Group.

"The 43rd SAARCFINANCE Governors' Group Meeting was held on May 2, in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, where the Afghani currency has been called as the most stable currency in the region, the statement said.

First shipment from Iran arrives in Herat by rail

HERAT (Agencies): The Afghanistan Railway Authority says that a test run saw a freight train arrive in Herat province on Monday via the Khaf-Herat Railway line.

Herat Railway officials say that the shipment weighs more than 600 tons, and is made up of equipment and supplies for the company that built Khaf-Herat Railway Line.

According to officials, an Iranian delegation arrived in Herat on Monday, also by rail, and the two sides discussed sustainable transportation via rail.

Mufti Mohammad Nasim Mohammadi, the head of the Herat Railway Department, says that this shipment includes 17 wagons that have transferred 655 tons of railway equipment and facilities for the contracting company. Currently, this railway has entered Herat as a test, but the process of transporting commercial goods through the Khaf-Herat railway line will start soon, officials said.

Officials ask for help in treating patients



KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Health and the Central Blood Bank said on World Thalassemia Day that the treatment options for thalassemia patients are limited. Thalassemia is a blood disorder.

The ministry asked the international organizations to assist Afghanistan in dealing with thalassemia.

"We ask charities to establish and strengthen the thalassemia treatment center in Kabul and the provinces," said Ahmad Siyar Pasoon, head of medical treatment at the Ministry of Public Health.

More than 12,000 thalassemia patients have registered with the Central Blood Bank, according to its director Nasser Sadiq. However, these patients have limited access to medical services, particularly



GAZA CITY: Relative weeping at a hospital after Israeli strike killed youngsters in Palestine.

Wheat price jumps to Rs 5,100 per 40kg in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Despite of boom season of wheat crops, the price for a 40kg bag of wheat has jumped to Rs. 5,100 in Lahore against the government's fixed rate of Rs. 3,900, according to media reports on Tuesday. The flour mills association representative said the government's rate is not being implemented in the market as per 40kg wheat being is being sold at Rs. 5,100 in Lahore against the government's fixed rate of Rs. 3,900.

He added that due to the increase in the wheat price, the rate of 20kg flour bag has jumped to Rs. 2,750 against the govt's rate of Rs. 2,316. The Flour millers said they cannot sell the wheat at the lower rates after getting the wheat at an exorbitant rate from the open market.

Last month, the officials of the Punjab Food Department foiled an attempt to smuggle wheat and flour to Afghanistan. Over 70 containers loaded with wheat and flour were being smuggled to Afghanistan from Islamabad Motorway. District food authority officials said 46 containers loaded with wheat and 16 containers of flour were seized during checking. The wheat and flour were being smuggled from Punjab to Afghanistan. The containers were sealed while 16 people were booked. It may be noted that there is a ban on the transportation of wheat from the province.

JI announces rallies against inflation

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq has announced to hold protest rallies against inflation, demanding subsidy on essential items in the budget.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore on Tuesday, he also expressed doubt about the continuation of dialogue among political parties on elections after the arrest of PTI chairman Imran Khan. He said the JI has a clear stance that the political victimization in the name of accountability was unjustified and unfair. The JI, he said, demanded across the board accountability.

Sirajul Haq said that the NAB had already lost credibility and there was dire need for not repeating the past mistakes of targeting people or political leaders without any credible proof of corruption or malpractices. The anti-inflation movement would start from May 21 from Lahore, he said, adding the JI workers would hold protest demonstrations in Peshawar on May 24. The detailed schedule for the countrywide rallies would be issued in the next couple of days, he said.

The JI chief demanded the government announce Rs100 per liter cut in petrol price and 50 percent decrease in medicine prices. The government was asked not to fill the top vacancies with the retired officers from military or civil bureaucracy rather the fresh blood should be inducted to serve the country. He said the government should cut all the non-development expenditure, discourage VIP protocol culture and bring back the money stashed in foreign accounts.

Russia's future rests on Ukraine war: Putin

MOSCOW (BBC): Vladimir Putin has said Russia's future "rests on" the soldiers fighting in Ukraine, during his annual speech to mark Victory Day in Moscow. "There is nothing more important now than your combat effort," he said. The military parade, which commemorates the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany, was scaled back this year for security.

Mr Putin also used his speech to justify his invasion of Ukraine, while accusing "Western globalist elites" of provoking conflicts. Civilisation is again "at a decisive turning point", he said in Moscow's Red Square to a crowd composed of just officials and veterans, as the event was not open to the public. Addressing the troops fighting in Ukraine - some of whom were present - Mr Putin said a "real war" had been "unleashed" against Russia. The reality is that it was Russia that invaded Ukraine.

"The security of the country rests on you today, the future of our statehood and our people depend on you," he told them. This was the second Victory Day parade since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. But a series of explosions and incidents of sabotage across Russia in recent weeks saw the celebrations scaled back because of security concerns.

In one incident last week, there was an alleged

drone attack on the Kremlin. Russia claimed it was an attempt on Mr Putin's life and pointed the finger squarely at Ukraine and the US, but both denied any involvement. This year's celebration had 3,000 fewer soldiers and less military hardware on display. The parade was shorter, while there was no military flypast and no modern tanks, which are usually a feature of the parade. On Tuesday, the only tank on display was the T-34 from World War Two.

However, for the first time since 2020, a handful of international leaders attended. All the Central Asian leaders were there, including Kazakhstan's Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko and Armenia's prime minister were also at Red Square. The US-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said the late decision of the Central Asian leaders to attend "likely indicates their reticence to show direct and public support of the war".

Mr Putin's speech followed similar themes to last year, likening the fight with Ukraine's "criminal regime" to the defeat of Nazi Germany. He took aim at the West, saying "their goal is nothing else but to see the fall of our country". Mr Putin said Russia wanted to see a "peaceful future", but accused Western elites of sowing the seeds of "hated

and Russophobia" and destroying family values.

But much of his speech was focused on his pride for the actions of Russian "heroes" in Ukraine. "There is no cause stronger in the world than our love for our armed forces," said Mr Putin, who stands accused of war crimes in Ukraine by the International Criminal Court (ICC). "To Russia, to our armed forces," he concluded, as the Russian national anthem started to play.

After Mr Putin's speech, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen held a news conference in Kyiv. President Zelensky said that increased attacks on Ukraine in recent weeks had been part of Russian efforts to "present something" to the military and political leadership, having failed to take the eastern city of Bakhmut before Victory Day. "They have to show that they destroyed something," he said.

Ms von der Leyen said "the invaders have been dragged out of prisons" to fight on behalf of Russia, which had "dramatically failed" in the war. Reacting to Mr Putin's speech, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said the EU must not be intimidated by the Russian leader's "show of force". "Let's stay steadfast in our support for Ukraine - as long as it is necessary," he told the European Parliament.

Imran arrested in 'biggest corruption case': Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan was arrested in the Al-Qadir Trust case, the biggest corruption case in the history of Pakistan.

Addressing a press conference, he alleged that the PTI chief indulged in corruption and corrupt practice during his government, besides misuse of power and his arrest was not a surprise move rather it was the result of months-long investigations by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Atta Tarar claimed that Imran Khan used his influential position to retrieve 190 million pounds for a property tycoon, which was confiscated by the British National Crime Agency on money laundering charges. In return, the property tycoon gifted the state-

owned land of 458 kanals to the Al-Qadir Trust.

The trust deed of Al-Qadir Trust had the signatures of Zulfi Bukhari, Babar Awan, Bushra Bibi and Imran Khan, he added. He further claimed that Imran Khan should have been arrested a long time ago for his involvement in corruption in the Al-Qadir Trust case and selling gifts stolen from the Toshakhana.

The SAPM expressed his doubts about the nature of the social services rendered by the Al-Qadir Trust, which received a total of Rs 180 million in its different accounts, in addition to the precious land transferred in its name. There was a nexus among the persons sitting in the Prime Minister's House at that time, who established a bogus trust to launder money and in return get hundreds of kanals of land from the property tycoon. He accused Imran Khan of ignoring various NAB notices served to him in the

Al-Qadir Trust case and not cooperating with the anti-graft institution. On the contrary, he said, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawas leaders had to visit courts and relevant offices multiple times for investigation into the fake cases instituted against them.

Responding to a question, Atta Tarar confirmed that Malik Riaz was the property tycoon referred to by him in the press conference. NAB served notices to Malik Riaz and the PTI leaders, including Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry, but none of them showed up for investigations, he added. The SAPM warned the PTI protestors of strict action for indulging in unlawful activity. Only a few PTI supporters were protesting over the arrest of their leader, and vandalizing public and private properties, and they would be treated as per the law, he warned. He called for trying Imran Khan under Article 6, and legal consultation in that regard was underway.

President for focusing on uplift of KP's merged districts

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday emphasized the need for focusing on the development of merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (erstwhile tribal areas). He said that the tribal areas of Pakistan had been mostly affected due to terrorism.

The president expressed these views while talking to the elders (Masharan) of the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr,

President Press Wing said in a press release. Talking to the elders, he observed that the tribal area of the country had been neglected in the past. The president said that priorities should be given to the education and health sectors in the merged districts of KP, and all steps should be taken for the livelihood of the people of the area.

He said that the people of the merged districts should be provided equal employment opportunities. While highlighting the importance of education, he said that

education could bring development and economic prosperity to the area. He underscored the need for peace in the area for exploring new business and trade opportunities. The tribal elders informed the president about their issues.

They said that the people of erstwhile FATA had sacrificed the most in the war against terrorism. They lost their dear ones and livelihood for the peace in the country, they said, adding that they wanted peace and development in the region.

SC rejects JIT report in Arshad Sharif murder case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) again rejected the report of the Joint Investigation Team (JIT) in journalist Arshad Sharif murder case. The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Umar Ata Bandial led a five-member bench of the apex court resumed hearing into the journalist's assassination case.

Other members of the bench include Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan, Justice Sayyed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar. Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan and Additional Attorney General of Pakistan Aamir Rehman appeared before the court.

At the outset of the hearing, Justice Mazahar Ali Naqvi remarked no progress has been made in the case yet he also asked about the motive behind the formation of JIT. So far no concrete material has been provided in the case, he added. CJP Bandial said JIT is planning to visit UAE again for the probe. He also rejected the report of JIT submitted in the Arshad Sharif murder case. We don't need such report which lacks facts and progress, he remarked.

PEMRA cannot suspend licence of any channel, rules SC:

The Supreme Court (SC) has declared that the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) does not have the legal authority to suspend the licence of any TV channel.

According to details, the Supreme Court ruling upholds a decision made by the Sindh High Court, stating that the chairman PEMRA does not have the legal authority to suspend the licence of any channel. The decision was made by a three-member bench of the Supreme Court in Islamabad where Justice Manzoor Ahmad Malik issued a nine-page ruling.

The ruling referred to Section 13 of the PEMRA ordinance, which clearly states that neither the Chairman nor any individual has the authority to suspend a licence. While the Supreme Court confirmed that conditions for suspending a broadcast media licence do exist but it is still unclear who has the power to suspend licences in PEMRA. The court ruled that it is necessary for rules to be put in place to clarify the situation. The court confirmed that the delegation of powers had taken place in the 156th meeting of PEMRA, but the organization's lawyer was unable to provide any valid reason for the decision.

'Pak adamant on addressing IMF concerns'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Amid months-long delay in the revival of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, Pakistan now aims to address the concerns raised by the lender before implementing the proposed fuel subsidy plan. Bloomberg reported Tuesday, Minister of State for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik admitted that the IMF had some reservations about the government's plan to raise fuel prices for wealthier people to finance a subsidy for lower-income people — the plan that aims to help protect the poor and vulnerable.

Malik said: "We want to make sure now that if we move forward, we take care of their concerns and make sure that they completely understand what we are trying to do and why." The government is still trying to meet IMF conditions to revive a stalled \$6.5 billion bailout package, key to avoiding a default.

The government has raised taxes and energy prices and allowed the currency to depreciate to meet some of them. This is not the first time petrol price subsidies have been a sticking point for the IMF, as measures by the previous Imran Khan-led government stalled the programme last year. Last month, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said that the fuel subsidy plans had been shared with the fund. However, there is still no sign of Pakistan reaching the staff-level agreement with the IMF any time soon.

Contempt of Parliament Bill introduced in NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf on Tuesday introduced 'The Contempt of Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) Bill 2023' in the National Assembly, aimed at punishing those involved in the contempt of Parliament or a committee or breach of privilege of a House or a member.

On the advice of Minister of State for Law and Justice Shahadat Awan and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Speaker Raja Pervaz Ashraf referred the bill to the committee concerned for further deliberation with the directive to submit the report within seven days. Minister Shahadat Awan viewed that the House must adopt a proper procedure to unanimously pass the important bill. The standing committee would further fine-tune the bill and remove lacuna if any, he added. Appreciating the PTI MNA for introducing such an important bill in the House, the minister said the amendment in the Constitution was the right of the Parliament and it also had the discretion to pass or reject any bill.

He said this bill would further help to establish the writ of the Parliament, urging the other state institutions to work within their own constitutional domains. Leader of the Opposition Raja Riaz Ahmad Khan opined that as it was a matter of the Parliament's prestige and supremacy there was no need to refer the bill to the committee. However, the mover agreed with the idea of worthy ministers and a couple of colleagues to send the bill to the committee concerned to further improve its content from the legal perspective.

He emphasized that the Parliament was the supreme institution and also the mother of all the institutions but its powers were being undermined by others time and again. He said the bill should be passed unanimously to uphold the sanctity and supremacy of the Parliament, which should use its "constitutional authority to make all those accountable involved in its contempt". Pakistan Muslim League-

Nawaz's Shaikh Rohale Asghar proposed the speaker to take the consent of the House instead of forwarding it to the committee concerned.

Federal Minister Javed Latif said the bill was the voice of the House and sought the Speaker's ruling on it. Pakistan Peoples Party's Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur said there must be amendments in the law as it was the need of the hour. The bill should be passed without any further delay as there was no logic to send it to the committee, he added. Jamaat-e-Islami's Abdul Akbar Chitrali, seconding the bill, said, "We must keep our house in order instead of inviting a third party to get involved in the affairs of Parliament".

PTI's Muhammad Mohsin Khan Leghari opined that the bill should not be given a blind approval and it should be sent to the committee for further consideration. Independent MNA Muhammad Aslam Bhootani termed the bill historic, saying it should be drafted keeping in view all aspects. Muttahida Qaumi Movement's Sabir Hussain Kaim Khani, favouring the bill, said those who spread false notions against the Parliament should be made accountable.

Balochistan National Party's Muhammad Hashim Notezai extended all-out support on behalf of his party to the bill, saying there must be the supremacy of the Constitution and the Parliament. PTI's Sardar Riaz Mehmood Khan Mazari said the Speaker must be given powers to de-seal anyone who violated the rules and regulations of the august House. PML-N's Mehnaz Akber Aziz said the bill should be sent to the committee to further refine its language.

PML-N's Sheikh Fayyaz Ud Din said there should not be any procedural mistake in the bill and that was why it was essential to send it to the committee. Balochistan Awami Party's Khalid Hussain Magasi said the bill should be taken up seriously and there should be no compromise on the Parliament's prestige. PPP's Nafisa Shah said the bill should have come into force so earlier.

Gaza mourns as 13 killed in Israel raid

GAZA CITY (Agencies): Adeb al-Rabai had just fallen asleep in his home in Gaza City when he was awakened by the sounds of bombing in the very early hours of Tuesday. "I thought I was dreaming until I realised that the bombing was on my building," the 60-year-old lawyer said. Israel had launched air raids on several areas across the Gaza Strip, killing at least 13 people, including six women and four children, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

Among the dead were three members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) movement. "It's a civilian residential building," al-Rabai said, standing in front of the bombed six-storey building. "Israeli missiles hit the fourth, fifth and sixth floors which were partially destroyed. Civilians live in those apartments, women and children." With no warning, al-Rabai said, "[the] Israeli occupation meant to destroy and kill those in the building."

An Israeli military spokesperson told reporters the attacks had been to target PIJ mem-

bers, adding, "We're aware of some collateral and we'll learn more as the day goes ahead." After the dhuhr (noon) prayers, thousands of mourners in a funeral procession through the heart of Gaza City, starting at the Omari Mosque, where they chanted as they lifted the bodies of the victims, promising revenge for the "major crime" committed. Shaaban Adass was mourning his cousins, sisters Dania, 21, and Iman Alaa Adass, 17, who were killed when an Israeli attack hit near their home in the Tofah neighbourhood east of Gaza City.

"What happened is a heinous crime by the Israeli occupation, which claimed the lives of innocent people who were supposed to be safe in their homes," he told Al Jazeera. The attacks on Tofah were apparently targeting 44-year-old Khalil al-Bahtini, a PIJ member who was killed along with his wife and his five-year-old daughter. Dania and Iman were "collateral damage".

"Dania was getting ready for her wedding in a few days, and Iman was sad because her sister was

about to leave the family home," Adass said, pointing out Dania's fiancé who wept silently near her body. He could not speak. "Now, the sisters are together forever, what an enormous heartbreak and shock."

Omar Saleh Abu Omar was there to mourn his friend Tariq Ezz el-Din, 48, a former prisoner in Israeli prisons and one of the PIJ members killed in the Israeli attack — along with his two children, Ali and Mayar. "Tariq was a good person, he loved his country and his family. He was such a loving father," Abu Omar said. Ezz el-Din lived in al-Rabai's building, where a total of six people were killed.

"Mr Jamal Khaswan, his wife and his 22-year-old son and Mr Tariq Ezz El-Din and his two children who are under 10," al-Rabai counted. Khaswan was a dentist who was known for offering free treatments to people who could not afford to pay for his help. In front of the bombed building, children aged seven to 10 gathered. They told reporters how frightened they and their families felt last night.

NAB arrests Imran

(Continued from Page 1)

kanals in Bani Gala were registered in the name of Al-Qadir Trust. Some seven to eight months ago he (Rana Sanaullah) had provided details of the two properties and had challenged the PTI chief to clarify that Al-Qadir Trust was established by Imran Khan himself to hide his corruption, he added.

Rana Sanaullah said the PTI chief and his wife Bushra Bibi were the only two trustees of the Al-Qadir Trust. He said the 240 kanals of land in Bani Gala, worth around Rs 5-7 billion, was got registered in the name of Farah Gogi, a close friend of Imran Khan's wife, while Shehzad Akbar had also taken Rs 2 billion for his services. He said instead of bringing Rs 60 billion into the national treasury, the amount landed in the bank account of the Supreme Court, where the accused property tycoon was under trial. The amount was, in fact, returned to the accused in a complex manner to hoodwink the masses, he added.

Even the apex court, he said, also did not question the source of the amount and why it was returned to Pakistan by the UK. "It is regrettable that at that time when this corruption was committed and permission

was taken for Shehzad Akbar to go to the UK court and give a statement on behalf of the Pakistani Government for the amount to be adjusted in the property tycoon's account, Imran Khan was instituting false corruption cases against opposition leaders, including Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz and all family members of Shehbaz Sharif," he added.

On impediments to the arrest of Imran Khan, he said lawyers had attempted to condemn Imran Khan's arrest. It did not befitt them to try to become an obstacle in a legal process, he said, adding the security forces personnel present at the Islamabad High Court (IHC) had executed the arrest warrants of the PTI chief in a befitting manner. Regarding the Toshakhana case, the minister said it was also proven that he (Imran) committed theft when false cases were being filed against former premier Nawaz Sharif and his family.

He said NAB had issued notices to the PTI chief regarding the corruption cases registered against him and directed him to appear before the Authority and should become a part of the investigation. "It was necessary for him to present himself before NAB and give answers but he did not do so. He challenged those

notices in the High Court, which ultimately said the [legal] process in accordance with law cannot be stopped and he [Imran Khan] should become a part of the investigation and submit his response but despite that, he did not feel it appropriate to become part of the investigation. Due to this today, NAB had to implement his arrest warrants."

The minister said soon after the arrest of the PTI chief, the high court had taken notice of the matter and the government had no complaint about it. He denied that Imran Khan was tortured or subjected to a physical assault. To a question, he said NAB played an active role then Shehzad Akbar could have been apprehended as per the law. He categorically said the Federal Government and all the provincial governments had been directed to take strict action as per law against the violators if any untoward situation was created by the PTI protesters. Replying to another query, he accused the PTI chairman of conjugating a nexus with inimical forces to harm the state institutions. "Not only Imran Khan but also some other PTI leaders and workers are also involved in damaging the national institutions."