

Khadija Shah arrested

LAHORE (Agencies): Punjab Police said Tuesday the law enforcers have taken Khadija Shah, the prime suspect in the attack on the Lahore Corps Commander House, into custody. Despite her husband and other family members being arrested, the PTI supporter did not surrender herself to the authorities even after claiming that she would present herself before them.

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PM for maximum relief in budget

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the government's economic team to utilize all possible resources to provide maximum relief to common man in the budget for upcoming fiscal year 2023-24.

Chairing a meeting here to review the budget 2023-24 preparations, he ordered to take every possible step to minimize the financial crisis of the middle and lower income segments of the society. During the meeting, the economic team briefed the prime minister about budget preparation besides the revised targets of tax collection for current fiscal year, and the proposed targets for next fiscal year.

The meeting was informed that after approval from the federal cabinet, the budget 2023-24 would be presented on June 9. It was also informed that Pakistan's economy was inching towards stability and the fiscal deficit was continuously declining.

PM Shehbaz, expressing satisfaction over the performance on economic front said, due to better economic policies, the country's current account balance turned to surplus after several year and was showing surplus for last two months. He also expressed satisfaction over the declining trend in the Urea fertilizer prices saying that it became possible only due to the government's timely action.

He said availability of the fertilizer at affordable price would not only ensure prosperity of the farmers but the country would also move towards self-sufficiency in the agriculture commodities. Furthermore, the prime minister also directed to finalize the

pension reforms as soon as possible.

He said a pension fund should be established by adopting innovative methods to ensure minimum financial burden on the national exchequer. Shehbaz Sharif said after the pension reforms, welfare of the pensioners would also be ensured. He also directed to take practical steps to expand the tax net and raise the tax revenues.

Minister for Finance and Revenue Ishaq Dar, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Interior Minister RanaSanaullah, Planning Minister AhsanIqbal, Advisor AhadCheema, Minister of State for Petroleum Musadiq Malik, Special Assistants to PM DrJehanzeb Khan, Malik Ahmad Khan, Tariq Pasha, Tariq Bajwa, AttalullaTarrar, MNA Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue and other officials attended the meeting.

Steps on anvil for provision of quality infrastructure, transport facilities to residents of Islamabad: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said practical steps were being taken for the provision of best infrastructure and transport facilities to the residents of Islamabad.

He directed the relevant authorities to make efforts for extending world standard facilities to the citizens of the capital. The prime minister chaired a meeting on the development projects of Islamabad. The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar, Minister for Interior RanaSanaullah, PM's Adviser AhadCheema, PM's Special Assistant Tariq Bajwa, former Members of the National Assembly HanifAbbasi, Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry and AnjumAqeel, Capital Development Authority chairman, secretaries and

other senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

PM Shehbaz also directed for acceleration of pace on the ongoing development projects without compromising on transparency and quality work. The meeting was apprised that in the rural areas of Islamabad, work on Rs10 billion package was being carried out which would bring a new era of development in those areas.

For improvement of the transport system in Islamabad, a total of 160 electric buses would run on different routes while 30 of them would arrive by the mid of June to ply on two routes. Addressing the participants, the prime minister said the overseas Pakistanis were the precious assets of the country and their welfare was among the top priorities of the government.

The meeting was apprised that a number of housing units equipped with the latest facilities were being constructed in the Federal Capital for the overseas Pakistanis while residential schemes for expatriates were also initiated in which they would be provided with concession of 15 percent over full payment. It was informed that a total of 45 commercial plots located at the best locations of Islamabad were ready for auction.

It was further informed that for the rural and urban areas of Islamabad, a short-term solid waste management project would commence in June this year, whereas an international tender had been floated for the solid waste management under a long-term plan. The prime minister directed that a comprehensive solid waste management plan should be presented before the Federal Cabinet for approval.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting on development projects.

Imran terms PTI leaders' exodus 'forced divorce'

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Tuesday termed his party leaders' exodus as "forced divorce" after senior vice president Shireen Mazari also jumped ship following the May 9 riots. "We had all heard about forced marriages in Pakistan but for PTI a new phenomenon has emerged, forced divorces," Khan — a former prime minister who faces a slew of cases ranging from corruption to terrorism — said in a tweet.

The party's leaders have been announcing their departure as the PTI workers attacked not only public buildings but also military installations — including the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. The people have majorly cited PTI's "policy of violence" as the reason behind their decision for leaving the party, with PTI claiming that they were under duress.

"Also wondering where have all the human rights organizations in the country disappeared," the PTI chief said. When the wickets began to fall recently, Khan said he sympathised with all those who were "under pressure" to leave the PTI — the party which ruled the country from 2018-2022. "My sympathies go to all those who under pressure have been made to leave the party. And I commend and salute all the senior members who are resisting the extreme pressure to quit the party."

TMA team calls on KP CM

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Azam Khan was called on by a 13-member delegation of Tehsil chairmen from newly merged districts to apprise him of the issues being faced by local governments in merged districts.

Besides, provincial caretaker ministers Hamid Shah and Manzoor Afridi, Secretary Local government Aamir Afaq were also present in the meeting. The delegation informed the chief minister about the issues being faced by local representatives which include unavailability of offices and other basic facilities for tehsil chairmen, shortage of Tehsil Municipal officers and other staff in merged districts.

The delegates said that due to lack of staff in tehsil municipal administrations, the office work of local governments is suffering, adding that local governments staff are also facing the issue of non-payment of salaries. The tehsil chairmen requested the Chief Minister for provision of operational grants to TMAs of merged districts to make them sustainable as they are financially weak.

The chief minister directed the concerned authorities to take concrete steps for immediate resolution of the basic issues being faced by the tehsil governments in merged districts and said that all the required staff including Tehsil Municipal officers be posted to TMAs in merged districts. He also directed the quarters concerned to make arrangements for the offices of local government representatives in merged districts.

High profile militant Shambay pleads mercy

Shehbaz lauds security forces

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday congratulated the countrymen and appreciated security forces over the arrest of "one of the most" high profile militant leaders, the founder and head of Baloch National Army Gulzar Imam Shambay.

"Congratulations to Pakistan for nabbing one of the most high-profile militant leaders, the founder and head of BNA Gulzar Imam Shambay. My appreciation to the security forces for their untiring efforts to restore peace," the prime minister wrote on Twitter. He said that the director general of ISI deserved the nation's highest commendation for carrying out with great sophistication, the "first of its kind and the most complex" intelligence operations involving various geographical locations. "Pakistan, especially Balochistan, are well on the way to peace and prosperity, Insha'Allah. Pakistan Zindabad," the Prime Minister remarked.

in anti-state activities were getting support from hostile agencies," he added. According to sources of the security forces, the BNA militant leader was born in Paroom, District Panjgur, in 1978. He worked as a contractor, and correspondent of a local newspaper before joining terrorist group in 2009.

He remained deputy to Brahamdagh Bugti in Baloch Republican Army (BRA) till 2018 and later, after the creation of Baloch Raj Aajoi Sangar (BRAS), he formed his own militant outfit Baloch National Army (BNA). He was an ideologue, who remained a leading character in steering militant activities in Balochistan, particularly in the south Balochistan, besides remaining contact with the hostile intelligence agencies for the so-called independence of the province.

He visited India on fake documents in December 2017. Upon shifting of militancy leadership from feuds to commoners, Shambay emerged as an influential character in BRAS due to links with hostile agencies and remained its operational head prior to his arrest. The operation to nab the high profile militant leader was spread over months. However, its climax/ execution was carried out in a professional and calculated manner in under 12 hours.

The intelligence agencies found initial leads about the hierarchy and leadership of the militant groups through ongoing investigations and

resident moles placed inside various militant organizations. The leads were confirmed and double checked through usage of state of the art digital technologies and software, thus cracking into secure networks used by hostile actors.

The militant leader (Shambay) was identified after extensive efforts that involved penetration into discreet and highly confidential digital space whereby various terrorist networks were identified and their linkage with hostile intelligence agencies and abettors were established. Highly trained intelligence operators were employed at various geographic locations to verify the digital information. Upon positive confirmation of Shambay, he was approached under the guise of agents from HIAs. After necessary rapport building, he was gradually lured in through offers for financial and technical assistance.

Owing to different geographic contiguities, the complex case of intelligence history was undertaken through creation of fictitious characters, preparation of required supporting documents and routing/ delivery of finances through failsafe unidentifiable means, which ultimately facilitated in engagement and strengthening bond with Shambay. The sources said, "The arrest of Shambay indicates that the state, LEAs and intelligence agencies (especially ISI) are cognizant of the challenges and in full grip of the militant landscape."

Qureshi rearrested after release from Adiala Jail

RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi was rearrested Tuesday, minutes after being released from Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail. Party leader Musarrat Jamshed Cheema was also rearrested immediately after her release.

Speaking outside the jail before his rearrest, Qureshi emphasised that he was still a part of the PTI and would remain so. The former minister was then taken away by police to an unknown location.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered Qureshi's release after he submitted an undertaking affirming that he would abstain from creating agitation and inciting workers. Qureshi was among the top PTI leaders arrested from Islamabad within 24 hours of the outbreak of violent protests by

PTI workers following former prime minister Imran Khan's arrest on May 9 in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

The former foreign minister was arrested by the police in cases of riots and arsons in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, police said back then. However, before his arrest, the PTI leader encouraged party workers to continue their struggle for "true freedom" in the country. "As a foreign minister of Pakistan, I defended Pakistan's interests at every forum. I have been in practical politics for 40 years," he said.

Qureshi added that he had no regrets and has not made any provocative statements that could lead to lawsuits. He was confident that the PTI's movement would reach its destination. On May 18, the IHC quashed orders for Qureshi's arrest and declared that he be released.

However, the court had said that the PTI leader's release would be contingent on his submission of a written undertaking that he would not partake in violent protests and refrain from inciting any kind of violence in the future.

LHC orders release of 123 PTI workers: Lahore High Court (LHC) on Saturday ordered the release of 123 workers of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) who were detained following the party protests against Imran Khan's arrest.

LHC's Justice Anwarul Haq issued the ruling on a petition filed by PTI leader Farrukh Habib, declaring a notification issued by the government for their detention illegal. During the hearing, Mr Habib's lawyer told the court that all the detained persons were political workers and sought orders for their release.

Imran appears before NAB in Al-Qadir Trust case

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI Chairman Imran Khan has arrived at the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) office in Islamabad to join the investigation of charges against him linked to the Al Qadir Trust case.

The case alleges that the former premier and his wife obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd for legalising Rs50 billion, which was later identified and returned to the country by the UK during the tenure of the PTI government. A video shared by the PTI on its official Twitter account showed tight security outside the accountability watchdog's office. Imran was whisked away from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) premises by paramilitary forces in connection with the case on May 9, leading to violent protests across the country.

The PTI chief had immediately approached the high court for release but it had declared his arrest legal. However, following the Supreme Court's verdict of the arrest being unlawful, he was released. Meanwhile, on Tuesday, an accountability court granted bail to Imran's wife, Bushra Bibi, in the same case until May 31. After Imran's arrival, the NAB's Combined Investigation Team (CIT) gave the PTI chief a questionnaire pertaining to the case.

In December 2019, why was a summary prepared for the approval of the return of illegal money from the UK? In December 2019, why was the approval for surrendering the return of illegal money from the UK given? Why was the land for Al Qadir University and other monetary benefits taken from the suspect in return? Why was the power abused while sitting in the highest public office role? Why were monetary benefits obtained from the suspects by abusing power? Why was a criminal act committed by returning the illegal amount from the UK to the suspects? Why were the letters and correspondence with the British National Crime Agency kept secret? Why was the summary for the East Recovery Unit kept secret?

India abusing G20 with Kashmir meet: Bilawal

E.P. Report

BAGH: Pakistan Foreign Minister and Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public gathering in Bagh, Azad Kashmir to protest India's violations of international law and UN resolutions by holding the G20 meeting in Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir said that the entire world is seeing the drama that Modi is orchestrating while the representatives of Pakistan are expressing solidarity with their Kashmiri brethren the very same day. Chairman FM Bilawal thanked the representatives of the provinces and the federation for attending the gathering including representatives of the MQM, JUI and JUP-Noorani.

FM Bilawal said that this is his first visit to Bagh as the Foreign Minister of Pakistan and he is representing each citizen and party of the country. He said that despite ideological and political differences among political parties, he represents the country as a whole globally. He said that he has been carrying out his duties as the Foreign Minister for a year and in every international interaction, Kashmir remains his priority. "Not only am I representing Pakistan as its Foreign Minister, but also Azad Kashmir and Occupied Kashmir", Chairman FM Bilawal said. Despite the temporary internal issues that Pakistan is faced with, our fraternal relationship with that of Kashmir is one that is generational. Quid-e-Awam had promised to

struggle for a thousand years for the sake of Kashmir. We are the successors of martyrs and this is their soil, we will always stand shoulder to shoulder with our Kashmiri brothers.

Chairman FM Bilawal said that when he visits the United Nations or any international forum, he always stresses on how the issue is not limited to Pakistan and India but the Kashmiri people and the international world. The UN resolutions state that this issue concerns the entire world, and holding a plebiscite is the sole solution. When I talk of the rights given to the Kashmiri people by the UN, Indian representatives label us 'terrorists' in response.

(Continued on Back Page)



BAGH: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public gathering in Azad Kashmir.

ATC grants Imran bail

ISLAMABAD (INP): An anti-terrorism court in Islamabad on Tuesday granted PTI chief Imran Khan bail in eight cases pertaining to the violence at the Judicial Complex. The court approved the bail, while hearing the PTI chief's plea, till June 8.

Cases were registered against Imran at Golra, Bara Kahu, Ramna, Khanna, and CTD police stations of the capital after the police accused the PTI chief and party workers of being involved in attacking police and creating unrest outside the FJC in Islamabad during the hearing of the Toshakhana case on March 18.

The former prime minister who is facing a number of cases and Bushra Bibi

reached the Islamabad judicial complex, ahead of the former's appearance before the NAB at its Rawalpindi office in the £190 million settlement case.

The two first appeared before the accountability court to seek a protective bail for the former first lady, whose bail in the graft case expired today (May 23), to avoid her arrest in the £190 million graft case. Earlier this month, the NAB had summoned Imran and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in connection with the Al-Qadir Trust case and the investigation into the alleged misuse of authority as public office holder in aiding and abetting illegal transfer of £190 million, for personal gains, but they did not appear

before the bureau. Imran, however, had submitted a detailed reply on May 18 and said that he was not the custodian of the document signed between property tycoon Malik Riaz's family and the National Crime Agency (NCA) neither did he have any copy of the document.

"All the allegations made by you in the call-up notice are absolutely false, frivolous and concocted, and based on a deliberate misconception of law and facts, and baseless conjectures and surmises," the PTI chief said in his reply. He said the correspondence between the government of Pakistan and NCA, UK constituted an official record and should be with the department concerned.



CM, Minister inaugurate Shaheed Benazir treatment, rehabilitaion centre

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Nawabzada Shahzain Bugti formally inaugurated Benazir Shaheed Model Addicts Treatment & Rehabilitation Centre (MATRC) Manghopir here on Tuesday.

The MATRC is a state-of-the-art facility established by the provincial government with the help of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and in collaboration with the Ministry of Narcotics Control, and other national and international partners. The ceremony was attended by provincial ministers, industrialists, Provincial Ministers, ANF DG and others. Federal Minister for Narcotic Control Shahzain Bugti said that there was a dire need to work in close coordination with all the provincial governments so that the drug menace could be eliminated.

He said that earlier, in some areas people were using drugs but now it has become accessible to the school children and affecting them badly.

The federal minister said that Arabic and Chinese languages would

be taught to the drug addicts being rehabilitated here at the Center so that they could be provided jobs.

He emphasized the need for working in jails where drugs were being paddled and used.

Shahzain Bugti thanked the chief minister and his party leadership for supporting him for the cause.

The Chief Minister thanked the Federal Minister for Narcotics Control for his presence and participation in the program to discuss the current situation of drugs in the province and other related matters.

"This is a vital issue that affects the lives and well-being of millions of people in our province and country," the CM said adding that this needed to be addressed jointly by the provincial and federal governments so that the menace could be averted. The Chief Minister said that the MATRC aimed at providing quality and comprehensive services for the prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration of drug users and their families.

"The MATRC has a capacity of 60 beds and offers free treatment & reha-

bilitation for drug abusers, providing detoxification, food, boarding, counseling, vocational training, and aftercare services to drug addicts," he said and added the MATRC would also conduct awareness campaigns, research studies, and capacity building programs for drug demand reduction. According to the CM, the MATRC is also a testament to our commitment and resolve to provide humane and dignified care to drug users and their families. "The MATRC is not only a hospital but also a home for those who seek help and hope for a better future," he announced.

Murad Shah said that Sindh was one of the most affected regions by the drug problem in Pakistan. According to the National Drug Use Survey 2022, the overall results of the survey revealed that approximately 6 percent of the population – 9 percent of the adult male and 2.9 percent of the adult female population – equivalent to 6.7 million people – had used a substance other than alcohol and tobacco in the preceding years, the CM said and added the most used drugs are cannabis, heroin, opium, methamphetamine, and prescription drugs.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Shah Zain Bugti along with Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurating the ANF Model Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Center at Manghopir & Malir.

Shehla Raza inaugurates Safe House for women

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Women Development, Syeda Shehla Raza on Tuesday, inaugurated the Dar-un-Nisa Safe House in district Central of Karachi for providing shelter and protection to women.

It is the 24th Safe House established in the province and the second in the metropolis by the Department of Women Development under its project aimed at providing needy women with immediate shelter, medical treatment and legal assistance.

The minister while speaking to media at the occasion informed that safe houses were being opened as the first emergency shelter for those women who have to leave their homes, as an extreme step, due to domestic

problems and violence against them.

"In such situations, even the neighbours, sometimes, do not give shelter to the woman while the police also shrug away the complainant while describing the matter as a family problem," she observed.

Shehla Raza said that safe houses are open round-the-clock as the initial shelter for oppressed women and the deserving women were provided there with immediate shelter, medical treatment and legal assistance as well as protection in case of any threat to their life. She said that within twenty-four to forty-eight hours of taking shelter in safe houses, the women were sent to Darul Aman on court order. She informed that safe houses were opened

on the directives of the court and the concerned deputy commissioner and SSP look after matters. Those officers were responsible for taking immediate measures and bringing the woman safely to the court, she added.

The DC Central was requested for providing an easily accessible place where women in need of assistance could reach with convenience, she said and termed the space provided in the education garden for the safe house as suitable.

Deputy Commissioner Central District Taha Saleem, Assistant Commissioner Neha Shah, Director of Women Development Department Sindh Muhammad Ali Sheikh and other relevant officers were also present at the occasion.

NFEH takes its tree plantation campaign to KU campus

KARACHI (PPI): Department of Biotechnology, the University of Karachi, and the National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH) have joined hands to jointly conduct the tree plantation campaign.

A tree plantation activity was held in this regard at the Biotechnology Department on the KU campus. In the first phase of the plantation drive, 100 tree saplings were planted and more saplings will be planted in the next phase, according to a statement issued on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, NFEH President Naeem Qureshi said that Karachi had lost its charm with its climate getting warmer with the passage of time due to a constant decrease in tree cover. He lamented the situation that tree cover was merely present on a three per cent area of the city whereas ideally, 25 per cent area of Karachi should be green.

Qureshi urged the KU students to come forward and fully own the tree plantation drive. Chairman of the Biotechnology Department, Prof Dr Saifullah, said that it was his firm resolve that his department should become a green zone and environment-friendly area on the campus as for this purpose massive plantation activity would be conducted.

Impact Foundation President Zafar Saleem said that his non-governmental organisation had been working for the cause of environmental protection, training, and creating job opportunities for the youth. Later, the plantation activity was carried out by the KU's faculty members, students, NFEH office-bearers, and Faqeeh Saleem of the Green Team. They also expressed resolve to take care of the newly planted saplings. Earlier, the NFEH joined hands with the Capital Development Authority for plantation activity at Islamabad's Heritage Village in March this year. Some 400 saplings were planted in the plantation activity in the federal capital. The plantation drive this year will continue by the end of this year's monsoon season.

PPP Christian Community organized rally

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A rally held in front of the Peshawar Press Club organized by the Pakistan People's Party Christian Community, led by former District Member Peshawar Yusuf George. Yusuf George said that on May 9, important installations of the Pakistan Army We strongly condemn the attacks and demand from the government of Pakistan that all the elements who have committed this heinous act should be severely punished.

The protection of the motherland, which we have gained after great sacrifices, is our first



responsibility and we are always ready to sacrifice our lives for it.

In this rally, in the spirit of patriotism, the officials of People's Party Christian Wing, Yasir Bhatti, Arif Councilor,

Karamat Ghori, Waris Khokhar, Sara Azhar and Councilor Waris Nawab, besides the important Christian religious figures of Upshawar and numerous people from the Christian nation joined.

MD AAA Associates Lt. Col. Shahzad Ali Kiani (r) attends IBA Directors' Training Program

F.P Report

ISLAMABAD: IBA Center for Executive Education made a significant stride towards nurturing the expansion of the business community in Islamabad by unveiling its anticipated Director's Training Program. The program was launched in an event organized by the core team of IBA Alumni North Islamabad Chapter. The Chief Guest of the occasion was Chairman SECP Mr. Akif Saeed.

More than 200 people from diverse fields attended the inauguration. The new office will provide leadership and management development programmes for family companies, public sectors, state-owned enterprises, and corporates in the northern areas, with a focus on IBA Karachi's executive and organisational development philosophy. IBA aims to bring opportunities for organizations and individuals through action learning-based capacity-building initiatives, research, forums, think tanks, and consultancies. This venture will help meet the increasing demands of today's business world.

AAA Associates MD Lt. Col. Shahzad Ali Kiani (r), a respected IBA alumnus and Bronze Medalist of the batch

of 2012, graced the occasion, marking his presence in this momentous event.

AAA Associates, under the leadership of Lt. Col. Shahzad Ali Kiani (r), has always respected and supported initiatives that contribute to business growth and professional development. The company sees the Director's Training Program as an invaluable addition to the educational resources available to Islamabad's business community.

The new training program, tailored to address the unique challenges faced by family-run businesses, promises to equip entrepreneurs with the essential skills and knowledge required to manage their business complexities efficiently.

Lt. Col. Shahzad Ali Kiani (r) expressed his support for such initiatives, stating, "At AAA Associates, we believe in the power of continual learning and professional development. This program aligns with our commitment to fostering business growth in Islamabad. We congratulate IBA Center for Executive Education on this significant milestone and look forward to seeing the impact this program will have on the business community." AAA Associates is a leading mul-

tidimensional business conglomerate, recognized for its exceptional dedication to excellence and customer service. They have grown into a highly reputable entity within Pakistan's business landscape. AAA Associates specializes in a broad array of services, including real estate development, consultancy, investment opportunities, and construction services.

TENDER NOTICE

The chairman, Procurement Committee, Civil Courts, Kohat invites sealed bids from reputed Authorized dealers, Firms/companies for the purchase of following items under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement of Goods, Works and Services Rules, 2014.

S. No.	Item Descriptions	Bid Evaluation Procedure	Specifications
01	Furniture	Single Stage, two envelopes (Rule 6(2)(b)) of KPPRA Rules, 2014	Detailed particulars of required items are available in Bid/solicitation documents which can be obtained from the office of Senior Civil Judge (Admn), Kohat during office hours before closing date
02	I.T Equipment's		
03	Hardware		
04	Plant & Machinery		

Terms and Conditions:

- All the goods must be offered with standard warranty.
- The offered rates should be inclusive of all applicable taxes. Tender Quoted rates will applicable till 30 June 2023.
- The bidder will be eligible for evaluation that are registered with relevant tax authority for STRN, GST, I. Tax Dept/ FBR reputable, Registration Certificates must be attached with the bidding documents otherwise bid will not be entertained.
- All the taxes applicable will be deducted from the suppliers as per relevant rule.
- Bid Security @ 2 % of offered rate addressed to the Senior civil Judge (Admin), Kohat is required to be attached with each item of the tender. Bidding documents & separate bids shall be offered for each item, without call deposit tender shall not be entertained.
- The successful bidder must deposit 8 % performance guarantee of the total amount under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement of Goods, Works and Services Rules, 2014.
- The bidder must submit an affidavit that they are not black listed with any Govt/ Semi Govt organization and that the supplied item will be genuine.
- The bidder must provide certificate with clear indications that no information has been concealed, in case distortion of facts are detected it would be sufficient cause to disqualify the bid & will lead toward blacklisting of the perspective bidder.
- The successful bidder will be strictly bound to supply the items according to specifications within 15 days after issuance of supply order. Failure in the supply within stipulated period or below specification shall entail in cancellation of that bid & forfeiture of the Earnest Money/ Call Deposit Return (CDR) and in case of cancellation of Supply Order, new supply order will be issued to next lowest bidder.
- Incomplete application/bid will not be entertained. The committee reserves the right to reject or discontinue the tender proceedings as well as to reject any or all the applications with the reasons. Grounds of rejection to be communicated to the bidders upon requests as per rule 47(1) of KPPRA Rule, 2014.
- Last date of bidding documents received to this office will be on 09th June, 2023 till 10:00 AM. The Tenders will be opened on the same last day at 10:30 AM. In presence of the bidders or the representative of the bidder.
- Quality shall be as per provided specification & Detail or better than that.
- Quantity can be increased or decreased according to available budget. The Subject purchase will be subject to availability of fund.
- Vendor will be responsible to provide defect free and brand new items. In case of inferior quality, the performance guarantee may be forfeited.
- The sample of items so supplied will be provided to the office of the undersigned before opening of tender for technical evaluation.

**Chairman Procurement Committee/
Senior Civil Judge (Admn), Kohat
Contact # 0922-9260238**

Miftah Ismail demands to hold census across Pakistan again

KARACHI (INP): Former finance minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Miftah Ismail has expressed reservations about the recent digital census and demanded to count the country's popula-

tion again. Miftah Ismail made the statement while addressing a conference organised by Muttahida Quami Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) in Karachi to develop consensus against the recent digital census.

The former finance minister raised questions about the findings of 3% growth in the census.

**HEADQUARTERS
PAKISTAN RANGERS (SINDH)
MUSLIM JINNAH COURTS
DR.ZIA-UD-DIN AHMED ROAD KARACHI-4
No. 03905/PRO/414/2023 Dated 22-May-2023**

TENDER NOTICE

- Sealed tenders are invited from the manufacturers, distributors and sole agents for supply of following stores by Pakistan Rangers (Sindh). Tenders will be opened on 09 June 2023 at 1500 hours in presence of concerned/ authorized firms representatives:-

Ser	Nomenclature	Tender Fee (Rs)
a.	Portable Field Toilet/ Shower/ Washbasin	500
b.	Tents (upto 40 Persons)	500
c.	Ablution Facilities (upto 50 Persons)	500
d.	Container for Ammunition Magazine (For Storage)	500
e.	Containers (For Stores)	500
f.	Micro (Multirotor)	500
g.	Generators Stationary and Mobile (76 - 100 KVA)	500
h.	Generators Stationary and Mobile (41 - 50 KVA)	500
i.	Collapsible Ladder	500
j.	Taser (Advanced Pistol)	500
k.	Ballistic Shield III A-NIJ (upper body protection)	500
l.	Road Spike Belt	500
m.	Truck Water Canon, Soft Skin over 5000 Liters & upto 10000 Liters	500
n.	Bus (29 passengers capacity)	500

- Manufacturers, Distributors & Sole agents desirous to participate in tender should be registered with Sales Tax, Income Tax Departments, Active Tax Filer at FBR and having valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council (as applicable).
- Tender forms can be obtained from Ordnance Branch Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) with effect from 25 May 2023 to 09 June 2023 from 1100 to 1330 hours daily (except Saturday and Sunday / Public Holidays) after payment of tender fee (non-refundable) as mentioned against each in shape of pay order/bank draft from any scheduled bank in favour of DG Pakistan Rangers (Sindh). Tenders can be dropped in tender box upto 09 June 2023 2023 till 1430 hours.
- Director General Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders as per Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Rules 2004. For further details please contact on telephone # 99205285-7 (Extension # 3095). PID(K) 3343/22

**Lieutenant Colonel for Director General
(Muhammad Salah Ud Din)**



LAHORE: Abdul Razzaq Niazi is announcing to quit PTI party in a press conference at Press Club.



Governor hands over 11 buses to various educational institutions

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali handed over 11 buses to various educational institutions including girls' colleges, schools for blinds and Special Education Complex for special children.

The buses were handed over to educational institutions during a ceremony held here in Governor's House on Tuesday.

Besides, members of the caretaker provincial cabinet Justice (R) Irshad Qaiser, Sawal Nazir Advocate, Fazl Elahi, Salma Begum, Malik Mehr Elahi, and Rehmat Salam Khattak, Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair, Secretary Local Government, Secretary Social Welfare and other authorities were present on the occasion.

Four buses were handed over to Intercity Girls

College Shahi Bagh, 4 to City District Government Women's College, 1 bus each to Government School for Blinds GT Road Peshawar, Government School for Blinds Gulbahar and Special Education Complex Hayatabad.

The Governor on this occasion had not only invited 500 students and special children of the concerned educational institutions to the Governor's House, rather also served fast food and juices to these children.

On this occasion, the joy of the students particularly of the special children was palpable. They posed for pictures with the governor and paid tribute to him for providing buses and meeting their demands considering their difficulties. They also thanked the governor for his excellent hospitality and

arrangement of their visit to the Governor's House. After handing over the keys of the 11 buses to the heads of the said educational institutions, the governor made all the students and special children sit in the same buses and left the Governor's House respectfully.

On this occasion, the professors of the Government Girls Colleges and the teachers of the schools for Blinds and Special Education Complex thanked Governor Haji Ghulam Ali and said that for the first time, the students of the Girls' Colleges and special children have come to the Governor's House wherein they were given buses and wonderful hospitality the students of their institutions.

Addressing the ceremony, the governor said that he considers the provision

of facilities to educational institutions and special children as his duty to take special care of them. He said that after assuming the office of the governor, he made the special children as his special guests in the Governor's House.

Speaking to the media on the occasion, the governor said that as a constitutional head of the province, serving every individual and all sectors is his duty to solve their problems.

He said that Peshawar is bearing the burden of the people from all parts of the province, saying he has already played a role in the rehabilitation of the infrastructure, repair, maintenance of roads, and abolition of water, power and resolution of other problems and will continue his role in future too.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali handing over keys of buses to heads of Girls' Colleges, Schools for Blinds and Special Education Complex for Special Children.

Pollution caused by factories: High Court orders EPA to submit progress report

Humayun Khan

Tuesday.

PESHAWAR: A two members bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Musart Hilali and Justice Waqar Ahmad annoyed pollution caused by Marble and Checkboard factories in Peshawar while ordered Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to submit progress till 29th June, on

During hearing Additional Advocate General Mubashir Manzoor and Deputy Director EPA Mumtaz Ali appeared before court while informed that assessment of factory in Hayatabad has been made while the valuation of others continued on routine basis and requested for time for submission of detail report. However, Chief Justice

inquired regarding number factories? Informed that five factories are operating in Hayatabad Industrial Estate.

Chief Justice observed Marble factories on Warsak Road creating environmental pollution especially polluting water which caused diseases in the premises. Deputy Director EPA informed that Marble City has been established in

Mohmand while several factories had shifted and shifting other factories are continued.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Chief Justice Musart Hilali and Justice Waqar Ahmad observed that concerned department should take concrete steps for controlling pollution while ordered to submit progress report till 29th June.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting of PEDO Policy Board.

‘2,528 miscreants of May 9-10 riots arrested’

PESHAWAR (APP): Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah Kakakhel here Tuesday said that 2528 miscreants including 21 attackers involved in the Radio Pakistan Peshawar's ransacking and fire incidents have been arrested with the help of NADRA and police in connection with the May 9-10 riots in the province.

Addressing a press conference here, the Minister said a total of 2,174 PTI supporters arrested including 94 first tire, 299 second tire and 690 third tire leadership of the Pakistan Tahrir

Insaf in connection of the said riots. He said 90 policemen including an SP and three SHO's injured while protecting red zone.

The Minister said that 1098 accused were arrested after registration of 84 FIRs including 7ATA. The accused that broke and stolen Radio Pakistan's main gate was also apprehended.

The Minister said the police have successfully frustrated the nefarious plans of miscreants as the rioters wanted to move towards Governor House, Serena hotel, Corps

Commander House, KP Assembly, Supreme Court, Peshawar High Court and Judicial complex with ill intention.

He appreciated the maximum restraint of the security forces and police despite the provoking attitude of the protestors in Peshawar, Mardan and others districts on May 9-10.

He said the accused that involved in ransacking of Kargil War hero Capt Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed's statue at Mardan was also arrested and put behind the bar.

PBSA commissioner alongwith team meets KP Governor

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Commissioner Pakistan Boys Scout Association (PBSA) Sardar Waqar Shahzad has met Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali along with a delegation of 9 members, on Tuesday.

According to details, the delegation headed by Qari Muhammad Usman, Haji Aziz Ur Rahman Desham (GS, Karachi), Arbab Farooq Jan (Peshawar).

Governor KPK Haji Ghulam Ali welcomed the honorable delegation and assured timely orders for solution of demands and matters put forward by the delegation. The delegation thanked and prayed Governor Haji Ghulam Ali for his time and support.

Court grants interim bail to 3 PTI MPAs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Anti-Corruption Court granted interim bails to three Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Members Provincial Assembly (MPAs) till 1st June, on Tuesday.

According to prosecution, three MPAs belong to Swat namely former Minister Mohib Ullah, Salim Ullah Garan and Fazal Hakeem recruited 66 employees against the merit at Nawaz Kidney Hospital Sangota while misusing their authority.

Anti-corruption establishment has probe the matter which has caused lost of Rs13 million to national exchequer while lodged case against the three MPAs for misuse of power illegal recruitment.

The counsel for petitioner Nasir Naqem Umarkheli advocate appeared before court and requested for interim bail while Special Anti-corruption Court has bails till 1st June and stopped their arrested and directed to submit record in this regard.

PDMA hold meeting

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A coordination meeting was held under the chairmanship of Janat Gul Afridi, Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), to discuss the establishment of 47 temporary schools in Tirah Valley.

The meeting was attended by key stakeholders, including the Director of the Complex Emergency Wing (CEW) and representatives from MSF INGO, Save the Children, Islamic Relief Pakistan, SRSP, and PRCS.

Janat Gul Afridi highlighted the significance of this project and emphasized the collaborative efforts required for its successful implementation. The DG PDMA expresses his gratitude to all the participants for their commitment.

KMU and KMC jointly launches 2 Year Diploma in Psychiatry

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar in collaboration with Khyber Medical College (KMC) Peshawar has launched a two-year Post Graduate Diploma in Psychiatry (DPM). In this regard, a launching ceremony was held in KMC Peshawar in which vice-chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq was the chief guest while on this occasion Dean KMC Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb, former principal of KMC and internationally known Psychiatrist Prof. Dr. Khalid Mufti, faculty and students were also present. Addressing the event, Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq said that psychiatry has always been a neglected field, although its importance is much higher than other fields considering the immense social and economic problems in society. He said

psychologists need to glamorize this field. He said that the responsibilities of psychologists have increased in the problems that our society is facing today.

Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq said that seeing the growing despair and hopelessness in the society, we have to promote the feelings of tolerance and patience in the society and psychologists can play an important role in this regard. He hoped that the two-year Diploma in Psychiatry program jointly launched by KMU and KMC would not only help in overcoming the problem of shortage of psychiatrists in the province but also help in solving the psychological problems faced by the society. Earlier, Dean KMC Prof. Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb said that the importance of psychiatry has increased in light of the complex problems facing the country. He hoped that the introduction of this diploma course would also



help in overcoming the problem of a shortage of psychologists in the province, especially in remote areas.

Director of the course Prof. Dr. Bashir Ahmad, while presenting various data related to psychological problems, said that according to the Royal College of Psychiatry, it is necessary to have one psychologist for every 12,000 population, while in Pakistan there is one specialist for every 360,000 population. He said that on one side this diploma pro-

gram will help in the preparation of a comprehensive workforce in the field of mental health, on the other hand, as a result of this course; the people of the remote areas of the province will receive psychologists at their doorstep. He said that only medical doctors will be eligible for admission in this program and this course will cover two years while its assessment will be done on 50% MCQs and 50% SEQs papers on a semi-annual basis, the passing marks will consist of 60% marks.

Govt sends 848,281 Pakistanis abroad: Sajid



PESHAWAR (INP): Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Sajid Hussain Tori here Tuesday said that Federal Government has sent over 848,281 skilled Pakistanis abroad for employment.

Presiding over a high-level meeting of the Workers Welfare board (WWB) and Employees Oldage Benefits Institution (EOBI) here at WWB headquarters, the Minister said the policies of the present government revolved around masses, labourers and working classes and by December 31, 2022, about 848,281 skilled workforces including IT specialists, doctors, engineers, technicians and others were sent to different countries including GULF

and Europe by the present government for their socio-economic empowerment.

He said the present government has addressed the maximum problems of WWB and EOBI employees and was endeavouring to address the residential and pension problems of the employees of both organizations.

He said the residential quarters at the labour colony Regil Lalma Township would be given to labourers on rent and later would be handed over on an ownership basis after the adaptation of a bill by the national assembly.

Earlier, addressing the meeting of WWB, the minister said that strict action would be taken against teachers on wilful absence from duties while trans-

fers/posting would be made strictly on merit.

He said today is the age of IT and the progress and prosperity of nations were linked with technical and modern education. He said as per vision of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, efforts were being made to provide maximum relief to labour and working class and address their problems at doorsteps.

Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Labour, Malik Mehar Elahi underscored the need for solozorization of WWB and EOBI employees and technical institutes, Rs five lakh bonus for teachers showing good performance and scholarship to position holder students.

Earlier, the Minister was informed that tailoring/designs diplomas for girls students were started as pilot project at Peshawar where vocational and trainings at industrial home are being provided for economic empowerment.

A total of nine industrial homes were established in KP where students were being imparted quality education as per modern days requirement.



PESHAWAR: Former Member Provincial Assembly Javed Naseem addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Symposium held to counter violent extremism

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Center of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism organized a symposium focused on the prevention and countering of violent extremism.

The event was attended by Ph.D. and MPhil scholars from Abdul Wali Khan University. Dr. Ayaz Khan, the Chief Coordination Officer of the Center of Excellence, provided an explanation of the organization's background and objectives in countering violent extremism.

During the symposium, Dr. Qasim, the Director General of the Center for Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism, warmly welcomed the students and introduced them to the center's staff. He also offered a brief rationale for the establishment of the Center of Excellence.

Dr. Irfan, the Manager of Enforcement Counter Violent Extremism, highlighted the ongoing and future

projects of the organization. He discussed the initiatives taken by the Center of Excellence to eradicate violent extremism.

The keynote speaker at the symposium was Dr. Amir Raza, a professor from the political science department at Peshawar University. He delivered a detailed discussion to the students on the current state of extremism in the region, its motivations, and its impact on Pakistan, with a specific focus on Pakhtunkhwa. He also presented potential solutions to address the issue.

Dr. Amir Raza informed the students about various aspects of extremism, including the active role of national institutions and the relevant laws of the United Nations. He emphasized the need for research to fill the gaps in understanding the motivations and effects of extremism, suggesting possible research topics.

In response to a question about cross-border extremism posed by the students,

Dr. Amir Raza acknowledged the importance of border management in countering this type of extremism. However, he also highlighted the potential impact on trade and cross-border culture.

Dr. Amir Raza encouraged the students to conduct research on the motivations of violent extremism and to write papers on related topics. He emphasized the need for the people of the region to comprehend the drivers of extremism and develop a national narrative to address the issue, thereby strengthening the overall national narrative. Expressing his appreciation for the establishment of the Center for Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism, Dr. Amir Raza remarked that such institutions should have been established in the province a decade ago.

However, he commended this as the first institution of its kind at the provincial level in the country, focusing on the motivations of extremism.

‘Various political leaders to join PPP soon’

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial president PPP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Minister of State for Water Resources, Mohammad Ali Shah Bacha has said that various political leaders and personalities will start joining the party soon.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, he said that the leaders of various political parties and personalities are in contact with the party to join it and a decision in this regard will be made with mutual consultation.

He said that those who are thinking to eliminate PPP themselves have become a bygone story, saying the PTI which targeted our leadership has developed cracks and is suffering from fragmentation and will collapse at any time.

He said that those who were talking of eliminating PPP were themselves fighting for their survival.

He said that PPP is an ideological political party and will always play an active role in the politics of Pakistan. He said that the party is fully prepared for the upcoming elections across the country, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and will participate in the elections in a democratic manner.

Mohammad Ali Shah Bacha said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is the future of Pakistan and people have many expectations attached to him. PPP workers should start preparations for the general elections from now, whenever the elections are held in the country the party will fully participate in it.



PESHAWAR: Pakistan Human Rights hold rally in support of Pak Armed Forces. — F.P. photo



In brief

Tourists stranded F.P. Report

MINGORA: Tourists visiting Swat valley were stranded on Tuesday after melting of snow flooded the River Swat and water entered Kalam road resulting in its closure. Despite passage of nine months after the destructive flood last year, Bahrain Bazaar has not been made secure due to which water entered into it. Closure of road left people on both sides including tourists stranded and mini-trucks were engaged in rescuing the trapped vehicles. All shops and business centers were also closed due to the entrance of water in Bahrain Bazaar.

Mobiles phones recovered F.P. Report

SWABI: Local police here Tuesday recovered electric gadgets including 140 stolen mobile phones and tablets during a raid conducted in Zaida area. According to District Police Office, an interprovincial gang of thieves stole 140 mobiles phones, tablets, USBs, memory cards and one million rupees from a mobile shop situated in Zaida. Investigating the case on modern guidelines, a team of police recovered all the stolen items and arrested inter-provincial thieves including Sulaiman, Muhammad Ahmad and Suhail. Police also recovered two pistols that were used by criminals in various incidents of robberies and theft.

Official blamed for corruption F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Chairmen of number of village councils (VC) and neighborhood councils (NC) blamed Assistant Director (AD) Local Government and Rural Development (LG&RDD) for his involvement in corruption during compiling necessary documents in tehsil Landi Kotal, on Tuesday. Out of 300 rupees per certificate charged by the council's Secretaries for formation of birth, death and marriages certificates, 50 rupees deposit in the personal bank account of Assistant Director, local government through easy paisa, they alleged. Yad Wazir, Haji Khan, Haji Sher and Nazek Shah, Chairman of NC-2, NC-01, VC-17 and NC-04 said that after assigned authority of rectifying and attesting of essential public documents, the Secretaries of VCs and NCs charged 300 per certificate. Clearing NADRA fee, the rest of money added in AD account was injustice to them, they said. They maintained that as per rule of business the money should be deposited in a joint account of the Chairman and Secretary and should be utilized to fulfill expenditure of the chairmen offices. "Joint accounts have been set up but the Secretaries who are the agents and employees of the local government have been restricted to sign cheques without permission of AD," they remarked. They added that approximately 60-90 forms, filed for seeking of different certificates are entertained in the tehsil chairman office that meant that huge income was corrupted. The councilors demanded an audit of the money, accumulated in AD account for the last 14 months. They threatened that they would not let the Secretaries to further deposit money (fee) in an AD account. One of the council Secretaries who performed his duty under the Civil Registration and Management System (CRMS) in the citizen facilitation center on the condition of anonymity said that they charged 300 rupees for urgent certificates while 150 rupees for normal ones.

PHC CJ orders speedy disposal at district judiciary, annoys pendency

Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) paid a surprise visit to sub-jail Nowshera while inspected each and every barrack personally and gave a patient hearing to all the prisoners by listening to their complaints and submissions individually.

The District and sessions judge Nowshera and Judicial Magistrate accompanied her ladyship. Prisoners had the majority of the complainant regarding the non-appearance of the counsels and prosecution witnesses which is causing hurdles for expeditious disposal of their cases. Complainants were also made regarding the non-conducive environment and overcrowding in the Nowshera jail and lack of basic facilities.

Her ladyship then and there issued strict directions to all concerned authorities for emergent fixation of the matters. Her ladyship showed her concerns about the cases of under-trial prisoners and directed the District & Sessions Judge for the speedy disposal of the cases. Directions were also issued for the proper medical facilitation and treatment of the inmates.

On complaints about the provision of insufficient food and other allied facilities, the Chief Justice inspected



the kitchen area and directed the Superintendent Jail for making sure of adequate arrangements. After the jail visit her ladyship presided over a meeting with the Judicial Officers of the district judiciary Nowshera. The District & Sessions Judge, Nowshera briefed Chief Justice regarding the pendency and disposal of the district Judiciary. Her ladyship appreciated the performance of the district judiciary and applauded their hard work and dedication.

Chief Justice emphasized that cases of Under Trial Prisoners and family matters must be given priority and shall be expeditiously disposed-off.

Her ladyship stressed that judicial officers shall maintain discipline and observe the court timings and official dress code, as per directions issued by the Peshawar High Court. Hon'ble the Chief Justice while speaking to the Judges emphasized that there will be zero tolerance for corruption. Strict actions will be taken against the delinquent officers and officials.

The justice also visited Tehsil courts Pabbi, met with the judicial officers of Tehsil Courts and discussed matters relating to Tehsil Courts. Her ladyship expressed her satisfaction regarding the overall performance and management of tehsil courts.

Jirga asks police authorities to avoid arresting political workers

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A 14-member delegation of the Talash Dushkhel Qaumi Jirga led by Dr Noor Muhammad and retired principal Aftab Alam Khan met the district police officer Tariq Iqbal and deputy commissioner Iftikhar Khan at their offices and voiced concerns over the arrest of political activists in connection with the May 9th violent protests.

The jirga members included Malik Muhammad Irshad, Haji Wali Rehman, Malik Naik Muhammad, former tehsil nazim Riaz Muhammad and others informed the DPO that houses of various political workers were being raided that had spread unrest among the residents. The jirga condemned the violent protests and vandalism on May 9 and 10 and said the elders would not support the real perpetrators and youth involved in those acts. They, however, asked the DPO to ensure that innocent workers would not be arrested.

The jirga members said the people of Talash were peace-loving and loyal citizens and they always supported the law enforcement agencies. They said that several innocent citizens had left their homes after the May 9 incidents because of the fear of being arrested. The DPO listened to the jirga and promised that the police would not disturb the innocent people.

He said the people involved in vandalism and looting of the government assets had been identified through videos, social media accounts and Nadra records and they would not be spared. The DPO said the innocent people who had been arrested would be freed soon while there would be no raids on houses of the political workers who had never been indulged in violent acts.

ANP membership: The Awami national Party local chapter announced to launch a party membership drive in the district and achieve the target of 200,000 new member-

ships and to hold intra-party elections. The announcement was made during the ANP general council meeting held at Timergara with former MPA and district president of the party Haji Bahadar Khan in the chair. The ANP member provincial election commission Rauf Khan also attended the meeting. The gathering was addressed by Haji Bahadar Khan, ANP central vice president Hussain Shah Yousafzai, Malik Sajjad Khan, Malik Muhammad Ayub Khan and others.

They said the party had fixed 200,000 men and women to be made as party members in the district. They said the ANP would fully participate in the next general elections.

Tax imposition: The Lower Dir chapter of Jamaat-i-Islami and Dir Qaumi Amn Jirga announced to the government to impose taxes in the Malakand tax-free zone. Talking to local journalists the Jirga's chairman and former MNA Sahibzada Yaqub Khan said the previous government had declared the Malakand region as a tax-free zone but the incumbent government wanted to impose several taxes in the region. He said the national assembly of Pakistan had also passed a resolution against the imposition of taxes. He said the Jirga and the local chapter of JI would strongly resist any such move of the government.

Services of retiring teachers' leader in Dir lauded: The provincial general secretary of the All Teachers Association (ATA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and senior school teacher Haji Khaliqur Rehman, a resident of Talash in Lower Dir was retired from services after completing 32 years of teaching in the elementary and secondary education department.

The staff members of the government high school Dherai Talash arranged a farewell party in his honour at the Chakdara Fishing hut here the other day. The patron-in-chief of the Ittihad e Asateza Muzzamil Khan

Tarnabi was chief guest on the occasion. The function was attended by schools' heads, retired educationists, teachers' leaders, poets, students, doctors and area elders. The Pakistan People Party senior leader and former senator Ahmad Hassan Khan, former provincial minister for finance advocate Muzafar Syed and others were also present. Speaking on the occasion Muzzamil Khan Tarnabi, former president of the school officers' association Aftab Alam Khan, former president of the All Teachers Association Mushtaqur Rehman, retired district accounts' officer Muhammad Habibullah and others lauded the services of the retiring teacher. They said that Haji Khaliqur Rehman had led the community and he had rendered great services in the field of education.

Local poets Jehan Bakht Syed Jehan, Insanullah Insan, Hamdillah Rahi, Muhammad Bilal Haqyar and Muhammad Ibrarullah Ibrar presented their poetry and appreciated the retiring teachers. The speakers said that teachers were the real builders of the nation and they owned respect and regard in society. They said that teachers throughout the world were respected because of their positive role and responsibilities.

Free eye camp: The Pakistan Markazi Muslim League local chapter organized a three-day free eye camp at Timergara that concluded here the other day. A total of 616 patients suffering from visual disorder were examined by specialist doctors during the event while 255 out of them were operated on free of cost. The party organizer Naveed Qamar and district president Abu Haroon told local journalists that expert doctors and eye surgeons including Dr Bilal, Prof Dr Afzal and others were called on from Lahore and Karachi to facilitate local patients on their door steps. They said the patients were also provided with free medicines. They said that such a camp would also be set up in Shangla soon.

Air pollution

mental quality'.

Whilst the scientist might favor the definition offered by Natural Environment Research Council (1976) that is the 'Release of substance and energy as waste product of human activities which result in change usually harmful', within the natural environment. Different type of pollution such as Air pollution, water pollution noise pollution etc.

"Air pollution is contamination of the indoor or outdoor environment by any chemical, physical or biological agents that modifies the natural characteristics of the atmosphere." Indoor air pollution include dust, dirt or gasses in the air inside building. air indoor pollution contribute to development of infection, lung cancer and asthma. indoor air pollution from solid fuels accounted for 3.5 million deaths and 4.5 % global daily adjusted Life Year (DALY) in 2010. indoor 10 times worse than outdoor pollution.

door pollution.

Outdoor air pollution are emissions caused by combustion process from moter and vehicles, solid fuel burning and industry. outdoor air pollution is the leading factor for premature death while in 2019, 4.2 million premature death occur in worldwide. The combined effect of indoor and outdoor pollution are associated with 6.7 million premature death annually.

Air pollution causing 7 million premature death each years. this equivalent to the number of people that have died from covid-19 since March 2020. A recent world band publication found that air pollution cost the global an estimated \$8.1 trillion in 2019, equivalent 95% of death caused by air pollution in low and middle countries. Air pollution in all form is responsible for more than 6.5 million deaths year globally, a number has increased over the past two decades.



HYDERABAD: A girl drinking water from hand pump at Hala Naka area.

F&PC 2023-24 proposed enhancement in academia Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: The Finance and Planning Committee (F&PC) meeting of Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) was held under the convenorship of Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, Vice Chancellor to recommend the budget for financial year 2023-2024.

Deputy Secretaries of Finance Department and Higher Education Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Deans and other members of the F&PC participated in the meeting. Like budgets of the financial years 2020-2021 and 2022-2023 that was surplus, the budget of the financial year 2023-2024 also remained surplus that is an achievement for the University Best Financial Management and optimal usage of university resources.

Enhancements are proposed in different funds like Endowment, Pension and KUST Reserves etc. that was appreciated by the committee members and considered as good indicator for long-term financial sustainability of the varsity. Director Finance also shared the revenue generation from other sources of KUST with the members of F&PC.

DHQ 100 beds hospital inaugurated F.P. Report

SHAH DAD KOT: The Sindh government has been established a District Headquarters DHQ hospital in Qamber city of Qamber Shah Dad Kot district for the betterment treatment of the people, the DHQ hospital which has 100 beds, but no duty doctor and staff on emergency basis.

The patients are often advised to seek treatment from Larkana Chanda Medical Hospital (CMC), due to which the public is not getting better facilities of emergency treatment in the hospital. According to informed sources, the hospital built at an estimated cost of 20 crores is called Awam Azaar & unprofitable hospital given to the public of district Qamber Shadadkot.

The residents have demanded the government to ensure the provision of basic facilities to the people by appointing doctors in the hospital for the time of emergency time.

First Hajj flight departs from Multan

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Pre Hajj Operation began from Multan International Airport (MIAP) with 326 intending pilgrims on board at Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) which departed for Madina here on Tuesday.

Senator, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani along with Airport Manager (APM), Syed Ghazanfar Raza, PIA Chief Information officer, Saqlain Gardezi, Director Haji Rehan Abbas Khokhar, PIA Distt Manager, Ghazanfar Akhtar, PIA Station Manager and Nadeem Murtaza saw off the pilgrims.

Exactly 52 flights of PIA, Saudi Airline and Air Blue will carry approximately 12,000 pilgrims from Multan during pre-Hajj operations this year which will conclude on June 22. The first PIA flight no 715 was Boeing 777 that left for Medina. A ceremony was held at MIAP to see off the pilgrims of the first flight attended among others by Haji Directorate, CAA, PIA, ASF officials.

Addressing the ceremony, Senator Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani congratulated the pilgrims saying that they were lucky to be chosen for the sacred Islamic duty. He said that only those who were called had

the chance to go for Hajj every year adding that they were the ambassadors of the country and the region on the Holy Land and are expected to behave in a civilized and good manners which will appease Allah Almighty, Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and Saudi citizens.

The Senator informed that this year 11,500 pilgrims would travel from Multan with an expenditure of over Rs11 lakh for each pilgrim and added that the government would pay Rs 55,000 for each pilgrim to sacrificial animals and it had made best arrangements for them. He asked the intending pilgrims to pray for the progress and prosperity of the country besides for martyrs, Pakistan Movement Leaders and workers and for poor segments of the society.

Gilani paid rich tribute to the former federal minister for Religious Affairs, Maulana Abdul Shakoor for his meritorious services to the pilgrims last year and requested this year pilgrims to remember the deceased in their special prayers. He reminisced that the first time he was invited by ex PM, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for opening of the airport and it was second time when he (Gilani) had come to say goodbye to them.

VC KUST chairs ASRB meeting

F.P. Report

KOHAT: The 106th meeting of the Advance Studies & Research Board (ASRB) under the convenorship of Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, the Vice Chancellor of Kohat University of Science & Technology (KUST). The main agenda included 44 synopses both MPhil and PhD, and also one case on the table agenda.

During the meeting, the ASRB approved 04 Ph. D cases, while three cases referred back to the departments with major observations. Similarly, 32 MS/MPhil synopses approved by the board while 02 cases referred back to the departments. Furthermore 02 general

cases as well as 01 table agenda item approved by the board.

The Vice Chancellor appreciated the active role of Directorate of Advance Studied and Research in conduction of frequent meetings of Advance Studies & Research Board (ASRB) and their efforts in raising academic and research standards of graduate programs with no compromise of quality and in line with HEC Policies.

He also appreciated the role of faculty members in creating innovative research culture in the university that is visible in the research proposals reviewed by the Advance Studies & Research Board (ASRB).

High time for development of socio-economic infrastructure in Kurram

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: District Kurram, nestled amidst breathtaking natural beauty, is a region that boasts majestic waterfalls, meandering rivers, and picturesque valleys especially the headquarter Parachinar. Encircled by snow-clad mountains on all sides, it stands as the highest plain area in Pakistan and serves as an international border, connecting three provinces of Afghanistan. Moreover, it holds the status of an international trade route. However, behind this scenic facade lies a history of

historical injustice and discrimination that has hindered the development of this remarkable region.

Despite the education rate in Parachinar District Kurram being on par with major cities like Peshawar and Islamabad, the absence of essential institutions, such as a university, medical college, and cadet college, has impeded progress. It is disheartening to note that the rulers have failed to prioritize the construction of these institutions, denying the local youth the opportunities they deserve.

One of the glaring issues

plaguing the area is the dilapidated state of the Peshawar-Parachinar Road, an international road constructed by the British. Regrettably, the government of Pakistan has neglected to rebuild this vital artery, causing severe problems for the local populace. The road's appalling condition has led to difficulties in accessing healthcare, with many patients succumbing to their ailments while being transported to Peshawar.

Furthermore, the persistent problem of electricity load shedding has cast a dark shadow over the lives of the people in District

Kurram. With only minimal or no electricity available for even an hour a day, the residents endure countless hardships, hampering their daily routines and overall quality of life.

The scarcity of gas facilities in the region has driven people to resort to deforestation as an alternative source of fuel. This alarming consequence could have been avoided had the government provided adequate gas facilities, thereby safeguarding the region's forests from rampant destruction.

In today's age, the internet plays a pivotal role in education.

However, the government's decision to inexplicably shut down 3G and 4G internet services in the area has severely impacted the community. The absence of online classes for children and the overall difficulty in accessing information have become pressing challenges faced by the people of Parachinar District Kurram. Additionally, the dearth of hospitals and the need for dams in the region further exacerbate the plight of the local population, hindering their access to essential healthcare services and depriving them of crucial water resources. By addressing the

aforementioned obstacles and investing in the region's infrastructure, education, healthcare, and connectivity, the government can uplift the lives of the hard-working and patriotic individuals who call this area home.

The time has come for the youth and all concerned citizens to unite and demand their basic rights, for silence and inaction will only perpetuate the cycle of injustice. It is not too late to rewrite the narrative and forge a brighter future for Parachinar District Kurram, ensuring that its beauty is matched by equitable opportunities and development.



2m killed, \$4.3tr in damages from extreme weather

GENEVA (AP): The economic damage of weather- and climate-related disasters continues to rise, even as improvements in early warning have helped reduce the human toll, the UN weather agency said. The World Meteorological Organization, in an updated report, tallied nearly 12,000 extreme weather, climate and water-related events over the past half-century around the globe that have killed more than 2 million people and caused economic damage of \$4.3 trillion.

The stark recap from WMO came as it opened its four-yearly congress among member countries, pressing the message that more needs to be done to improve alert systems for extreme weather events by a target date of 2027. "Economic losses have soared. But improved early warnings and coordinated disaster management has slashed the human casualty toll over the past half a century," WMO said in a statement. The trend of rising economic damage is expected to continue. The Geneva-based agency has repeatedly warned about the impact of man-made climate change, saying rising temperatures have increased the frequency and intensity of extreme weather - including floods, hurricanes, cyclones, heat waves and drought.

WMO says early warning systems have helped reduce deaths linked to climate and other weather-related catastrophes. Most

of the economic damage between 1970 and 2021 came in the United States - totaling \$1.7 trillion - while nine in 10 deaths worldwide took place in developing countries. The economic impact, relative to gross domestic product, has been felt more in developing countries, WMO says. WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said the cyclonic storm Mocha that swept across Myanmar and Bangladesh this month exemplified how the "most vulnerable communities unfortunately bear the brunt of weather, climate and water-related hazards."

"In the past, both Myanmar and Bangladesh suffered death tolls of tens and even hundreds of thousands of people," he said, alluding to previous catastrophes. "Thanks to early warnings and disaster management these catastrophic mortality rates are now thankfully history." "Early warnings save lives," he said. The findings were a part of an update to WMO's Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate and Water Extremes, which previously had covered a nearly 50-year period through 2019. WMO acknowledges some caveats to its report: While the number of disasters has risen, some of that may be due to improvements in reporting about extreme weather events that might have been overlooked in the past.

While the findings account for inflation,

WMO cautioned that estimating the economic toll can be an inexact science, and the reports could understate the actual damage. Worldwide, tropical cyclones were the primary cause of reported human and economic losses. In Africa, WMO counted more than 1,800 disasters and 733,585 deaths related to weather, climate and water extremes - including flooding and storm surges. The costliest was Tropical Cyclone Idai in 2019, which ran to \$2.1 billion in damages. Nearly 1,500 disasters hit the southwest Pacific, causing 66,951 deaths and \$185.8 billion in economic losses.

Asia faced over 3,600 disasters, costing 984,263 lives and \$1.4 trillion in economic losses - that cost mostly due to the impact of cyclones. South America had 943 disasters that resulted in 58,484 deaths and over \$115 billion in economic losses. Over 2,100 disasters in North America, Central America and the Caribbean led to 77,454 deaths and \$2 trillion in economic losses. Europe saw nearly 1,800 disasters that led to 166,492 deaths and \$562 billion in economic losses. Last week, WMO forecast a 66% chance that within the next five years the Earth will face a year that averages 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than in the mid-19th century, reaching a key threshold targeted by the Paris climate accord of 2015.

Lebanese prosecutor summons bank chief

BEIRUT (AP): Lebanon's public prosecutor summoned the country's embattled central bank governor for questioning following an international arrest warrant issued against him in France over corruption charges, judicial officials said. Riad Salameh is to answer the summons later this week, although no specific date was given.

France, Germany and Luxembourg are investigating Salameh and his associates over myriad alleged financial crimes, including illicit enrichment and laundering of \$330 million. A French investigative judge on May 16 issued an international arrest warrant, or Interpol red notice, for the 72-year-old Salameh after he failed to show up in Paris for questioning. Officials in Beirut said that Public Prosecutor Ghassan Oueidat will formally ask France to hand over the governor's case files to decide on future measures against Salameh. Asked whether it is possible to hand the former governor over to France, the officials - who spoke on condition of

anonymity - said Lebanon does not hand its citizens to foreign countries and the case will be overseen in Lebanon. They added that once Oueidat receives the case files from France, he will decide whether Salameh should face justice in Lebanon or elsewhere.

In 2020, the Lebanese prosecution received two Interpol red notices for tycoon Carlos Ghosn, who faced financial misconduct charges in Japan. Ghosn remains in Lebanon. Salameh has repeatedly denied all corruption allegations, saying he made his wealth from his years working as an investment banker at Merrill Lynch, inherited properties, and investments. He said he would only resign if convicted of a crime. He also said last week he plans to appeal the Interpol red notice. The officials said French authorities have set May 31, as the day to question Salameh's brother, Raja, in France and the governor's close associate Marianne Hoayek on June 13. Reports have circulated that the Lebanese central

bank had hired Forry Associates Ltd., a brokerage firm owned by Raja, to handle government bond sales from which the firm received \$330 million in commissions. Riad Salameh, a Lebanese-French citizen, has held his post for almost 30 years, but says he intends to step down after his current term ends in July.

The three European governments in March 2022 froze over \$130 million in assets linked to the probe. During a visit to Lebanon in March, the European delegation questioned Salameh about the Lebanese central bank's assets and investments outside the country, a Paris apartment - which the governor owns - and his brother's brokerage firm. Once hailed as the guardian of Lebanon's financial stability, Salameh since has been heavily blamed for Lebanon's financial meltdown. Many say he precipitated the economic crisis, which has plunged three-quarters of Lebanon's population of 6 million into poverty.

Ukraine says Russian armed groups behind border raid on Russia

KYIV (Agencies): Russian forces are battling a cross-border incursion by fighters - described alternatively as either armed Russian opposition groups or Ukrainian saboteurs - who crossed the Ukrainian frontier in what appeared to be one of the most daring attacks on Russian territory since Moscow's war on Kyiv began 15 months ago.

The governor of Russia's Belgorod region, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said that a Ukrainian "sabotage group" had entered Russian territory in the Graivoron district bordering Ukraine and was being repelled by local forces. Ukrainian news broadcaster Hromadske, citing Ukrainian military intelligence sources, said two armed Russian opposition groups, the Liberty of Russia Legion and the Russian Volunteer Corps (RVC), consisting of Russian citizens, were responsible for the attack on the Belgorod region. Little is known about the groups or their ties with the Ukrainian military. The RVC was founded last August and reportedly consists mostly of anti-Putin far-right Russian fighters who have links with Ukrainian far-right groups. Ukraine intelligence representative

Andrii Cherniak also said that Russian citizens were behind the cross-border assault. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, said on Twitter that Ukraine had "nothing to do with it" and suggested that an "armed guerrilla movement" had emerged to oppose "a totalitarian country". "Ukraine is watching the events in the #Belgorod region of #Russia with interest and studying the situation," he said.

Belgorod's Governor Gladkov said he had imposed a "counterterrorism regime" allowing authorities greater powers to clamp down on people's movement and communications. In a late-night post on Telegram, Gladkov said that in two separate attacks, houses and administrative buildings were damaged in two towns in the region, Borisovka and Graivoron. He said earlier that at least eight people had been wounded. Telegram channels monitoring Russia's military activity, including the blog Rybar with more than a million subscribers, said buildings housing Russia's Interior Ministry and the FSB security service had come under attack in the region's main

town, also known as Belgorod.

The RVC published video footage on their Telegram social media channel which showed what the group said was a fighter inspecting a captured Russian armoured vehicle. Another video showed what it said were fighters operating an armoured vehicle on a country road inside Russian territory. Other videos posted on Russian and Ukrainian social media channels showed pictures and videos of what were described as captured Russian service members and their identity documents. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Russian President Vladimir Putin had been informed and that work was under way to drive out the "saboteurs", the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported. An effort to "push them out from the Russian territory and liquidate them" was under way, he said.

Peskov described the action as an attempt by Ukraine to divert attention from the eastern city of Bakhmut, which Moscow claimed to have captured after months of battle but where Kyiv says it is still fighting.

'Don't delay reforms to prepare for pandemic'

GENEVA (Reuters): The head of the World Health Organization urged countries to carry out reforms needed to prepare for the next pandemic, hailing their "historic" decision to accept a major budget hike at the UN agency's annual assembly. Speaking at the assembly weeks after ending the global emergency status for the COVID-19 pandemic, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it was time to advance negotiations on preventing the next pandemic.

"We cannot kick this can down the road," the WHO director-general said in a major address to the agency's member states, warning that the next pandemic was bound to "come knocking". "If we do not make the changes that must be made, then who will? And if we do not make them now, then when?" he said. The 10-day annual World Health Assembly in Geneva, which coincides with the WHO's 75th anniversary, is set to address global health challenges including future pandemics, eradicating polio and supporting steps to ease Ukraine's health emergency triggered by Russia's invasion.

The WHO's 194 member states are now drafting a pandemic treaty which is up for adoption at next year's assembly. "A commitment from this generation (to a pandemic accord) is important, because it is this generation that experienced how awful a small virus could be," said Tedros. At the same meeting, countries approved a \$6.83 billion budget for 2024-25 - a decision that tested national commitments to fixing a WHO funding model which was seen as too small and overly reliant on the vagaries of donors. The budget includes a 20% increase in member states' mandatory fees under a preliminary agreement reached last year in exchange for a commitment to reforms including on budget, governance and finance policies.

US Assistant Secretary for International Affairs Michele J. Sison said future increases would be "continued upon continued reform progress". Central and South American countries also called for the WHO to address what they described as chronic underfunding of their region.

Iranian leader visits Indonesia

BOGOR, Indonesia (AP): Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi will meet his Indonesian counterpart Joko Widodo on Tuesday during a two-day trip aiming to strengthen economic ties between the Muslim-majority nations amid heightened global geopolitical tensions. Indonesia's Foreign Affairs Ministry said Raisi is visiting at Widodo's invitation as Indonesia aims to speed up its post-pandemic recovery by increasing its exports.

The visit is expected to deepen Iran's ties with Indonesia as Tehran seeks alternatives to the United States-led Western domination of international affairs and seeks further cooperation after the two nations concluded negotiations on the Indonesia-Iran Preferential Trade Agreement this month, Indonesia's Trade Ministry said. The ministry's data showed that trade between Indonesia and Iran amounted to \$54.1 million between January and March, while the bilateral trade value last year increased by more than 23% to \$257.2 million. Iran was a nontraditional trade partner for Indonesia, said Johni Martha, the director of bilateral negotiations at Indonesia's Trade Ministry. "With this PTA, we hope to widen our market reach and export opportunities in the Middle East and Persia," he said.

Southeast Asia's largest economy is seeking new markets to diversify its export options and to reduce its reliance on traditional trade partners, many of which have been affected by a weakened global economy and geopolitical risks. In February, Raisi met with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping to seek further cooperation following their meeting last September in Uzbekistan, when Xi underscored China's support for Iran.

US Senator Tim Scott launches campaign for president

WASHINGTON (Agencies): United States Senator Tim Scott has officially launched a campaign for the 2024 Republican nomination for president, joining a growing list of candidates seeking the White House next year. Scott focused on his personal story in a speech announcing his candidacy, portraying his rise from humble beginnings to the US Senate - where he currently serves as the sole Black Republican - as evidence that America is "the land of opportunity, and not a land of oppression".

Scott, 57, told the story of his grandfather who was born in 1921 and was forced out of school early to pick cotton but lived on to see the senator elected to Congress. "That's the evolution of the country we live in: My family went from cotton to Congress in a lifetime," he said from his home state of South Carolina.

With his announcement, Scott joins former President Donald Trump, ex-US envoy to the United Nations Nikki Haley and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy amongst others in the race for the Republican nomination. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is also expected to launch a presidential campaign soon. Various public opinion polls have shown Trump as the frontrunner in the Republican field with DeSantis as a clear, albeit distant, second. The primaries will kick off in Iowa early next year. The chances for Scott and other candidates appear minimal, but with Trump facing legal trouble - including criminal charges in New York - and the elections months away, 2024 hopefuls will be looking to improve their standings.

On policy, Scott took aim at Democratic President Joe Biden, who is running for re-election, criticising his immigration approach, student loan forgiveness plan and manage-



ment of US competition with China. Scott also touched on social issues prioritised by conservatives. He voiced support for law enforcement agents, pledged to protect religious liberty against what he said was an "assault" by the far left, and vowed to reform the education system. "I will lead a revolution for excellence in our schools - less CRT and more ABCs," he said, referring to critical race theory, an educational perspective that looks at US history through the lens of racism.

Conservatives have been adamantly opposed to discussions focused on race in the education system, but proponents of such curriculums argue that they aim to counter institutional racism and teach an accurate version of history. Scott repeatedly rejected that the US is a racist country. "Our party and our nation are standing at a time for choosing victimhood or victory," he said. Scott did not mention any of his Republican rivals by name in his speech, but he suggested that he would be best positioned to appeal to voters outside the party.

"We need a president who per-

suades not just our friends and our base," he said. "We have to do that with common sense, conservative principles, but we have to have compassion for people... who don't agree with us." Scott will be looking to capitalise on the early primary in his state of South Carolina, where he may enjoy greater popularity and name recognition than other candidates - a possible advantage he shares with Haley, who previously served as governor there. Trump, who is known for rebuking election rivals, appeared to welcome Scott's candidacy, noting that the race is getting crowded and hitting out at DeSantis, referring to the Florida governor as "DeSanctimonious". "Good luck to Senator Tim Scott in entering the Republican Presidential Primary Race," the former president wrote on his Truth Social platform. "It is rapidly loading up with lots of people, and Tim is a big step up from Ron DeSanctimonious, who is totally unelectable. I got Opportunity Zones done with Tim, a big deal that has been highly successful. Good luck Tim!"

Colombia suspends rebel ceasefire after Indigenous teens killed

BOGOTA (Agencies): The administration of Colombian President Gustavo Petro has announced it is suspending a ceasefire agreement with a rebel group accused of killing four Indigenous people in a recent attack. The government said that it will resume attacks on the Estado Mayor Central (EMC) group, a splinter of the now-disbanded Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), once the country's largest rebel group.

The temporary suspension applies to the provinces of Caqueta, Putumayo, Guaviare and Meta. The ceasefire with the EMC will remain in effect in other regions. "If a bilateral ceasefire is not effective in protecting the life and integrity of the entire population in certain territories, then there is no point in persisting," a government statement said. The incident underscores the difficulty of securing peace in a country where various armed groups jostle for control of resources and territory, often bringing violence and displacement to regions where they are active.

Last week, Indigenous organisations accused the EMC of killing four people who tried to evade forced recruitment in the southern province of Putumayo. All four victims were Indigenous minors, according to a government state-

ment on social media. The Petro administration called the slayings an "assault on peace". The president continued to criticise the violence through his Twitter account.

"Killing Indigenous children is an unacceptable crime against humanity," Petro wrote. "To forcibly recruit minors is the same." In Colombia and throughout South America, Indigenous communities are often subjected to violence from criminal groups seeking to carry out illegal operations in areas where they live. The attacks also highlight the challenges Petro faces as he tries to implement an agenda of "total peace" to combat Colombia's nearly six-decade-long internal conflict. Petro, the country's first left-wing president, and a former guerrilla fighter, has sought to distance himself from the heavy-handed, military-centred approach of his predecessors. But his emphasis on negotiations with armed groups, however, has yielded mixed results. A Red Cross report released in March found that, while violence between armed groups and government forces had dropped, civilians continue to face displacement and violence from armed groups.

Those mixed results were further on display when, around the New Year holiday, Petro announced that his government had reached a series of ceasefire agreements, including with the EMC and other FARC dissident groups like the Segunda Marquetalia. But almost immediately, he had to backtrack on claims that a truce had also been reached with the National Liberation Army (ELN), the largest remaining rebel group, after it denied the existence of such a ceasefire. And the ceasefires that did remain have hit stumbling blocks. Petro has since accused the Gulf Clan criminal group of violating its ceasefire. Attempts at a ceasefire have continued, meanwhile, with the ELN, with the latest round of talks held in Cuba. But those negotiations have been fraught with tensions, particularly after the group allegedly killed nine Colombian soldiers in late March.

"When Petro came into power, essentially he had promised to try and reach what he calls 'total peace'," Al Jazeera correspondent Alessandro Rampietti explained. "This was seen as very ambitious, but also a lot of these groups saw the opportunity [of] having, for the first time, a leftist president to negotiate with - somebody who was less bellicose than previous Colombian governments," he said. "But so far, this plan has been big on announcements and big on the president's vision

but has achieved very little in terms of practical effects." Groups like the EMC were created in the wake of a historic 2016 peace deal, which saw the FARC disband as an armed force. More than 14,000 fighters agreed to demobilise - a milestone in a conflict that has killed hundreds of thousands of people.

Some groups, however, refused to participate in the 2016 peace accord. Former FARC commanders formed their own splinter organisations, like the EMC. Petro, who inherited the legacy of this 2016 deal, has sought to engage directly with groups like the EMC to see them disarm as well. But as Rampietti reports, Petro's approach has been criticised as too soft by some in the political opposition. Incidents like the deaths of the four Indigenous youths only amplify those concerns. "Consider that formal negotiations with this group were supposed to start on May 16 but were postponed while the government negotiators in this group were still trying to finesse the details of, among other things, exactly how the truce was expected to work," Rampietti said. "Essentially this is, unfortunately, just the latest setback in a series of setbacks that Petro's peace policy in the country has seen since he came into power last August."

US bombs unlikely to reach underground Iran nuclear site

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Near a peak of the Zagros Mountains in central Iran, workers are building a nuclear facility so deep in the earth that it is likely beyond the range of a last-ditch United States weapon designed to destroy such sites, according to experts and satellite imagery analysed by The Associated Press news agency. The photos and videos from Planet Labs PBC show Iran has been digging tunnels in the mountain near the Natanz nuclear site, which has come under repeated sabotage attacks amid Tehran's standoff with the West over its atomic programme.

With the country now producing uranium close to weapons-grade levels after the collapse of its nuclear deal with world powers, the installation complicates the West's efforts to halt Tehran from potentially developing an atomic bomb, which Iran denies seeking. The report comes amid a spike in Iran-US tensions and stalled diplomacy between the two countries. Completion of such a facility "would be a

nightmare scenario that risks igniting a new escalation spiral," warned Kelsey Davenport, the director of nonproliferation policy at the Washington-based Arms Control Association.

"Given how close Iran is to a bomb, it has very little room to ratchet up its programme without tripping US and Israeli red lines. So at this point, any further escalation increases the risk of conflict," Davenport told AP. This month marked five years since former President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from a multilateral nuclear deal that saw Iran scale back its nuclear programme in exchange for a lifting of international sanctions against its economy. The administration of US President Joe Biden has continued to impose and enforce a strict sanctions regime against Iran and its oil and petrochemicals industries. Meanwhile, Tehran has been advancing its nuclear programme.

Biden, who was vice president to Barack Obama when the 2015 agreement was signed, had promised to revive the pact, but numer-

ous rounds of indirect talks over the past two years have failed to restore it. Since the demise of the nuclear accord, Iran has said it is enriching uranium up to 60 percent - up from the 3.67 percent limit it observed under the deal. Inspectors also recently discovered the country had produced uranium particles that were 83.7 percent pure, just a short step from reaching the 90 percent threshold of weapons-grade uranium. As of February, international inspectors estimated Iran's stockpile was more than 10 times what it was under the Obama-era deal, with enough enriched uranium to allow Tehran to make "several" nuclear bombs, according to the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The US and Israel - which is widely believed to have its own covert nuclear arsenal - have said they won't allow Iran to build a nuclear weapon. "We believe diplomacy is the best way to achieve that goal, but the president has also been clear that we have not removed any option

from the table," the White House said in a statement to the AP.

Iran's mission to the United Nations, in response to questions from the AP regarding the construction, said that "Iran's peaceful nuclear activities are transparent and under the Atomic Energy Agency safeguards." Iran says the new construction will replace an above-ground centrifuge manufacturing centre at Natanz struck by an explosion and fire in July 2020. Tehran labelled the attack at that time as "nuclear terrorism" and blamed it on Israel. Tehran has not acknowledged any other plans for the facility, though it would have to declare the site to the IAEA if authorities planned to introduce uranium into it. The Vienna-based IAEA did not respond to questions about the new underground facility.

The new project is being constructed next to Natanz, about 225km (140 miles) south of Tehran. Natanz has been a point of international concern since its existence became known two decades ago.

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State versus enemies of literacy and enlightenment

IN another extremist act, terrorists blew up two girls' schools in the Mir Ali sub-division of the North Waziristan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. According to the authorities, two girls' schools located in the Musakki and Hassu Khel villages of the Mir Ali sub-division had been targeted and destroyed by the terrorists on Sunday night, however, no loss of lives occurred. The police have registered cases against unknown terrorists under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

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Over the decades, neither our political leadership nor military strategists could access the full extent and gravity of the problem of terrorism and extremism that has taken deep routes in our society. The state-sponsored jihad in Afghanistan and Kashmir not only radicalized Pakistani youths but numerous political groups and military dictators used religion as a tool for political and electoral gains. Thus countless political, ethnic, and religious extremist pressure groups have emerged in the country that often use their street power to challenge the writ of the law and pressurize the government in administrative, constitutional, and policy matters in pursuit of cheap popularity. Currently, a huge chunk of our population in various parts of the country had been radicalized due to the insane policies of past governments. The Pakistani nation in general and Pushtuns and Baloch communities in particular faced irreparable damages due to those sentiments, whilst extremist behaviors and intolerance are also on the rise in Punjab. Ironically, Pakistani leaders always preferred instant benefits and temporary gains instead of considering the long-term effect and repercussions of their domestic and foreign policies on society and country.

A fresh wave of terrorism has erupted in the country, and several incidents of violence against educational institutions had been witnessed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after a long pause. Earlier this month, eight people including five teachers had been killed in separate shootings in Upper Kurram Tehsil that caused fears in academia and intellectual circles in the country. Currently, the security forces are carrying out intelligence-based Counter Terrorism operations (IBOs) on a regular basis, while the terrorists are on the run. Amid, heighten security in the major cities and a kinetic targeted operation by the LEAs, the terrorists seek easy targets like schools, teaching staff, and polio workers to create fear among the masses and divert the focus of the security forces from the ongoing operation against the terror outfits.

Although the LEAs and other state institutions are actively working to curb the menaces of extremism and terrorism from the country's soil, there is a dire need for public military partnership against this evil. Brave Pakistani tribesmen had played a heroic role during Operation Zarb-e-Azb and rendered unmatched sacrifices including economic and monetary losses, along with enduring hardships, and months-long displacement from their homes. Baloch and Pashtuns' had suffered utmost from unrest and violence in their areas and now they are not in the mood of living in such dire conditions. The theory of good and bad Taliban as well as the policy of comparable risk had proved totally fatal. Now there is time for zero tolerance for terrorism, no partnership with extremism, and no use of thugs and violent gangs for the so-called state interest as those sketchy and immature plans had cost irreparable damage to the country over the past four decades. The government must use the latest technology to unearth terrorists' hidden caches in cities and safe havens in far-flung hilly areas in KP and Balochistan. The government must initiate awareness and indoctrination campaigns against extremism and radicalization to completely eradicate this menace from society, so our coming generations can live in a peaceful, enlightened and terror free environment in the future.

Rohingya repatriation must address safety, citizenship and dignity

MYANMAR'S military-led initiative to repatriate Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh has drawn skepticism and criticism from human rights campaigners. The pilot project, aimed at repatriating about 1,000 Rohingya refugees, has been labeled a mere PR campaign. Concerns over the transparency of the verification process and the absence of guarantees for the Rohingya's safety and citizenship rights have cast doubts on the initiative.

The plight of Rohingya refugees is becoming an urgent humanitarian crisis. Nearly 1 million Rohingya Muslims sought shelter in squalid camps in Bangladesh after fleeing a military-led crackdown in Myanmar and their population seems to be increasing, adding more pressure on Bangladesh to find speedy - and imperfect - solutions. Despite recent efforts to encourage voluntary repatriation, Rohingya refugees remain hesitant due to concerns about their security, citizenship and the conditions they would face upon returning. Rohingya rightly demand the need for comprehensive solutions that prioritize safety, recognition of their citizenship rights and dialogue to address the historical animosity and abuse they have endured.

The recent visit of a delegation from Myanmar to Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district, where the biggest camp shelters the largest refugee population in the world, marked the initial step in the pilot repatriation project. The delegation aimed to interview potential candidates for repatriation as early as the following month. However, the verification process lacked transparency and failed to

address the demands of Rohingya refugees. Most concerning was the lack of commitment from the Myanmar junta regarding the restoration of Rohingya citizenship and rights. The junta also had not assured returnees the freedom to return to their original homes or grant them freedom of movement. The ongoing genocide further

an attempt to create a false narrative of sincerity while addressing only a minute fraction of the refugee population. Additionally, more than 200 civil society organizations expressed their condemnation of the UN's involvement in the process. They questioned the UN's decision to facili-

Myanmar, as they fear being confined to camps once again. Their visit to Rakhine state was part of an initiative to assess the preparations for resettlement. However, the refugees have questioned the adequacy of these arrangements and stressed that they will only return

cards offered by Myanmar, seeing them as a means to further marginalize the Rohingya and deny their rightful status as citizens. Changes in village names in Rakhine state have only added to their concerns, indicating a deliberate attempt to erase their presence and historical connection to the region. The UNHCR stresses the signif-

has historically denied citizenship to the Rohingya and subjected them to mistreatment, has shown little willingness to accept them back until recently. The military chief, Min Aung Hlaing, dismissed their identity as "imaginary" and played a significant role during the 2017 crackdown.

Attempts to initiate repatriation in previous years have failed due to refugees' justified fears of violence. The UNHCR recognizes the Rohingya's inalienable right to return but emphasizes that it must be voluntary, safe and dignified. No refugee should be forced to return under unfavorable conditions. The international community, including organizations like the UNHCR, must continue to play an active role in facilitating dialogue and ensuring the well-being of the Rohingya. Efforts should focus on addressing the underlying causes of the crisis, fostering a climate of reconciliation and advocating for the recognition of Rohingya citizenship rights. The skepticism surrounding Myanmar's repatriation plan for Rohingya refugees underscores the urgent need for transparent, genuine and comprehensive efforts to address their plight. The verification process must be conducted with transparency and take into account the demands and concerns of the Rohingya community. Restoring citizenship rights, ensuring the safety of returnees and addressing the ongoing genocide are critical steps toward building trust and facilitating a sustainable repatriation process. The international community must remain vigilant and exert pressure to ensure the rights and well-being of the Rohingya are protected throughout this challenging process.

Arab News

The delegation aimed to interview potential candidates for repatriation as early as the following month. However, the verification process lacked transparency and failed to address the demands of Rohingya refugees. Most concerning was the lack of commitment from the Myanmar junta regarding the restoration of Rohingya citizenship and rights. The junta also had not assured returnees the freedom to return to their original homes or grant them freedom of movement. The ongoing genocide further erodes trust, with reports of arrests and sentencing for those who return without official permission or attempt to seek refuge elsewhere. The planned repatriation has also faced criticism from Rohingya diaspora groups, which view it as a token gesture coinciding with the International Court of Justice resuming the genocide case against Myanmar's military rulers. The Arakan Rohingya National Alliance condemned the repatriation as an attempt to create a false narrative of sincerity while addressing only a minute fraction of the refugee population. Additionally, more than 200 civil society organizations expressed their condemnation of the UN's involvement in the process. They questioned the UN's decision to facilitate the Myanmar delegation, emphasizing that the current conditions in Myanmar are unsafe for the Rohingya community. While the UN High Commissioner for Refugees defended its support for efforts that could lead to verification and eventual return, it acknowledged the ongoing dangers faced by Rohingya in Myanmar.

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The planned repatriation has also faced criticism from Rohingya diaspora groups, which view it as a token gesture coinciding with the International Court of Justice resuming the genocide case against Myanmar's military rulers. The Arakan Rohingya National Alliance condemned the repatriation as

tate the Myanmar delegation, emphasizing that the current conditions in Myanmar are unsafe for the Rohingya community. While the UN High Commissioner for Refugees defended its support for efforts that could lead to verification and eventual return, it acknowledged the ongoing dangers faced by Rohingya in Myanmar. Rohingya that were selected for the repatriation have themselves expressed reservations about returning to

permanently if their safety is guaranteed and their citizenship rights are recognized.

Oli Hossain, one of the Rohingya refugees who visited Rakhine state, emphasized the desire to reclaim their land and rebuild their homes instead of being confined to camps. He reiterated that citizenship and the restoration of their rights are essential prerequisites for their return. Similarly, other refugees rejected the proposed national verification

icance of voluntary repatriation and informed decision-making. The agency maintains that engaging in dialogue with Rohingya refugees is crucial to ensuring their well-being and allowing them to make informed choices about their return. Such visits to their homeland enable them to assess conditions firsthand and contribute to informed decision-making. The repatriation plan agreed upon in 2017 has made almost no progress. Myanmar's military, which

Time to turn US Democrats' ‘affinity’ for Palestine into policy

Ramzy Baroud

THOUGH the US remains a strong supporter of Israel, there are some indications that the supposed "unbreakable bond" with Tel Aviv is faltering, though more in terms of language than deeds. Following last week's provocative "Flag March," which is carried out annually by Israeli Jewish extremists in the occupied Palestinian city of East Jerusalem, the US joined other countries around the world in condemning the racism displayed at the event.

The language used by the State Department was firm, but also guarded. Spokesman Matthew Miller did not condemn the racist, provocative march, which involved leading Israeli officials, but rather the language used by the participants, most of whom were strong supporters of the far-right government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "The United States unequivocally opposes racist language of any form," Miller tweeted. "We condemn the hateful chants such as 'Death to Arabs' during today's marches in Jerusalem." Carefully articulated so as not to appear as a condemnation of Israel itself, the US position is still more

"balanced" than previous positions, in which Palestinians were often the ones associated with the American use of words such as "condemnation," "incitement" and the like.

On the other hand, during this month's bloody Israeli five-day war on Gaza, Washington resorted to the same old script - that of Israel having the "right to defend itself," thus entirely misrepresenting the events that led to the war in the first place. This US position on Israel's war on Gaza suggests that Netanyahu is the "defender" of Israel against supposed Palestinian violence and "terrorism." But this purported champion of Israeli rights is yet to be invited to the White House five months after he returned to power at the helm of the most right-wing government in Israel's history. Some want to believe that the decision by the Biden administration to distance itself from Netanyahu is entirely altruistic. But that cannot be the case, as the US continues to back Israel militarily, financially, politically and in every other way.

The answer lies in Netanyahu's major miscalculations of the past, when he crossed a dangerous line by turning against the

Democratic Party and allying his country entirely with Republicans. His tactics paid dividends during the term of Republican President Donald Trump, but backfired when Trump left the White House. Joe Biden is unquestionably pro-Israel. As per his own repeated remarks, his support for Israel is not only political but ideological as well. "I am a Zionist. You don't have to be a Jew to be a Zionist," he has repeated, and proudly so, on several occasions. But the US president is also anti-Netanyahu - a dislike that even preceded the Trump-Netanyahu love affair. It mostly dates back to Barack Obama's two terms in office, when Biden was vice president. Netanyahu's political shenanigans and relentless attacks on the Obama administration taught Biden that Netanyahu simply cannot be trusted.

But Biden, with historically low ratings among ordinary Americans, cannot possibly single-handedly challenge Netanyahu and Israel's stronghold on Washington through its influential lobby. Something else is at work; namely the fact that the Democratic Party as a whole has shifted alle-

giances from Israel to Palestine. This assertion would have been unthinkable in the past, but the change is real, confirmed time and again by credible polling companies. The latest was in March. "After a decade in which Democrats have shown increasing affinity toward the Palestinians, their sympathies ... now lie more with the Palestinians than the Israelis, 49 percent versus 38 percent," the Gallup poll concluded.

The fact that such growing "affinity" with Palestine has been taking place for at least a decade suggests that the changing position of Democrats is a generational one, not the outcome of a single event. Indeed, numerous organizations and countless individuals are working on a daily basis to create a link between affinity and policy. Buoyed by the growing sympathies for Palestine, Rep. Betty McCollum, a long-time advocate of Palestinians' rights in the US Congress, this month reintroduced the Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act. Co-sponsored by 16 other members of Congress, the

legislation demands that Israel be prohibited from using "US taxpayer dollars in the Occupied West Bank for the military detention, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children."

Two years ago, The Intercept reported that McCollum and her supporters were pushing to bar Israel from using US aid to subsidize "a wider array of Israeli occupation tactics." Alex Kane wrote at the time that this was "an indication of just how far the debate over the US aid to Israel has come in the past six years," in reference to 2015, when McCollum introduced the first legislation on the matter. Since then, things have moved forward even more quickly. The effort to hold Israel accountable has now reached the New York State Assembly. The New York Post last week reported that legislation had been introduced by several Democratic lawmakers that was aimed at blocking registered US charities from funneling money to fund illegal Israeli Jewish settlements.

The legislation - known as the Not on Our Dime! Ending New York Funding of Israeli Settler Violence Act - dares to challenge Israel on multiple fronts: The traditional power of the

pro-Israel lobby, questioning US funding of Israel, and confronting the channeling of funds to illegal settlements in the name of charity work. Several factors compel us to believe that the shift in US policy on Palestine and Israel, though slow, nuanced and, at times, symbolic, will likely continue.

One is the fact that Israel is turning toward far-right nationalism, which is increasingly difficult for liberal American politicians and media outlets to defend. Another is the steadfastness of Palestinians and their ability to overcome mainstream media restrictions and censorship, which have prevented them from having any fair representation. And, finally, the dedication of numerous civil society organizations and the widening network of support for Palestinians throughout the US, which has allowed courageous lawmakers to push for a substantive change in policy. Time will tell what direction Washington will take in the future. However, considering the current evidence, support for Israel is dwindling at rates that are unprecedented. For those advocating a just peace in Palestine, this is a good thing.

Wagner's psychotic tactics give Putin the edge

Robert Clark

A VIDEO circulating this weekend showed a Russian soldier standing alongside a Wagner PMC mercenary, waving the flags of Russia and Wagner in the destroyed Ukrainian city of Bakhmut. Both Vladimir Putin and Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin have claimed victory in the battle for the city.

While Moscow has maintained an unrealistic narrative around its barbarous war, it is sadly plausible that its forces have finally captured Bakhmut at an enormous cost in blood and treasure. And, if indeed true, it will have been achieved primarily by the Wagner group. While their brutality has been widely decried and their effectiveness denigrated, they have proved themselves on the battlefield. The Wagner group is being used in a very specialised role: its soldiers do assault, and

only assault. They've adapted their tactics over months of gruelling warfare, and despite high-profile clashes between Prigozhin and the Russian military, they clearly have strong communications with the regular army's artillery units.

A Wagner assault has a battle-tested pattern. Multiple three to five-man assault teams, well equipped relative to the conscripts in the Russian army, will assault heavily fortified defensive Ukrainian positions, usually manned by platoon-sized numbers of soldiers. They tend to pin down Ukrainians with fire and locate the position, and then the shells will start coming in. Behind the assault teams are more experienced "blocking" units, who shoot anyone trying to retreat - a grim reminder of the Soviet-era doctrines still common in modern Russian military thinking. There is a crucial

distinction to be drawn between the mercenaries and their regular military counterparts, who are now often poorly trained boys. They are rubbish fighters who have been pulled off the street and do not want to be there. The better trained Wagner men, by contrast, do not lack fighting motivation. These soldiers are hardened criminals. Murderers, rapists and armed thugs, pulled from Russian jails and given a reason to fight by a possible future pardon.

When the first assault team is dead, Wagner's commanders send another. And another. And another. They have a significant numerical advantage and are unafraid of using it. Lives, like shells, are simply a resource to be expended. From a Western perspective this is absolutely incoherent: in our strategies, a platoon-sized objec-

tive would be assaulted by a company, with the ratio of attacking to defending soldiers around 3:1. Nevertheless, Wagner's tactics, unencumbered by concern for human life, seem to have worked. Bit by bit, they grind down the Ukrainian defences.

And as always in an industrialised land campaign, over the top you have the artillery fire from the regular army. The ability to still call in tremendous amounts of earth-shattering artillery has remained a central focus of Russian doctrine: it is first and foremost an artillery-dominant army. But while the sheer number of shells it is able to fire is impressive, the ability to sustain such numbers in the long term is questionable as Western sanctions have begun to bite into Russia's industrial capacity.

This war, the world's

most brutal in more than half a century, has largely been a war of attrition. In Bakhmut, the objective has simply been to inflict as many casualties as possible on the enemy's forces.

The convicts of the Wagner group, simultaneously hardened and expendable, make perfect fodder for such battles. Warfare has been this way since the great battles on the Western Front more than a century ago. Suppress and soften up with artillery and airstrikes, then send in infantry to storm the trenches and the defended positions.

Ultimately, this is how land campaigns are decided; by the ability to take and hold vital ground. This is how wars are won. In the first Gulf War in 1991, and even the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the British Army stormed Iraqi trenches. Such fighting is brutal, unpleasant and a potent reminder that while

in many ways society has evolved in the last hundred years, warfare has not.

It is still characterised by men killing other men, by the storming of defensive positions too tight to wield a rifle effectively, with pistols or automatic fire, and then often in hand-to-hand combat with entrenching tools, knives and fists, all in order to take and hold ground.

From shattered cityscape to defensive line, the battle for Bakhmut was always going to be a form of warfare to which the Wagner group's brutal tactics were well suited. In this long war, we will almost certainly see the lessons it learned replicated in the struggle to take other important cities. As insane as the Wagner group may seem to Western observers, it may yet hand Putin victory at an immense cost in Russian lives. It would be a price he is more than willing to pay.

The Telegraph

Xi'an summit rebuts Western lies

Jophey Chan

THE just-concluded China-Central Asia Summit, held in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, has elevated China-Central Asian cooperation to new heights. In the 10th year of the Belt and Road Initiative, China and the Central Asian countries have cast their decisive vote to expand cooperation, especially in areas such as new energy and infrastructure development amid the fast-changing geopolitical landscape.

The Central Asia region, comprising upper-middle- and low-income economies, holds significant strategic importance due to its geographical position and natural resource reserves. Recognizing its vital importance, President Xi Jinping, in his keynote speech at the summit, said China is ready to align its development policies and plans with those of the five Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and deepen cooperation to facilitate modernization and achieve common prosperity. But despite the positive developments, many Western media outlets have been trying to politicize the summit. Even before the summit began, some Western media outlets tried to spark controversy by splashing headlines such as "Chinese-Russian competition in Central Asia", "China filling Russia's position in Central Asia", and "Russian-Central Asian relations deteriorating", implying that relations between China and Russia, and among China and Russia and the five Central Asian countries were deteriorating.

Needless to say, these are desperate attempts by the Western

media to sow the seed of discord between China, Russia on the one side and the Central Asian countries on the other. Given their narrow political goals, the Western media overlook the fact that China and Russia share a common interest in fostering regional stability and development. Cooperation between China, Russia and the Central Asian nations is mutually beneficial, not hegemonic.

Based on their economic interests, the Central Asian countries have ample reasons to pursue a comprehensive, diversified foreign policy, maintaining friendly relations with both China and Russia. The strong trade relations between the five Central Asian countries, and China and Russia prove that instead of deteriorating, overall relations among the seven countries are strengthening. The Central Asian countries import dozens of agricultural products including wheat, soybean, fruits and beef from China, with their trade volume reaching a record \$70 billion last year. Pursuing close cooperation with China and maintaining friendly relations with Russia are not contradictory, especially when China and Russia have become comprehensive strategic partners in the new era. According to National Bureau of Statistics data for 2022, the trade volume between China and Russia reached a historic high of \$190.27 billion, with an annual growth rate of 29.3 percent.

Given these facts, relations between China, Russia and the Central Asian countries will not be shaken easily by Western propaganda. Western media also

argue that the fact that China hosted the China-Central Asia Summit around the same time as the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan, shows it wants to compete with the developed economies on the diplomatic front.

The fact is that China's foreign diplomacy is based on the principle of "building a community with a shared future", which was first officially proposed at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2012. The principle is aimed at fostering economic integration, cultural exchanges, and mutual growth and understanding. That explains why many are saying the decisions made at the Xi'an summit will help improve global connectivity and industrial cooperation. The Xi'an summit could do so because, unlike the G7 Summit, it was not obsessed with political issues such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, although the United States' efforts to maintain its global hegemony have been affecting the Central Asian region and the rest of the world.

The G7 Summit is nothing but a political theatre staged by a small clique which excels in smearing China and Russia. A Chinese proverb, "never gauge the heart of a man with your own measure", best describes the G7 summit. The proverb cautions people against judging others based on one's narrow yardstick, and reminds them to refrain from projecting their own biases onto others, especially those with a higher moral character. The China-Central Asia Summit is a platform for promoting regional cooperation and development in various fields, from infrastruc-

ture and energy to trade and cultural exchanges. As China continues to deepen its ties with the Central Asian countries, the Belt and Road Initiative plays a crucial role in enhancing regional development and economic integration.

The initiative has brought tangible benefits to the people of Central Asia. And the many infrastructure projects underway, including railways, highways and power plants, will bring more benefits to the region, especially because China has committed to providing the Central Asian countries with 26 billion yuan (\$3.71 billion) in financing support and grants to bolster regional cooperation and development. As for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, it can tap the Central Asian market by leveraging its strength as the world's largest offshore renminbi financial hub, and by offering the most diverse range of renminbi investment, financing, and risk management products. As such, Hong Kong should take measures to deepen its economic and trade engagement with the Central Asian countries.

In conclusion, the China-Central Asia Summit serves as a testament to China's commitment to regional cooperation and development. The summit will help maintain regional stability and promote common prosperity amid the changing global political landscape. In the face of Western media's divisive narratives that attempt to make the China-Central Asia Summit a political issue and create discord among the participating countries, China's actions to achieve common prosperity speak louder than words.

The China Daily

Russo - Ukrainian conflict...



Get a grip, Westminster - Suella speeding is hardly the issue of day

Simon Jenkins

TRIVIAL is the default mode of British politics. Whether or not the home secretary did ask civil servants and an aide to help her get out of a group speed-awareness course, and if she did, whether she was right to do so, is not the most urgent issue of the day. Yet, as MPs this week gathered round the Westminster village pump, it pushed immigration, the NHS, Ukraine and the G7 off the agenda.

Suella Braverman had few qualifications for high office and even fewer to handle Britain's vexed immigration challenge. Her workload would indeed be a fit topic of discussion. But she has also, like the archbishop of Canterbury, fallen foul of Britain's driving speed limits. Offenders are offered a choice between a fine and licence points or a speed awareness course, which they aren't allowed to attend again in three years. It is alleged that Braverman asked if she might do the awareness course one-on-one instead of in a group. This is apparently a facility offered to some people. Reportedly, Braverman first inquired of a civil servant, who correctly but fastidiously refused it as a private matter. She then asked her political adviser, who inquired and was told she had to do a

normal course. For a senior minister guilty of a minor offence this process seems reasonable, albeit with a suspiciously harsh outcome. Braverman took it on the chin, paid the fine and took three points on her licence rather than doing the course.

It would take an Alan Ayckbourn to turn this into a full-blown scandalous drama. But for Westminster it has been Only Fools and Horses from start to finish. People in top jobs are surely entitled to have people round them - personal secretaries, drivers, diary-keepers - to ease the borderland between work, family and moments of leisure. There is a borderline between private and public duties that the civil service must respect in the taxpayer's interest. It will be up to Rishi Sunak and his ethics adviser, Laurie Magnus, to determine if that line was crossed here, and whether the ministerial code has been broken. But in the affair as a whole, Parkinson's law of triviality has applied: the less the importance, the more the attention. The Braverman affair is like the Chequers chef trying to work out whose lunch should be credited to which departmental budget while the massive defence estimates are being passed on the

nod. One upside might be that the home secretary and archbishop of Canterbury form a lobby to induce a less centralist attitude to speed limits. Some make sense, some should be lower and some higher. This should depend on local context, not central guidance. London has been reduced to a heaving morass of roadworks, low traffic neighbourhood diversions and a one-size-fits-all, 20mph speed limit in several boroughs. Opponents of low-traffic neighbourhoods argue that journeys reduced are more than cancelled out by longer distances travelled. London drivers now have eyes only for their speedometers, and it seems few people - not taxis, buses, motorbikes or even police cars - stick to the 20mph limit, a limit now extending across many towns and cities. The result is a vast speed trap available to any local authority eager to boost its income. Braverman's speeding ticket thus joins Downing Street parties and non-dom spouses in the dressing-up cupboard of British politics. Much such behaviour may be reprehensible, but its evils should be kept in proportion. They are how the system crowds out discussion of things that matter. MPs should go on a seriousness awareness course.

Debt ceiling talks ‘productive,’ but no deal yet

US President Joe Anita Powell & Ken Bredemeier Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy met again Monday for tense Oval Office talks around raising the government's borrowing limit - and, again, reached no agreement - as the US government stares down a looming deadline for its first-ever default.

The US Treasury has warned that the US government could default on its debt as soon as June 1 if Congress doesn't raise the debt limit. On Monday, as the leaders sat down for another meeting, Biden said failing to act could have major consequences. "The American people would have a real kick in their economic well-being," said Biden, who cut short an overseas trip to return to Washington for the debt negotiations. "As a matter of fact, the rest of the world would, too."

Biden and McCarthy have met three times in recent weeks, each time failing to announce a deal afterwards. "We don't have an agreement yet, but I did feel the discussion was productive in areas that (CQ) we have differences of opinion," McCarthy said Monday. He said the two negotiating teams would continue to talk via staffers.

Previous presidents and congressional leaders have reached deals to raise the country's debt limit 78 times in give-and-take negotiations in which neither side got everything on its wish list for the federal budget. This year, Republicans in the House have called for sharp government spending cuts, while the White House has countered with proposals to close tax loopholes and enact more limited spending reductions.

Republicans also want increased work requirements for able-bodied poor people receiving government assistance, but Democrats say that under such a proposal, several hundred thousand people could lose the benefits they now receive. Republicans also are seeking cuts in funding for the country's tax-collection agency and asking the White House to accept provisions from their party's proposed immigration overhaul to stem the tide of migrants trying to enter the US at the Mexican border. Biden said in a statement after the talks, "We reiterated once again that default is off the table and the only way to move forward is in good faith toward a bipartisan agreement."

The president said he had done his part by offering ways to raise the country's \$31.4 trillion borrowing limit so the US government can keep paying its bills, such as interest on government bonds, stipends to US pensioners, payments to health care providers and salaries for government employees and contractors. But as Biden warned Monday, the tight balance of power in the legislature means that any deal needs to appeal to both Democrats and Republicans. He has previously called House Republicans' spending plan an "extreme position." "We have to be in the position where we can sell it to our constituents," Biden said. "We are pretty well divided in the House, almost down the middle. And it's not any different in the Senate. So we've got to get something

we can sell to both sides." On Sunday, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that the date when the government runs out of cash to pay its current bills remains uncertain, but that an expected June 15 infusion of tax payments may not come soon enough to avert a default.

"There's always uncertainty about tax receipts and spending," Yellen said. "And so, it's hard to be absolutely certain about this, but my assessment is that the odds of reaching June 15th, while being able to pay all of our bills, is quite low." She said decisions have not been made on which bills would go unpaid if the government defaults. "I would say we're focused on raising the debt ceiling and there will be hard choices if that doesn't occur," Yellen said. "There can be no acceptable outcomes if the debt ceiling isn't raised, regardless of what decisions we make."

And scholars at one of Washington's premier universities said Monday that the stakes are high. "The uncertainty that the debt ceiling injects into the economy adds another element of risk to the tenuous economic conditions that we are already experiencing," said Jeffrey Harris, a finance professor at American University. "On top of the added burden of inflation and higher borrowing costs, consumer confidence is already near all-time lows. The possibility of a continuing US impasse driving rates higher would compound current consumer issues and threatens to push the economy into a worse state," he said.

VOA

The indirect costs of war should never be forgotten

Chris Doyle

THE backdrop to the annual gathering of G7 leaders last week was extraordinarily poignant. Nowhere signifies the dangers of war better than Hiroshima, the site of the first use of the atomic bomb. Back in August 1945, a US bomb killed tens of thousands of people. The Japanese hosts wanted to remind the world of the horrors of nuclear warfare, not least as we are currently in the throes of the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Even today, a debate rages as to how many died as a result of the firestorm from "Little Boy." The estimates range from 70,000 to 140,000. The challenge is not helped by the Japanese not being sure of the population of the city at the time. And should the figure only include those killed during the explosion or should it cover the first week, month or year? Should the figure include those who died due to long-term radiation exposure? Decades later and the question of fatality counts in wars remains a huge debate. Wars are a costly business. Calculating these costs in the 21st century is a challenging, even Herculean, task. But it matters. Decision-makers need to know what the true cost is. Tallying the direct costs of war is considerably less daunting than the indirect costs - the long-term impact on societies through the likes of disease, suicides and the destruction of economies and health systems.

The Costs of War Project at Brown University has just published a detailed study on exactly what have been these indirect costs from the so-called 9/11 wars. It is sobering. It puts the total death toll from the wars in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen

at 4.5 million to 4.6 million. It calculates the indirect deaths as being 3.6 million to 3.7 million. The fact that indirect deaths typically outnumber direct deaths in modern warfare shows how significant an issue this is. This is not an exact science. The report even questions whether, in 2023, even after US forces departed, that any death in Afghanistan can be unrelated to the war. Hunger and malnutrition have escalated massively since that ill-fated withdrawal in 2021. Are these deaths any different to those resulting from missile strikes?

Indirect fatality rates are affected by the state of the health of the population pre-conflict. This is why it has been hard to define a precise ratio between direct and indirect death rates. When the war takes place in countries or regions with questionable prewar statistics, it makes the job so much harder, given that statisticians need to know what the typical death rate in a population would be. It is not always easy to determine which fatalities are direct and which are indirect. When a medical center is intentionally bombed and then, due to the absence of medical care, people die, is that a direct consequence? Every Israeli bombardment of Gaza leads to damage to the water and sewage infrastructure, allowing disease to thrive. In wars, many parties have targeted food production facilities, such as bakeries in Syria.

Then consider the unexploded ordnance, the detritus of war left behind, let alone the land mines and cluster munitions deliberately deployed. Take Vietnam. Since 1975, more than 40,000

Vietnamese are estimated to have been killed, with 60,000-plus injured, by unexploded ordnance. There is also a savage economic cost, as these munitions render farmland inaccessible and cut food production. Women and children constitute a large part of the indirect tally, while men are more likely to be killed in combat. Birth-related problems account for some of this. But so many other issues need to be examined, such as the massive mental health impact on a population of war, not least post-traumatic stress disorder.

Massive numbers of deaths due to the indirect effects of war are not new of course. In the Korean War in the 1950s, in which 5 million to 6 million people died, only about 15 percent to 20 percent of that number were direct fatalities of conflict. UNICEF has shown that, in conflict zones, children are 20 times more likely to die from diarrheal disease than war. The combination of malnutrition and disease is a particularly lethal one. Figures will always be contested. The fatality count for the Iraq war of 2003 still arouses great passions. In Syria, the UN stopped doing fatality statistics back in January 2014, when it had estimated a death toll of about 200,000. It then produced a figure of about 350,000 in 2021. At the same time, a major Syrian human rights organization claimed the death toll was more than 600,000. And remember this was all before anyone tried to determine the indirect costs of the war.

These post-9/11 campaigns have displaced 38 million people - the largest number of forced displacements since the Second World War.

More than half of the Syrian population has been displaced either as refugees or internally since 2011. War also leads to a massive brain drain. Consider how many of the brightest and best flee for safer climes during times of war. Iraq lost about 18,000 doctors in the five years following the 2003 US invasion. This all brings into question what the eventual human costs of the wars in Ukraine and Sudan will be. The fatality statistics right now are subject to the inevitable war of narratives. It is a reasonable assumption that the number of indirect fatalities in Ukraine will be high, given the levels of bombing, but because it was a well-off nation before the war it may not be as high as, say, in Afghanistan, Somalia or Sudan. This segment of the statistics industry is one we would all like to see retired, with wars consigned to the rubble of history. If only. Some would like to end it prematurely. Who can forget Donald Rumsfeld's dismissive aside in 2003: "We don't do body counts on other people." But the reality is that more of this vital research is required and more light can be shed on the long-lasting impact of wars.

Wisely, the Costs of War report does not attempt to attribute responsibility. This, in some ways, strengthens it, as it does not get into a dangerous blame game that could put leaders off paying attention. It should make chilling reading for those in power - a painful reminder of how easy it is to get into wars, as opposed to exit them, and that the indirect costs have to be considered as well as the direct. If these reports do nothing else, then that lesson alone is worth its weight in gold.

Centre-left politics has been dealt a crushing blow in Greece

Marina Prentoulis

GREECE'S election results were a big surprise for the winners, the losers and the pollsters. In a country where huge numbers of people are struggling every day, with almost a third of the population estimated to be at risk of poverty, the prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis's rightwing New Democracy party managed to secure 40% of the vote - a remarkable victory that no polling agency predicted.

The runner-up was the former prime minister Alexis Tsipras of the centre-left Syriza party, best known for its turbulent confrontation with the EU's economic centres of power in 2015. He picked up only 20% of the vote, much lower than the pollsters had predicted and lower than most Greeks - friends and enemies of Syriza alike - thought possible. The lack of an outright majority for New Democracy makes the most plausible scenario a second election in June or early July - this round is designed to give bonus seats to the winner, increasing its chances of securing a majority. New Democracy's victory was not unexpected, but the eye-watering share of the vote the party received is a different matter. The conservative government often points to its record of growth and investment, backed by European Commission

forecasts, but the proceeds of this have not been felt evenly: a growing number of Greece's population over the same period have dealt with low wages, low pensions, high rents and a painful cost of living crisis. The disparity between what is on paper and the bleak reality on the ground is striking. So why are the conservatives still out in front, with an outright majority within their grasp? It seems the promises of stability, growth and impenetrable borders have paid off.

But there is also the question of the sorry state of the opposition. For Syriza, the high of the 2015 electoral triumph at the peak of the eurozone's financial crisis was quickly tempered by the imposition of loans from Greece's creditors that demanded huge sacrifices by the Greek people in order to control the country's spiralling debt. The return of New Democracy to power in 2019 made clear the extent of disillusionment and hopelessness that Syriza's base felt after voting against a bailout in a referendum - and then watching their government accept one. Since then the party leadership's strategy has been to return to the centre ground to attract more moderate voters - and it has failed spectacularly. On top of that, the absence of

any sign of contrition or self-reflection for the years Syriza was in government further alienated its electoral base.

Whatever form the next government takes, the structural problems that Greece faces remain profound. Corruption is rife. A series of scandals - such as a phone-tapping scandal that has been dubbed the Greek Watergate - have stained the Mitsotakis premiership and speak loudly to the failure of the country's institutions. New Democracy and the social democratic Pasok party, with which it alternated in government from 1974 to 2015 - cannot escape responsibility for this long-term deterioration. Take the outrage over the Tempe railway tragedy in February, when the collision of two trains left 57 dead. The disaster led to protests and was raised by opposition parties during the election as a sign of the country's administrative dysfunction: many believe it could have been avoided had the rail network not been so neglected.

Greece does not fare much better on the international front. Only last week, footage was revealed that appeared to show 12 asylum seekers who had arrived at Lesbos being forcibly transferred to a Greek coastguard vessel and then abandoned in an inflatable boat in

the middle of the sea. The rightwing government has dismissed allegations of being involved in the pushback of asylum seekers, but the video evidence and testimonies leave little doubt as to Greece's infringements of European rules and international law. Nonetheless, it is partly this draconian treatment of migrants that has helped New Democracy shore up electoral support. Another story of the night is the slow recovery of Pasok. Once a force for change in the post-junta period, it picked up a respectable 11%, confirming an upwards trajectory after its near-fatal low of less than 5% in 2015. One factor behind this is that its leader, Nikos Androulakis, is an MEP and, as such, is not directly involved in Greek parliamentary shenanigans. In fact, Androulakis is even a victim of the Greek state itself - last year it was revealed that his phone had been tapped by Greece's intelligence services. (Mitsotakis denied knowing about this and said it was wrong.)

Maybe these results will be a wake-up call for Greece's progressive parties as to the importance of collaborating with each other. To get anywhere close to winning office, however, they will have to learn to offer something more than just being a way of avoiding the worst-case scenario.

The Guardian

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Pak Stock Exchange loses 95.76 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) declined by 95.76 points on Tuesday, showing a negative change of 0.23 per cent, closing at 41,099.31 points against 41,195.07 points the previous day.

A total of 91,494,440 shares were traded during the day as compared to 97,765,956 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs2.390 billion against Rs2.879 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 300 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 114 of them recorded gains and 149 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 37 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 23,196,785 shares at Rs1.11 per share, K-Electric Ltd with 8,547,185 shares at Rs1.81 per share, and Unity Foods

Ltd. with 3,690,957 shares at Rs12.09 per share.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs1600.00 per share price, closing at Rs23400.00, whereas the runner-up was Bata (Pak) with a Rs35.00 rise in its per share price to Rs1680.00.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs86.67 per share closing at Rs6500.00, followed by Pak Tobacco with a Rs18.51 decline to close at Rs640.00.

Rupee sheds 59 paisas against Dollar

Pakistani rupee witnessed 59 paisas devaluation against US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading on Tuesday and closed at Rs287.14 against the previous day's closing of Rs286.55.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded

at Rs302 and Rs305, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 48 paisas to close at Rs310.23 against the last day's closing of Rs309.75, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs2.07, whereas a decrease of 27 paisas was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs356.06 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs356.33.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal went up by 16 paisas each to close at Rs78.19 and Rs76.57, respectively.

Gold prices decrease by Rs100 to Rs237,200 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs100 and was sold at Rs237,200 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs237,300

the previous day. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs85 to Rs203,361 from Rs203,446, whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs186,414 from Rs186,493.

The price of per tola silver and that of ten-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs2900 and Rs2486.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$ 13 to \$1959 against its sale at \$1972, the Association reported.

Suzuki Motor distributes scholarship

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Under Education Assistance Program of CSR Pak Suzuki Motor Co. distributed Lower Secondary Scholarships. The ceremony held on 4th May, 2023 at Govt. Boys Primary School Pipri.

The purpose of this scholarship program is to motivate and encourage the needy and talented Government Schools students to keep continue their education, which empower them to achieve their dreams and lead to become a successful person and dedicated citizen of country.

Mr. Muhammad Ali Lodi-Head Operations Pak Suzuki announced 177 Scholarships for successful students of grade 6 to 9, which is consisted of School bag, Copies, Stationery, Water Bottle, Lunch Box, paint box, wrist watches, Scientific Calculator, etc.

Head Operations, Head Corporate Planning, Government Schools Principals and Teachers also attended the ceremony.



KARACHI: Representatives of Pakistan National Shipping Corporation and Bahria Classification Society signing MoU for capacity building of BCS, for providing professional and sea training practically to BCS surveyors as PNSC resolve to the national cause.

MD attends IBA Directors' Training Program

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: IBA Center for Executive Education made a significant stride towards nurturing the expansion of the business community in Islamabad by unveiling its anticipated Director's Training Program. The program was launched in an event organized by the core team of IBA Alumni North Islamabad Chapter. The Chief Guest of the occasion was Chairman SECP Mr. Akif Saeed.

More than 200 people from diverse fields attended the inauguration. The new office will provide leadership and management development programmes for family companies, public sectors, state-owned enterprises, and corporates in the northern areas, with a focus on IBA Karachi's executive and organisational development philosophy. IBA aims to bring opportunities for organizations and individuals through action learning-based capacity-building initiatives, research, forums, think tanks, and consultancies. This venture will help meet the increasing demands of today's business world.

AAA Associates MD Lt. Col. Shahzad Ali Kiani (r), a respected IBA alumnus and Bronze Medalist of the batch of 2012, graced the occasion, marking his presence in this momentous event. AAA Associates, under the leadership of Lt. Col. Shahzad Ali Kiani (r), has always respected and supported initiatives



that contribute to business growth and professional development. The company sees the Director's Training Program as an invaluable addition to the educational resources available to Islamabad's business community.

The new training program, tailored to address the unique challenges faced by family-run businesses, promises to equip entrepreneurs with the essential skills and knowledge required to manage their business complexities effectively.

Lt. Col. Shahzad Ali Kiani (r) expressed his support for such initiatives, stating, "At AAA Associates, we believe in the power of continual learning and professional development. This program aligns with our commitment to fostering business

growth in Islamabad. We congratulate IBA Center for Executive Education on this significant milestone and look forward to seeing the impact this program will have on the business community."

AAA Associates is a leading multi-dimensional business conglomerate, recognized for its exceptional dedication to excellence and customer service. They have grown into a highly reputable entity within Pakistan's business landscape. AAA Associates specializes in a broad array of services, including real estate development, consultancy, investment opportunities, and construction services. Their landmark project in Bahria Town Karachi, AAA Octa 2, will be launched in Karachi shortly.

Jubilee Life Insurance appoints Symmetry Digital



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Jubilee Life Insurance, the leading private sector insurer in the country has appointed Symmetry Digital, a Symmetry Group Company, as their partner in transforming their digital presence and customer experience. This relationship covers the full range of interactive marketing and transformation services including digital marketing strategy, content, social, search, influencer, performance, media, and web design and development while delivering innovative ideas with data and future tech at the centre.

"In line with the marketing requirements of the modern age, we at Jubilee

Life are making efforts to create the relevant impact through digital mediums," shared Mr. Javed Ahmed, MD and CEO Jubilee Life Insurance.

"Symmetry Group is a great fit for us in this regard. We are excited to join forces and take our customer experience to the next level, meeting their ever-changing needs with cutting-edge tech and digital solutions," he added.

"We are honoured that Symmetry Digital is partnering with Jubilee Life Insurance in their digital journey," said Mr. Sarosh Ahmed, CEO of Symmetry Group. "This is an extension of our vision to deliver digital experiences that make the world better and together we will provide

exceptional digital solutions for Jubilee Life Insurance customers."

Jubilee Life Insurance is actively shifting focus to raise awareness amongst the younger generation to invest in insurance products from an early age. This objective formed the basis of bringing Symmetry Digital on board to direct marketing efforts toward the appropriate target audience through channels that are effective.

Symmetry Group, along with its extensive range of brands and unrivalled suite of digital products and services, will collaborate closely with Symmetry Digital in this partnership to deliver a seamless digital experience for customers.

LIPTON teas, infusions Pakistan announces exciting partnership with Imtiaz Supermarket

F.P. Report

KARACHI: LIPTON Teas and Infusions Pakistan, the world's #1 tea brand in the industry (formerly known as ekaterra), is pleased to announce a groundbreaking partnership with Imtiaz Supermarket, a national retail chain, marking a significant milestone for both companies and the local channel landscape in Pakistan.

This collaboration signifies a strategic shift in LIPTON's approach, transitioning from "negotiating with a customer" to "creating collective value with a partner." The transformation has already yielded remarkable results, including a substantial increase in in-store sell-out market shares, the introduction of an Imtiaz-specific pack, and the implementation of a captivating call-to-action on the shelf. By embracing

this new approach, LIPTON aims to redefine its modern trade footprint across Pakistan, leveraging the expertise and excellence of its esteemed partner, Imtiaz Supermarket.

During the signing ceremony held in Lahore, Kashif Imtiaz and Razzak Amin M-Akhtar Anjum, representatives from Imtiaz Supermarket, expressed their enthusiasm for the partnership. They emphasized their commitment to collaborating with LIPTON in reshaping the tea category and driving mutual success. LIPTON extends its gratitude to Kashif Imtiaz, Razzak Amin M-Akhtar Anjum, Farrukh Iqbal, Jahanzeb Aamir, and Omer Farooq for their dedication to the new strategy and their unwavering passion in bringing it to life.

Farheen Salman Amir, President BSPAN and

General Manager Pakistan said, "As the partnership between LIPTON and Imtiaz Supermarket unfolds, we are excited to explore innovative approaches, enhance customer experiences, and contribute to the growth of the tea industry in Pakistan. Together, they aim to deliver exceptional value to consumers, solidifying their positions as

leaders in their respective fields."

LIPTON Tea and Infusions Pakistan is a renowned brand known for its high-quality teas and infusions, home to brands including Lipton and Brooke Bond Supreme in the country. With a commitment to excellence, LIPTON continuously strives to innovate and provide

exceptional products to its consumers.

Imtiaz Supermarket is a prominent retail chain in Pakistan, offering a wide range of products and services to customers across the nation. With a focus on customer satisfaction, Imtiaz Supermarket aims to provide a seamless shopping experience and superior quality products.



Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, Maersk Boston, MSC Cape Town-III, MSC Roma, Olympia and Al-Thakira carrying Containers and LNG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Engro Elengy Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile another ship, Sea Adore with Gas oil is also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same day.

A total of 08 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them six ships, Maersk

Boston, MSC Cape Town-III, MSC Roma, Stena Important, Ogino Park and N-Orhan left the Port on Tuesday morning today.

Cargo Throughput of 165,395 tonnes, comprising 84,125 tonnes imports Cargo and 81,270 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,924 Containers (1,239 TEUs Imports and 2,685 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 08 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Stream Baltic, FSM and Santa Rose & two more ships, MSC United-VIII and Bulk Paraguay carrying Edible oil, LPG, Containers and Coal are expected to take berths at LCT, EFTL, QICT and PIBT respectively on Tuesday & two more Container ships, MSC Kritika and Cussler are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.

Tourism: A potential industry for Pakistan

Sayed Sajid Shah Bokhari

Tourism is the only industry which possesses multi-dimensional aspects. It gives exposure to individual to learn and enjoy while base to the government for earning more through revenue generation. The world has closely focused on Tourism industry for strengthen the economy of country and giving opportunities to develop. The land of Pakistan possesses diversity in its texture. Its physiology and geography have unique status in the world. It contains a lot of natural resources and potential but lacking the ability of rulers and representatives to utilize it properly. It has strong background of Islamic perspective. Though it caught the foot prints of Alexander the great on Indus Valley site in 324 BC. All the Great warriors of the world had crossed the sub-continent at least once in life and left everlasting impacts on the masses culture and civilization forever. The Persian, Arian, Indian and Gandhara art, civilization had predominant features on its soil. The Hindus, Sikhs, English, Buddha ruled it for many centuries and had deepest links with all the religions and civilization of the world.

The archeological backgrounds and heritage of Pakistan

shows that it was a land of peace, tranquility, income and stability so every warrior prefers it to be stationed here. The relics of Moen Jo Daro, the ruins of Taxila, Butkada Swat, had enrich legacy where tourists from the world came to visit the cities regularly. The Badshahi mosque of Lahore, Jehangir Mosque in Sindh, Mohabat Khan Mosque at Peshawar, the Faisal Mosque at Islamabad are the unique places of attraction for tourist. During Covid-19 tourism suffers badly.

However, in the last one and half year its worth has increased up to 30 percent level but it needs more focus? Still the security threats and natural calamities had hindered the potential areas to be explored. Unfortunately, the lacking facilities like roads, communications channels, hotels, attractive spots has made it more difficult for the Tourists to enjoy the journey. The Pakistan tourism development corporation (PTDC) has wide network but it lack the capacity to explore the neglected areas like district Shangla to be included in tourists spots. Today the traditional approach of tourism has been changed with innovative system but we don't recognize it.

Although the world generate billions of dollars annually as revenue generation from

Tourism industry but Pakistan pay less attention that's too in developed areas like Kaghan, Naran, Gilgit, Baltistan and Chitral and ignore the beautiful cities to explore. Although the UNESCO has declared some spots as heritage but still it needs focus on beautiful but undeveloped area to be promoted. Tourism is a vast field of traveling to an area of more scenic view, historical places and archeological sites. The strong-nations in the world have already adopted a tangible plan and integrated approach for survival through tourism. When we talk about Europe, Africa and Asia we can never ignore Singapore, Switzerland, France, Turkey, Egypt and Balkan states.

Even the most powerful Arab country Saudi Arabia has decided to construct Neon city and attract the world for boosting its economy. Already the UAE a country of deserts had constructed Burje Khalifa to earn huge amount through Tourist visits. The Suez Canal had billion of income generation annually. Still the Egypt economy depends on the annual income of Pyramids. Pakistan being a land of beautiful valleys could not attract Tourists due to its poor land and traditional approach.

The natural resources and locked potential even at Baluchistan Reddick plan had

imposition of billions of dollars although, it contains huge amount of Gold. The Diamonds of swat and Shangla have no worth to sustain our economy Tourism department plays major role to divert the attention of tourist to invest. The role of Media, communication and advertisement is no doubt of great importance. The means of communication, transportation, hoteling, small business industry set up and Brushers and information Desks can also play vital role to attract the people charm. In Pakistan the Silk was built in a period of 10 years (1966-1976) after a long struggle and mark of friendship between Pakistan and China.

It goes through Shangla along Indus River (more than 360 Km) but has been ignore by government to make it valuable and worthy for tourist attractions and boosting economy of Shangla and Kohistan. Although this road (Shara-e-Resham) silk route was called the 8th wonder of the world. Even the Thakot Bridge constructed on River Indus at Dandai is one of the beautiful scenes in Shangla and a large number of Tourists come every year to enjoy it.

However, just adjacent to Dandi at Takhta Alexander the Great had stationed for a while before passing towards the valley of Chakiser in next expeditions. On the other side of the

valley (the valley of Khana) the dense forest of sprouse, fur, koil at Olander and Ajmeer presents a beautiful outlook leads to Spin Ghar (a mountain always cover with snowfall) but is still ignore area. Once in 1919, the historian Aural Austain crossed the valley from Lilwoani and reached to Kana Valley in 3-5 feet snow and describe the valley as paradise on earth. The most important in the valley of Khana is the Beharam Lake. Behram was prince and Badri Jmala was her adored. This was a period of fantasy and they came here to stay in between the lofty mountains forever. There was garden where flowers blossom in the month of July, August with unique taste and colour to represent the lover's background.

The area from Logai to Behram Lake has a distance of 8 kilometer and if the road construction ensured maximum output could be expected of the valley. The conifers, Deodar, spur and other species of plants along with Medicinal plants in the dense forests located at High altitude Mountains could be source of revenue generation and attraction if planned. The only plant once exists in the dense forest of Ajimmer logai was called Texas Bacceta but it does not exists now. The Flora and Fauna of the district Shangla is washing speedily and the fear

of exists majority of the specious from the area will cease forever if not protected properly. What could be seen in the dense forest of Yakhtangey, Shalkoo sar, Bahdar Sar, Kafar Banda, Peer Sar and many other spots can attracts thousands of Tourists if developed by PTDC. If the Tourism Department advertise it properly it will enhance the opportunities of tourism on large scale. The Sub Divisions of district Shngla called Puran (alouch) and Martoong possess historical values, archaeological background and heritage in large numbers but underestimated and ignored by government. Shangla was kept in dark in the past. It was exploited by the rulers. Today the people of Shangla are the most deprived masses in the province.

The Socio-economic conditions of the poor's are on stake and they needs livelihood for survival. At the moment integrated plan is required to save Shangla and its soil from further decay. Tourism is the only industry which can provide an opportunity to the masses to be developed. If the stakeholders (Agriculturist, forest department, Tourism industry, social welfare, archeology and heritage departments pay attention the area can be turned as best source of income for the native and country growth.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No.231/11. Institution 17/3/2022. Date of hearing. 7/6/2023. Jihanzeb etc VS Merjawal Khan etc. Notice to no 4.Habibullah s/o Danish Khan. 9.Anwar Khan. 14.Mst Zargana sins of Mer Salem. 17.Mst. Gulzakheron. 18.Mst Bacha Kheron daughters of Munjarab Khan. 22.Meran Khan s/o Rasan Khan. 26.Aysha d/o Rasan Khan. 49/3. Imtiaz Khan. 49/4.Israr. 49/5.Shahid. 49/6.Niaz Ali. 49/7.Qamar Zada sons of Lal Zada. 56.Mukhtiar Khan. 57.Bakht Afsar sons of Maen Khan resident of Pacha Kalay tehsel Gadezai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through duly authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 7/6/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court,



In brief

Thomas suspended for match-fixing

PARIS (APP): West Indies batter Devon Thomas has been provisionally banned for match-fixing, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Tuesday. Thomas, 33, who has represented his country in all three formats, has been charged with breaching rules by three governing bodies. "The International Cricket Council (ICC), on behalf of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) and the Caribbean Premier League (CPL), has charged West Indies player Devon Thomas with seven counts under their anti-corruption codes and he has been provisionally suspended with immediate effect," the ICC said. "Mr Thomas has 14 days from 23 May 2023 to respond to the charges," it added. Thomas, has been named in the West Indies' squad for next month's one-day series with the UAE. "CWI (Cricket West Indies) is not directly involved in the process but remains firm in denouncing corruption in cricket, and fully supports the ICC ACU in its efforts to uphold the integrity of the sport," the body said. "In collaboration with ICC and the West Indies Players' Association (WIPA), CWI remains committed to sensitizing and educating our players and officials on anti-corruption in sports," it added.

Paris takes security steps

PARIS (Agencies): France will deploy 35,000 security and military personnel to protect the Paris 2024 Olympic Games opening ceremony from threats including drone attacks. The opening ceremony will take place along a 6km stretch of the River Seine, featuring 160 boats with athletes and officials from more than 200 countries. Crowds of more than 600,000 people are expected to line the route. "Drones represent a totally new threat," said French interior minister Gerald Darmanin. "We've done a lot of work on the classic threat, whether it's delinquents, whether it is a person armed with a weapon, a bomb... We know how to detect and combat this threat. "The arrival of drones loaded with explosives in the theatre of civilian operations is new. There is no certainty this threat will materialise, but it is the hardest to stop." The Paris 2024 opening ceremony will be the first held outside of a stadium at a summer Games. Organisers are planning to install the Olympic flame on the Eiffel Tower, although not on the top of the monument. The 2024 Olympics take place from 26 July to 11 August.

Thomas reclaims Giro overall lead

MONTE BONDONE (Agencies): Britain's Geraint Thomas reclaimed the overall race lead at the Giro d'Italia as Joao Almeida took victory on Monte Bondone in a thrilling 16th stage. After appalling weather marred the Giro's first two weeks, the general classification race ignited on Tuesday with Thomas, 36, making his move. The Welshman finished runner-up in a sprint to the line with Almeida, who he now leads by 18 seconds overall. Primož Roglic is 29 seconds behind Thomas after his third-place finish. "It would have been nice to win the stage but I had to keep riding, we didn't want to play cat and mouse with Roglic behind," Thomas said.

Babar, Naseem join Colombo Strikers in LPL 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Colombo Strikers, who will play their first season of the Lanka Premier League this year, announced a star-studded Icon Players line-up on Tuesday.

The Icon Players include Pakistan captain Babar Azam, highly talented Pakistan speedster Naseem Shah and Sri Lankan T20 stars Matheesha Pathirana and Chamika Karunaratne.

The Colombo franchise in a statement expressed the hope to receive a lot of attention from cricket fans around the world with Pakistan superstar Babar Azam in their set-up. The top-order batter has amassed a whopping 9201 runs in 260 T20s at a bril-

liant average of 44.02.

Fast bowler Naseem Shah will be looking to lead the bowling attack with Pathirana. The youngster has taken 73 wickets in 76 matches at a magnificent average of 29.75.

The 20-year-old Matheesha Pathirana has caught the cricketing world by storm with his performances in T20s in the recent past. The fast bowler has picked up 22 wickets in 20 matches at a spectacular average of 22.36.

Meanwhile, the bowling all-rounder Chamika Karunaratne will play a vital role in the Colombo Strikers team.

The experienced campaigner has taken 60 wick-

ets and scored 726 runs in 93 T20 matches.

Speaking about the announcement of the Icon Players, Sagar Khanna, the owner of the Colombo Strikers said, "We are absolutely thrilled to have four of the biggest T20 stars as a part of our Icon Players line-up.

We have built a strong core group of players around which we will construct a formidable team for the season. With these superstars with us, we are well on our way to forming a power-packed team."

The Colombo Strikers will be in action in their first season of the Lanka Premier League in July-August 2023.

Ghulam Fatima, Aliya Riaz, Sidra Amin script Dynamites' dominating win



E.P. Report

KARACHI: The One-Day phase of the Pakistan Cup Women's Cricket Tournament began with Dynamites' commanding win over Blasters at the State Bank Ground on Tuesday. Leg-spinner Ghulam

Fatima returned exceptional figures of four for 17 in eight overs and seaming all-rounder Aliya Riaz took three wickets for 19 in five overs to bundle out Blasters for 94 in 37 overs before captain Sidra Amin's 58 not out sealed a nine-wicket win at the 16.4 overs mark.

Blasters' decision to bat after winning the toss backfired as they lost first two wickets for just one run and found themselves stuttering at 25 for four. Their six batters failed to get going and were out for none. Opener Ayesha Zafar and Saba Nazir scored 37 and 27.

Fatima, who was named player of the match, dismissed Ayesha, Aleena Shah, Anam Amin and Zaib-un-Nisa. Aliya's

scalps included Zunaira Shah, Iram Javed and Saba. Sidra provided a solid start with Khadija Chishti (11 off 31) with a 63-run opening stand, providing no opportunity to Blasters bowlers to defend their low-score.

Sidra struck nine fours in her unbeaten 55-ball knock

and had the company of Bismah Maroof (13 not out off 14) when Dynamites chased the target.

Blasters will play Challengers in the second one-day on Thursday.

Scores in brief: Blasters 94 all out, 37 overs (Ayesha Zafar 37, Saba Nazir 27; Ghulam Fatima 4-17, Aliya Riaz 3-19)

Dynamites 95-1, 16.4 overs (Sidra Amin 58 not out)

Player of the match – Ghulam Fatima (Dynamites).

Pakistan falls to Indonesia in Women Baseball Asia Cup

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan fell to Indonesia 2-8 in their third match of the 3rd Asian Women's Baseball Championship (Women Baseball Asia Cup) in Hong Kong on Tuesday, according to information made available here by Pakistan Federation Baseball (PFB). In their opening match on Sunday, Pakistan had edged passed hosts Hong Kong 16-1 in a one-sided affair, while in their second outing they defeated Sri Lanka.

34th National Games Pakistan wapda off to a flyer in tennis event

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hot favourites Pakistan Wapda started their campaign on a winning note in the men's singles event of the 34th National Games, trouncing a young Islamabad team 2-0 at PTF Tennis Complex Islamabad on Tuesday.

Pakistan No.1 Aqeel Khan beat the upcoming junior Ahmad Nael Qureshi 6-1, 6-1, while Muhammad Abid defeated Syed Nofil Kaleem 6-1, 6-2 to clinch the tie.

The strong PAF team beat Pakistan Navy 2-0 to make a strong entry in event.

Muhammad Shoaib defeated Taimur Malik 6-0,6-0, while Abbas Khan overpowered Noufil Malik 6-1, 6-0 to wrap up the tie.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa beat Punjab 2-0. Barkatullah thrashed Faizan Fayyaz 6-1, 6-0, whereas Hamid Israr overcame Asad Zaman 6-2, 6-3.

The 2nd seed Pakistan Army beat HEC 2-0. Abdullah Adnan edged passed Uzair Khan 6-1, 6-2, while Huzaifa Abdul Rehman outwitted Aqib Hayat 6-2,6-1.

In the women's team event, favourites Wapda beat PAF 2-0. Pakistan No.1 Sarah Ibrahim Khan saw off Shiza Sajid 6-0, 6-1, while Ushna Suhail beat Zainab Ali Naqvi 6-0, 6-0.

In the second tie of the day, Islamabad beat? Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 2-0. Kainat Ali outclassed Oreen 6-7(1), 7-5, 6-0, whereas Mahvish Chishti tamed Maryam 6-0, 6-0 to complete a comfortable win.

Peshawar Zalmi Talent Hunt trials begins



PESHAWAR (APP): An open trial under Peshawar Zalmi Talent Hunt Program in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa got underway here at Hayatabad Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.

Young cricketers from all over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa turned up in large number wherein Peshawar Zalmi President and legendary cricketer Inzamam-ul-Haq, Director Domestic Cricket Muhammad Akram, star batsman Kamran Akmal and rising star Muhammad Haris, international cricketer Muhammad Fayyaz, Aftab Alam were the penal includ-

ed in the selection for Open Trials. Chairman of Peshawar Zalmi Javed Afridi while talking to media men said that the best talent has emerged from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the last eight to ten years. Peshawar Zalmi Director of Cricket Muhammad Akram said that young cricketers from all over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will get an opportunity to show their skills in open trials.

For the first time, Peshawar Zalmi started the registration process through digital plat-

forms. In light of the special instructions of Chairman Peshawar Zalmi Javed Afridi, open cricket trials were held in Peshawar in which all players in all ages participated fully.

Thousands of youths were present for registration, Muhammad Haris got the attention of young players, young players kept taking selfies, Provincial Secretary Sports Captain (ret'd) Mushtaq Ahmed, Additional Secretary Sports Hamidullah Marwat, Director Operations Sports Aziz Ullah Khan were also present. Peshawar Zalmi President Inzamamul Haq while talking to the media said that there is no shortage of talent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He was surprised to see such a large number of players of all ages. There is no age limit or any other restriction, Inzamam Ul Haq added.

Selection can be done only through fitness and good performance, he said, adding, "Children of Peshawar have a lot of passion. They can go forward and hard work is necessary." The competition is tough and Peshawar Zalmi are trying to give the best facilities to the players from its platform, Inzamam Ul

Haq said. In response to a question, he said that they are making four different teams and would short-listed 40 to 45 players for all four teams according to their age group, Inzamam Ul Haq said.

All the selected players would be trained and coached under qualified coaches in National Cricket Academy (NCA) Lahore. He said such opportunities would be given to all youngsters and he is hopeful the way talent is coming up to the main pool, Pakistan can have more than three four teams, like other countries of the world.

In response to a question, he said that former Test cricketers Muhammad Yousaf and Saqlain Mushtaq worked hard with the national team and they deserved appreciation but I do not know why their hard work was not noticed by the concerned quarters in the PCB management.

Inzamam Ul Haq said that he is very confident and hopeful that the Pakistan team would give good results in the forthcoming Asia Cup and World Cup. He said Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan are top players and consistent performers. They are showing excellent performance and are carrying their entire team

along to a height where the team deserved, Inzamam Ul Haq.

Other young players are also in form and are showing good performances," he said. Iftikhar Ahmed is also in great form and certainly he can give his 100 per cent during the national team matches against strong cricketing countries of the world.

"I am very happy to see the cricket Stadium in Peshawar, Inzamam-ul-Haq. Former captain of Pakistan cricket team, legendary batsman and former chief selector of national team Inzamam-ul-Haq said that it was a great pleasure to see the cricket stadium in Peshawar like Hayatabad Cricket Stadium and Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium, which are also home grounds of the Peshawar Zalmi.

The interest in cricket has increased in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Inzamam said that in the Asia Cup, we pray that the Pakistani team will play well, the team currently has good players. Batting is not the only thing to depend on in the Asia Cup, good bowlers can also win tournaments. He said that there are good coaches in Pakistan too who could play key roles for the national team.

Spain arrests seven over Vinicius racism incidents

MADRID (AFP): Spanish police arrested seven people Tuesday over two incidents of racial abuse targeting Real Madrid's Brazilian star Vinicius Junior, including one this weekend that sparked an international outcry.

Spain's football league, La Liga, has been engulfed in a racism scandal after the 22-year-old forward was subjected to racist taunts during Sunday's 1-0 defeat at Valencia and later sent off.

The player has been taunted by opposition fans since joining Real in 2018 but the latest incident has kicked up a storm over whether Spain is doing enough to stamp out racism in football.

Police on Tuesday arrested three youths in Valencia for "insults and gestures with racist overtones" towards the player that amounted to "an alleged hate crime" during Sunday's match.

After their statements were taken, they were later "released on condition they appear when summoned" by the public prosecutor's office or the courts, a police spokesman told AFP.

Sunday's game was held up for several minutes and with the referee saying that shouts of "monkey" had

been directed at Vinicius.

In a statement, Valencia confirmed the arrests, reiterating its "strongest condemnation of racism and violence" and saying the club was acting against those involved "by banning them for life" from their stadium.

In Madrid, police arrested another four men suspected of dangling an effigy wearing a Real Madrid shirt with Vinicius' number on it from a bridge earlier this year.

The dark-skinned inflatable dummy was hung by the neck from a bridge near Real Madrid's training ground several hours before a derby clash with Atletico Madrid on January 26.

Above it was a 16-metre banner reading 'Madrid hates Real', police said. Investigators said three of the suspects were "active members of a group of radical fans" who had previously been identified as "high risk" by agents working to prevent football violence.

"Take drastic measures" "Spain is fighting this behaviour, we condemn it and we are working to eradicate it," government spokeswoman Isabel Rodriguez said Tuesday just hours after Brazil protested to the Spanish ambassador. The Brazilian government also said it

would complain to Madrid and La Liga in a statement saying it "deeply regrets that no effective measures have yet been taken to prevent the recurrence of these racist acts".

Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said Sunday's incident showed FIFA's racism protocol in football was "obsolete".

Referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea activated the racism protocol after Vinicius squared off with fans, singling out one supporter whom he accused of abuse. But Ancelotti said the protocol should have been "applied when the team bus reached the stadium, because the insults started there".

In mobile footage of the crowds awaiting the arrival of Real Madrid's bus broadcast on Tuesday by LaSexta television, multiple voices can be heard singing abusive chants and making offensive sounds. It was, said Ancelotti, "a moment to take drastic measures" to tackle the issue.

Meanwhile, La Liga said it would request more sanctioning power to act against fans for violent, racist or xenophobic behaviour, saying it felt "powerless" when its incident reports failed to have an impact.



MONTE BONDONE: João Almeida and UAE Team Emirates - White best young jersey celebrates at finish line as stage winner during the 106th Giro d'Italia 2023, Stage 16 a 203km stage from Sabbio Chiese to Monte Bondone 1642m.

Ervine, Gumbie centuries hand Pakistan Shaheens seven-wicket defeat

HARARE (Agencies): Zimbabwe Select got an unassailable lead in the six-match one-day series against Pakistan Shaheens on Tuesday as centuries from Craig Ervine and Joylord Gumbie helped them to a seven-wicket win in the fourth match at the Harare Sports Club.

Zimbabwe Select chased down the 296-run target with ease thanks to a mammoth second-wicket stand of 277 runs between Ervine and Gumbie.

Ervine top-scored in the match with 161 off 144 (19 fours and three sixes), overshadowing Omair Bin Yousuf's 153, and his partner Gumbie, who opened the innings with Tadiwanashe Marumani (four off two), made 111 off 124 (10 fours).

The pair had come together after Pakistan Shaheens dismissed Marumani in the second over, but the tourists failed to make any further inroads as Ervine and Gumbie put up a solid stand. The other



two wickets came in the 45th and 46th overs.

That Pakistan Shaheens posted a target of 296 was because of Omair's 153 off 126. The right-handed batter struck 14 fours and four sixes and provided stability in the middle order after his side had lost three wickets for 55. The 24-year-old Karachi-born stitched a 139-run partnership with Kamran Ghulam, who made 55 off 79, for the fourth wicket.

Once the partnership was broken in the 39th over, fast bowler Brad Evans made the most of the opening and recorded a

five-wicket haul with five for 62 in 10 overs.

The two teams will meet on Thursday at the same venue for the fifth one-day with the scoreline reading 3-1.

Scores in brief: Pakistan Shaheens 295-9, 50 overs (Omair Bin Yousuf 153, Kamran Ghulam 55, Haseebullah 22; Brad Evans 5-62, Wellington Masakadza 2-45)

Zimbabwe Select 299-3, 47.3 overs (Craig Ervine 161, Joylord Gumbie 111; Shahnaaz Dahani 2-60)

Player of the match – Craig Ervine (Zimbabwe Select).

Simona Halep: Doping case hearing delay is 'contrary to my rights'

LONDON (Agencies): Former world number one Simona Halep has accused tennis' doping authority of "publicly stating one thing while privately doing another" by requesting a further delay to her hearing.

Halep was charged with a second doping offence last week over "irregularities" in her biological passport.

The Romanian, 31, has been suspended since October after testing positive for a banned substance at the US Open.

The second charge is separate to the one for which she is already suspended.

In a statement on Twitter, 2019 Wimbledon champion Halep said the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) had requested a third delay.

Halep, who denies the charges, said she was "extremely shocked and disappointed by the ITIA's attitude".

"While the ITIA via their representative Nicole Sapstead was pub-

licly stating three days ago that the ITIA 'has remained committed to engaging Mrs Halep in an empathetic, efficient and timely manner', they were at the same time officially requesting the tribunal to delay my hearing... for the third time," Halep said.

"The ITIA publicly states one thing while privately doing another. I have repeatedly asked for my hearing and the ITIA has repeatedly sought to delay it.

"When is it going to stop? I ask the question once again. I am entitled to a quick hearing. Acting this way is contrary to my rights."

Halep's coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, said the ITIA had played a "double game" from "day one".

An ITIA spokesperson said: "We have proposed that both charges are heard together to avoid multiple hearings. To do this, we wish to provide all parties (including the inde-

pendent tribunal) sufficient time to consider the significant materials associated with the latest charge.

"Ultimately it is a decision for the independent tribunal. Ms Halep also has the opportunity to make her representations to them."

Halep's suspension last year was imposed after she tested positive for roxadustat, an anti-anemia drug which stimulates the production of red blood cells in the body. She denies knowingly taking the banned substance.

The investigations into failed tests by the ITIA are often complex, particularly when a player denies taking a substance knowingly.

It is not uncommon for cases to take months to be resolved.

In such cases, a player can produce evidence to disprove or mitigate the failed test. This would bring further investigation and testing by the ITIA, leading to the process being further extended.



In brief

IRSA releases 157,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 157,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 164,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1425.73 feet and was 27.73 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 54,600 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1115.60 feet, which was 65.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 47,300 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 70,600, 61,100, 42,800 and 13,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 34,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 18,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

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, Tufail Shaheed, Charah, Farash Town, Karpa, Bhadana, I-11/1, I-11/3, Metro, Anguri, NCP, Mengyal, Shahdara, Shahpur, Khayaban Iqbal, Pir Suhawah, Quid-e-Azam University, Punjab House, Bri Imam, Mandala, Athal, NIH Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Shahpur, Dhok Noor, Chahan, Chontra, Rajar, Chakri, SPD, SPF, Park View, Pindi Borar, Jail Park-1, Car Chowk, Mehboob Shaheed, Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Nozgi, Bajanyal, F-17/1, F-17/2 Feeders, Jhelum Circle, Paran, Khore, Sarai Alamgir, Sanghui, Chotala, Baba Shaheed, Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Daultala, Adi, Dera Muslim Feeders, From 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM, Attock Circle, Bolinwal, Shadi Khan, Sirka, Shamsabad Feeders and surrounding areas.

Sheikh for punishing real perpetrators

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Awami Muslim League chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said the real conspirators and perpetrators of May 9 carnage should be punished and the innocent people should be released. In his message on the social networking site Twitter, he vehemently criticised the people who were changing loyalties and called them coward. "Cowards don't even wait to complete the days of iddat [transition period]. There is a marathon going on to leave the party. The party they will join will also sink," Sheikh Rashid added. He said parties were made through the "needy" and "self-serving people", therefore, democracy fails and no government completes five-year term. The prime minister was delivering useless speeches three times a day. They could not run the government, he added. Sheikh Rashid feared Pakistan could default. He enumerated failures of the government – IMF deserted them, rupee devalued to 307 to a dollar, friends abandoned them, political and economic collapse took place.



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar and Parliamentary Secretary Law and Justice Division Mehnaz Akbar Aziz in a meeting with Dr. Riina Kionka, Ambassador of European Union to Pakistan.

Pakistan highly values relations with EU based on mutual interest: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar has said that Pakistan highly values its bilateral relations with European Union based on mutual interest.

This was stated by him while talking to European Union Ambassador to

Pakistan Dr. Riina Kionka who called on him on Tuesday and discussed with issues of mutual interest.

Senator Azam Nazir Tarar praised the active and comprehensive role of the Ambassador regarding the GSP Plus status of Pakistan. This status was an important milestone in

economic cooperation between Pakistan and the European Union, he added.

The law minister reiterated the commitment to further promote bilateral relations. EU Ambassador Dr. Riina's gave assurance of full cooperation in the promotion of trade relations.

Edu minister visits IMCG Shah Allah Dita to review progress on OOSC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain visited the Islamabad Model College for Girls – Shah Allah Dita to review the progress on enrollment of Out of School Children (OOSC).

Senior officials of the Ministry of Education also accompanied the minister.

Additional Secretary Salman Mufti briefed the minister that according to the BISP data, approximately 52,796 children are Out of School in ICT.

He told the minister that the ministry has devised a plan to address this issue on the directions of the minister. He said that in the first week of May 2023, the education ministry rolled out an implementation plan on the Zero Out of School

Children in ICT campaign.

Rana Tanveer was told that FDE, NCHD, BECS, NGOs, and various NGO's are partners of the Ministry in this campaign. Minister was told that the campaign has started from five UCs-Shareefabad, Sohan, Shah Allah Ditta, Golra Shareef, and Burma Town.

Field Control Centers have been established by the education ministry in collaboration with numerous NGO's to monitor the progress at - Burma town (NCHD and Jinnah Junior Trust); Sohan (BECS), Shareefabad (Alight Pakistan, FDE); Golra Shareef (FDE & NEF); and Shah Allah Ditta (Sunbeams; FDE School; & NCHD).

Federal Minister was told that through collective efforts of all stakeholders

so far 6549 out-of-school children have been identified out of which 3396 children have been enrolled in various public and private schools so far. NCHD and BECS have deputed their teams in the field for this campaign - (about 100 officials of NCHD and 40 of BECS). All partners are committed and have plans to reach Zero OOSC in Islamabad by 30th June 2023. Rana Tanveer Hussain said that his vision is to make Islamabad a model for the rest of the country to follow.

He encouraged all the stakeholders to combine their efforts and ensure that Islamabad has zero OOSC as soon as possible. He said that Islamabad has to lead by example so that the right direction can be given to the rest of the country.

Seminar on technical education organized

RAWALPINDI (APP): A seminar on technical education awareness program for the students was organized here on Tuesday at Government Graduate College for Women Satellite Town (GGCWST) Rawalpindi.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta was the chief guest at the seminar.

Director Colleges, Prof. Sher Ahmad Satti, Principal Government Graduate College for Women, Satellite Town Rawalpindi, Dr Fatima Gul, Principal Divisional Public School Rawalpindi Muhammad Yasin Mirza and others were also present on the occasion.

The Commissioner while addressing the seminar said the program of imparting skills and technical education to the student during summer vacations is a major initiative of the Punjab government.

The Commissioner informed that he was a member of the committee formed in this regard and is aware of the importance of this program. The program would have constructive effects, he said adding, technical

education training is a joint effort of different departments including ICI, SDD, HED and SED.

He advised the students not to waste their precious time during summer vacations and they should learn skills. In developed countries children are imparted technical education and given training during holidays, he added.

It is possible to eliminate unemployment through skill and technical education, the Commissioner said.

Technical training would be beneficial not only for the person getting education based on technical training but the entire family would benefit economically, he added. Earnest efforts are required to achieve the targets set to eliminate poverty and unemployment, he said.

The Commissioner said that the role of the teachers is very important in attracting students so that they could get technical education. He informed me that soon this program would also be started in Divisional Public Schools.

Farooq Rehmani hails China, KSA, Turkey

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senior APHC-AJK leader Muhammad Farooq Rehmani has expressed his gratitude to the People's Republic of China, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Turkey, People's Republic of Egypt, Sultanate of Oman, Republic of Indonesia, and Republic of Mexico for their decision to not send delegations to the G20 meeting in Srinagar.

In a message to the embassies and missions of these G20 member countries, Rehmani said that he prayed for and was grateful for their "high moral decision" to boy-

cott the meeting. He said that the Indian government had "demolished Kashmir's indigenous personality" by implementing a "ruthless demographic change plan" and had "implemented draconian laws" that had kept thousands of people in jail. He also said that the Indian government was "hoodwinking the world opinion and UN Charter and relevant resolutions" by pretending to organize a tourism moot in the besieged and caged city of Srinagar.

Rehmani told the G20 countries that after dismem-

bering the occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 and revoking all its special status laws, India's activities in the name of tourism in Kashmir were "meaningless and fake" and that India, not Kashmir, was the beneficiary of tourism in Kashmir. He appealed to other members of the G20 to "think over the positive lines and boycott the moot" until India withdrew all its harsh laws, honored UN laws, and lifted all restrictions on Kashmiris to pave way for a just multiple dialogue on the future of Jammu and Kashmir.

ANF foils four bids to smuggle over 1549 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations across the country managed to recover over 1549 drugs and arrested three accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that ANF and ASF in a joint operation at Lahore International Airport arrested an Indonesia-bound passenger, resident of Kurram, going on flight no QR-621 and recovered 1140 grams of Ice drug from his trolley bag. In another operation conducted near Rajana Road, Toba Tek Singh, ANF seized 43.2 kg charras and arrested two accused including a woman resident of Toba Tek Singh.

The spokesman informed that in the third operation, ANF conducted a raid in the Quetta Pishin area and recovered 1500 kg charras from an abandoned house. In the fourth operation, ANF and FC recovered 5.5 kg charras from the possession of a drug smuggler, a resident of Lower Orakzai, arrested during routine checking at the check post. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

CPO visits Gujar Khan, Mandra, Jatli police stations

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Khalid Hamdani paid visits to Gujar Khan, Mandra and Jatli police stations on Monday night and checked record of the cases, lockups, front desks and condition of the buildings, informed a police spokesman.

The CPO during the visit also chaired a meeting which was attended by SDPO Gujar Khan, SHOs and Investigation officers and directed to make all-out efforts to control crime in their respective jurisdictions. The investigation process of the cases should be completed purely on merit and challans should also be submitted in time, the CPO said adding, police patrolling should further be made effective. The CPO directed the officers to accelerate their ongoing operations against drug peddlers and smugglers. The CPO advised the SHOs and other cops to behave politely with the crime victims and solve the cases on merit.

‘Imran will not be able to escape conviction in Al-Qadir corruption case’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan Niazi would "not be able to escape conviction in the Al-Qadir corruption case due to strong evidence". Sharing details at a presser, SAPM Tarar said property tycoon Malik Riaz made a payment to purchase One Hyde Park, an apartment in London.

After a thorough investigation, the National Crime Agency (NCA) of the United Kingdom declared the huge transaction money laundering and imposed a penalty of 190 million pound on the property tycoon.

The Government of Pakistan through Shahzad Akbar entered into an agreement with the NCA for refund of 190 million pounds, which the latter agreed on a condition that the money would be spent on the welfare of people of Pakistan, he added. At that time, he said, another case against Malik Riaz for the payment of Rs 460 billion was pending before the Supreme Court of Pakistan. Shahzad Akbar presented another agreement in the sealed envelope to the Federal Cabinet for

approval which was regarding the transfer of 190 million pounds to the apex court's account to adjust the property tycoon's liability. For the above favor, Tarar said, Malik Riaz gifted 458 kanal land to Imran Khan Niazi. Zulfi Bukhari made a trust with the name of the Al-Qadir Trust and transferred the land in the name of Imran Khan Niazi, his wife Bushra Bibi and Farhat Shahzadi alias Farah Gogi.

He said initially the Al-Qadir Trust had Rs15 million in its account but later at different times later more than Rs 200 million was deposited in it.

He said the Al-Qadir University was a fake institution as it was not a chartered by the High Education Commission (HEC) and was only affiliated with an unknown college of Lahore showing the strength of 20 to 25 students. He said the Al-Qadir Trust case was biggest financial scam in the history of Pakistan and Imran Khan Niazi was refusing to cooperate with the investigation team in the case. He said the PTI attacked the national institutions only to run away from the proceedings of the Al-Qadir Trust case but Imran Khan would not be able to escape conviction in it.

HEC asks students to ensure university's NOC before taking admission in MS/MPhil, PhD

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has alerted the students and parents that before taking admission, the students must ensure that the university has a valid NOC to offer MPhil/MS/equivalent and PhD programme.

According to official sources, HEC Pakistan has made it mandatory since November 7, 2013, for all Universities/Higher Education Institutions

(HEIs) to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NOC) before launching MS/MPhil or equivalent and a PhD programme.

HEC asked the students to visit its website for updated NOCs given at the link: <http://www.hec.gov.pk/site/NOCs-MPhil-PhD>.

Further, the affiliated colleges/institutions are not allowed to offer MS/MPhil/PhD and equivalent programmes.

Parents and all prospective students are advised not to take admissions in PhD and MPhil/MS programmes offered by the universities/degree awarding institutions or sub-campus operating without prior NOC from HEC as well as those offered and taught at any affiliated institution/college.

HEC has warned that it will not recognise/attest the degrees awarded in violation of HEC guidelines.

Food additives associated with increased risk of diabetes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Food additives, which are added to food to maintain flavour or enhance taste, appearance, or other sensory properties, are associated with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, a new study has shown.

According to the study published in the journal PLOS Medicine, nitrites and nitrates are chemical compounds used as food additives to increase shelf life, while researchers suggest a link between dietary exposure to nitrites and the risk of type 2 diabetes. To investigate the relationship between dietary exposure to nitrites/nitrates type 2 diabetes risk, researchers accessed data collected from 1,04,168 participants in the prospective cohort NutriNet-Sante.

The researchers analysed self-reported diet information with health outcomes using detailed nitrite/nitrate exposure derived from multiple databases and sources. The researchers discovered that

participants in the NutriNet-Sante cohort who reported a higher intake of nitrites overall, and specifically from food additives and non-additive sources, had a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes, everyday health reported.

"This is the first large-scale cohort study to suggest a direct association between additives-originated nitrites and type-2 diabetes risk. It also corroborates previously suggested associations between total dietary nitrites and T2D risk," said the study authors.

The cohort included a greater number of younger individuals, more often women, who exhibited healthier behaviour. "These results provide a new piece of evidence in the context of current discussions regarding the need for a reduction of nitrite additives' use in processed meats by the food industry, and could support the need for better regulation of soil contamination by fertilisers," the authors added.

RDA enforcement team directed to take strict action against illegal housing societies

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Director General (DG), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa here on Tuesday directed the enforcement team to take strict action against illegal housing societies.

According to RDA spokesman, on the complaints of citizens, the DG had issued directives to the officers concerned to take

solid steps to address complaints of the citizens.

He said that the DG had advised the citizens not to invest in illegal housing societies.

The DG had also instructed the Director MP&TE to lodge FIRs against those involved in illegal advertising and marketing of the illegal housing societies.

The Planning Wing of

RDA had also requested the Cyber Crime Wing of FIA to take legal action against illegal and misleading advertisements of the illegal housing schemes, he said adding that on the directives of the DG, the citizens were advised to check status of the housing projects before any investment at RDA's official website www.rda.gop.pk.



ISLAMABAD: Member of National Assembly, Patron-in-chief of Pakistan Hindu Council and State Minister Ramesh Kumar Vankwani chairing a meeting regarding The Task Force on the Ghandhara Tourism at Department of Archaeology and Museum, Sir Syed Memorial Building.

65,000 people receive training

KABUL (Agencies): The United Nations Development Program in Afghanistan (UNDP) says the organization recently provided technical training to 65,000 people in Afghanistan. United Nations Development Program in Afghanistan announced that these educational programs were implemented in eight different zones across Afghanistan. The focus of this program has been on youth and marginalized groups, the organization said.

The Frontier Post AFGHANISTAN

Zil-Qadah 03, 1444 — Wednesday, May 24, 2023

COVID-19 cases increased

KABUL (Agencies): WHO said on Tuesday the number confirmed COVID-19 cases showed an increase by 282.5 percent in April in Afghanistan. There were a total of 4,954 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in April. Nine associated deaths happened last month, compared to four deaths in March, WHO said in a report. Local health officials in Badakhshan have also confirmed that the number COVID-19 cases is rising.

Businessmen continue to face obstacles with transactions

KABUL (TOLOnews): Afghan traders expressed concerns over the existing restrictions in the banking system, saying that they have been facing problems in transactions abroad.

The traders said that they are obliged to send money through money exchangers, which have high costs.

"The banking problems or transactions of money through banks are some of the main reasons for economic challenges and the drop in national and international trade," said Mabubullah Mohammadi, a trader.

"The traders can send their money abroad through money exchangers but now as the banks received the permission to do transfers, they charge more than the money exchangers," said Zalmay Azimi, a trader.

But the Da Afghanistan Bank, the country's central bank, said that the commercial banks can transfer the money of traders to abroad.

"Currently, all commercial banks can perform commercial transactions and the commercial banks are also a legitimate source of money," said Hassibullah Noori, a spokesman

for the Central Bank.

This comes as the Union of Money Exchangers of Sarai Shahzada said that traders have transferred more than \$4 billion abroad to purchase commodities.

"A major part of money transaction is being conducted through money exchangers... the money exchangers are not facing any problem now," said Abdul Rahman Zirak, a spokesman for the union.

According to the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, Afghanistan imports more than \$6 billion annually.

Number of tourists visiting Bamyan up

BAMYAN (Agencies): The number of foreign tourists visiting the historical sites of the country's central province of Bamyan has increased in the past two months, the provincial Information and Culture Directorate said.

"About 265 tourists from Italy, the US, Taiwan, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Spain, Germany, Sweden, England, and Russia have visited the historical sites and places of the province in the past two months, head of Tourism of the provincial Information and Culture Mohammad Din Muflih said.

The provincial officials of the Information and Culture Directorate is making efforts to develop and provide a sound tourist industry to attract more tourists from the countries of the world, said the statement.

Meanwhile, a number of tourists have expressed their pleasure and happiness over hosting more tourists compared to previous years, the statement added.

Better security and touristic facilities have caused an increasing number of tourists visiting the province this year.

AWCC opens first customer services center in Panjshir

PANJSHIR (Agencies): Afghan Wireless Communications Company (AWCC) has officially opened its first customer services center in Panjshir province.

The modern sales and services center boasts modern equipment and facilities and is now in Panjshir's Rukha district.

The head of AWCC's central zone said at the opening ceremony that AWCC customers can now visit the center to resolve phone and internet problems.

"We try our best to provide telecommunication services wherever people need it, we take care of those points and provide standard telecommunication services to the noble people of Panjshir," said Suleiman Khorram, AWCC's director for the central zone.

"We request the respected Afghan Wireless company to provide these services across Panjshir province," said Mirza Jan Muslim, head of Afghanistan Telecom Regulatory Authority (ATRA) for Panjshir.

The head of Panjshir Telecommunication and Information Technology, Abdul Hamid Noori, also called for AWCC to expand its services across the province.

"We are ready for any cooperation with Afghan Wireless Company. We would like to thank the respected Afghan Wireless Company for starting 4G activities in Panjshir province for the first time, and today they took the first step in the sales center, which was very important," said Noori.

A number of residents also welcomed the company's initiative.

"Before, when the Afghan Wireless Company was not here, we used to go to Kabul, where the expenses were very high, but now it has arrived in our own province, we are very happy," said a resident.

Recently, AWCC also opened new sales and services centers in Parwan and Kapisa provinces.

Haqqani meets Chinese ambassador in Kabul

KABUL (Khaama Press): The acting Interior Minister of the interim government in Afghanistan, Sirajuddin Haqqani, met with Mr Wang Yu, the Chinese ambassador in Kabul, Afghanistan.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry, the two sides underlined the issues of mutual interest, including the tripartite conference in Islamabad.

According to Haqqani, justice is crucial in international engagement, and he praised China for taking a realistic stance.

He also pointed out that "there will not be an atmosphere of trust unless moral principles become the norm, and that having malicious intent for others is bad politics."

"We believe in good relations. The policy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is that of interaction and understanding, we have good intentions, and we expect the same from others," Haqqani stated.

In his part, Yu said at the meeting that China supports Afghanistan and believes a free and independent environment is necessary for the country to



flourish. The statement indicated that the country is presently on this path.

"We are not supporting the policies of sanctions, pressure and interference in other countries," Yu said.

Since the takeover of the country by the de facto regime, China extended its support and initiated several investments, particularly in the mining and energy sectors.

TOLOnews adds: The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP) said that China and other countries are interested in investing in Afghanistan's

lithium resources.

The majority of Afghanistan's lithium is known to be in the provinces of Kunar, Nuristan, and Helmand, according to Homayoun Afghan, the ministry's spokesman.

"A number of countries and investors have expressed interest in the lithium business in addition to the Chinese. The Chinese even said that they are prepared to invest \$10 billion," Afghan said.

The Islamic Emirate's cabinet will handle the process of turning over the mining contracts, a

spokesperson said.

"We have large reserves of lithium worldwide. Our country is on the global list of those countries that are rich in lithium, and our lithium reserves are to a large extent in Kunar, Nuristan and Helmand provinces," Homayoun Afghan stated.

"China is the largest market for new energy vehicles in the world. Lithium is especially important for the electric vehicle industry," said Sieyar Qurishi, an economist.

Many new technologies use lithium, particularly in the production of batteries.

Haqqani urges UN to invite IEA to meetings on Afghanistan

KABUL (TOLOnews): The acting Minister of Interior, Sirajuddin Haqqani, met with the UN special envoy for Afghanistan, Roza Otunbayeva, and he requested that representatives of the Islamic Emirate be invited to UN meetings held on Afghanistan.

According to the MoI, Otunbayeva welcomed the improvement in security, saying that the UN will continue its aid for the people of Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the chief of staff for the office of the political deputy Prime

Minister met with Scott Smith, director of political affairs at UNAMA, and they discussed countering narcotics, and assistance to Afghanistan.

"There was discussion about humanitarian assistance, climate change and improvement of relations between the Islamic Emirate and world. The UN will play a positive role in this regard," said Hassan Haqayr, press director for the office of the political deputy of the PM.

In a meeting held between former President

Hamid Karzai and Markus Potzel, deputy head of UNAMA, the reopening of schools and universities for girls, women's access to work, and the start of an intra-Afghan dialogue were agreed upon as important.

Karzai said on Twitter he and Potzel discussed the current situation in the country as well as humanitarian aid.

Political analysts said that the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) can play an essential role in removing

challenges. "The responsibility of the Islamic Emirate is to answer their legitimate wishes, regarding the ensuring of human rights, women's rights or the education of women," said Wahid Faqiri, a political analyst.

The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres earlier host an international meeting on Afghanistan in Doha, Qatar.

Guterres told reporters that a similar meeting would be held in the near future.

Afghan girls robotics team to study at US universities

KABUL (Agencies): Members of the Afghan girls robotics team, who have been living in Qatar for almost two years, recently received news that they have been accepted by American universities.

Members of the team will study in different fields and have voiced their excitement over the development.

"I was able to get into one of the best universities in America in the engineering department and I am going to start this new course of study at Ohio State University in the field of aerospace engineering," Florence Pouya, the captain of the robotics team, said.

The girls have been part of the national robotics team for more than four years.

"The field I want to study is mechanical engineering, and I hope one day



I can return to my country and transfer everything I have learned to the future and new generations of Afghanistan so that everyone joins hands and builds a prosperous and independent Afghanistan," Elham Mansouri, a member of the robotics team, said.

Asefa Amini, another

member of the team, said: "I am happy that I was able to get accepted by five American universities, including Nevada in Las Vegas, where I will study computer science."

Shabnam Noorzai, another member of the team, said: "I want to show the world the abilities and

talent of Afghan girls. You give them a chance. They can also be scientists, leaders and engineers of the future who will make a change in society."

Women's rights activists believe that Afghan girls have good talent, and if allowed, they could have great achievements.

2,400 Afghan refugees returned

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugee and Repatriation Affairs said about 2,400 Afghan refugees had returned home from Iran.

"A total of 2,348 Afghan refugees returned to their homeland Afghanistan on Sunday after years of living as refugees in Iran, and the process of returning the refugees to their country continues," the statement said. The reports indicated over the past few months, more than 54,000 Afghan refugees returned from Iran.

The migrants returned home from Iran via the Islamqala crossing point in the eastern Herat province of Afghanistan.

The ministry reported that more than 2700 Afghan nationals returned home from Iran on Saturday.

Meanwhile, some 547 returnees have been intro-

duced to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to receive humanitarian aid.

In a telephone talk with the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the Iranian Foreign minister said that Afghan migrants

living in Iran exceeded five million in numbers and asked for immediate international support.

The increasing issues in the neighbouring countries, including unemployment, restrictions lack of jobs and earnings, led to the return

of thousands of Afghan refugees to the country voluntarily.

Most Afghan nationals immigrate to the neighbouring countries due to the country's lack of employment, prosecution, security issues and threat.



Flash floods kill five in Ghor province



FIROZKOH CITY (Khaama Press): According to the provincial officials in Ghor province, flash floods on Tuesday killed at least four women, one man and a child in Firozkoh city.

Meanwhile, the officials reported that the flash floods had financial losses besides physical to the area's people.

According to local officials, in a similar incident earlier in May, heavy rains and flash floods killed four people and injured more than 25 others in the eastern province of Nangarhar.

At least four children perished, 25 others were

injured, and some 300 residential houses were destroyed due to the flash floods.

Meanwhile, the local people asked aid organizations to assist the affected families during these harsh times.

According to official reports, at least 29 people were killed across the 31 provinces of the country due to flash floods and earthquakes in April 2023.

29 people have died across 31 provinces of the country, according to Shafiuallah Rahimi, a spokeswoman for the State Ministry for Natural

Disaster Management. In contrast, over 105 additional people have suffered injuries from the recent earthquake and flash floods from 21 March to 20 April.

Meanwhile, he continued, there were both material and financial losses due to the natural disasters, including the loss of 848 cattle, 155 residential homes, 1,242 partially damaged homes, and 7,106 acres of agricultural land.

Afghanistan is the most vulnerable country to various natural disasters, including flooding, earthquake, avalanches, heavy rains and landslides.

200 MW wind power project planned for Herat



HERAT (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Energy and Water said that work on the production of a 200 MW wind power project will start soon in Herat.

According to the acting minister, a Turkish company has invested in the project.

"We signed an agreement for a 200 MW wind power project with a company a few days ago, and in Pakia also we have an agreement for a 73 MW electricity project," said Abdul Latif Mansour, act-

ing minister of the Energy and Water Ministry.

Residents of Herat welcomed the start of the electricity production project.

"Herat has wind and we asked the government to invest in the field and provide electricity for the people," said Ahmad, a Herat resident.

"In winter we do not have electricity, we have electricity just for two hours a day so for 5 hours we don't have it, if this wind power project is implemented, it will benefit

the people," said Noor Mohammad, a Herat resident.

Local officials in Herat said that preparations have started for the wind power production project.

According to the officials, the beginning of this project will provide work for hundreds of people.

"According to this agreement, Turkish 77 Company is supposed to start the project that will produce 200 megawatts of electricity after completing the technical studies after one year," said Nisar Ahmad Elias, a spokesman of the Herat governor.

Herat's required electricity is imported from Iran and Turkmenistan, and a few months of the year some electricity from Salma Dam is also supplied to the electricity grid.

Every year during cold and hot peaks, the imported electricity of these countries is cut off for several days due to technical challenges.

Unknown individuals axing down trees in Nangarhar, allege residents

JALALABAD (Pajhwok): Unidentified people are axing down forest's trees during night in the Naziyan district of eastern Nangarhar province, residents claimed. On the other hand, local officials say they have set up a special unit to prevent arbitrary deforestation.

According to the officials, some people have also been arrested in connection with cutting down the trees in the Naziyan district, but a manhunt for

arresting the main perpetrators was underway.

Ulfatullah Mohibzai, a civil activist and resident of Naziyan, told Pajhwok that for the past several days, unknown people were axing down the trees of forest during night, taking advantage of darkness.

He said: "The forest are the national wealth and deforestation is illegal and not allowed and the practice should be prevented." Hundreds of forest's

trees had been cut down and more trees also faced by the threat to be axed down if no step was taken against the violators, Mohibzai warned.

Malik Sayed Abdul Hakim, another resident of the district and a tribal elder, asked the security forces and agriculture department to prevent such illegal activities.

He said: "We call upon the government to stop deforestation because the

forests are national wealth and no one reserve the right to cut them down."

Maulvi Shirin Agha Badr, chief of the special green unit, said they had arrested some suspects in the district in connection with cutting down the trees.

Badr added: "Our personnel reached the area and detained some individuals but they did not confess to their crimes, however, a manhunt launched to capture the real perpetrators."

Shireen Mazari, Chohan quit PTI

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a major setback for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Shireen Mazari and Fayyazul Hassan Chohan Tuesday announced quitting the Imran Khan-led party which has lost several seasoned leaders in the recent days in the aftermath of the May 9 mayhem.

The development came as several party leaders and lawmakers — including Amir Mehmood Kiani, Malik Amin Aslam, Mahmood Moulvi and Aftab Siddiqui among others — have publicly denounced the attacks on the state installations and announced leaving the former ruling party since the May 9 vandalism.

Addressing a press conference in the federal capital, Mazari — the former federal minister and close aide of Khan — condemned the May 9 riots during which PTI supporters ransacked and torched public and defence installations across the country. “I strongly condemn the May 9 violence. I have always condemned the violence of any kind,” she remarked.

Mazari said she is not only leaving her party but also politics. “From today onwards, I am not a part of any political party.” The senior PTI leader also said her health deteriorated during the last 12 days of the detention. “My children and parents are [now] my priority,” she remarked.

“I condemn violence against state symbols like the GHQ, parliament and the Supreme Court,” she added. Sharing her ordeal, Mazari said her daughter, Imaan Mazari, had to go through a tough time due to her repeated arrests. “When I was taken to jail for the third time, my daughter was crying a lot, I saw her video.”

The seasoned politician went on to say that she had also submitted an affidavit to the Islamabad High Court (IHC) pledging that she would not become a part of any violent protest in future. The senior vice president of the former ruling party had been arrested several times during the past few days following the May 9 riots triggered by the arrest of the former prime minister



in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

Earlier, she was re-arrested once again after the Gujranwala court approved her bail in a case related to the vandalism and attacks on defence and public installations including Lahore Corps Commander's House and the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi during the violent protests. Shortly after her presser, Fayyazul Chohan addressed the media and also announced parting ways with the party.

“I will continue exposing anti-Pakistan elements. I will say categorically that there was no PTI leader present who could stop workers from violence on May 9,” he remarked while addressing a press conference in Islamabad. Opposing Imran Khan's “anti-establishment” tirade, Chohan said politicians are not supposed to clash with the state institutions. “I had been sidelined in the party for the last one year and even once denied permission to meet Imran Khan in Zaman Park.”

He announced quitting the party saying he will continue serving the country and playing an active part in politics. Reacting to the PTI leaders' departure, Khan has claimed that they had been pressurised into leaving the party.

“My sympathies go to all those who are under pressure and have been made to leave the party. And I commend and salute all the senior members who are resisting the extreme pressure to quit the party,” Khan wrote on his official Twitter handle last

week. Following the May 9 vandalism, the high-powered National Security Committee (NSC), comprising top civil and military leadership of the country, vowed to try the miscreants under relevant laws of the country including the Army Act. Subsequently, thousands of party workers have been arrested across the country over their alleged involvement in the May 9 riots with top leadership including party's vice chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi and secretary general Asad Umar remained behind bars despite court ordering their release.

Another PTI leader Jamshed Cheema has decided to part ways with the party over May 9 violence. According to media reports, the development was confirmed by his lawyer, stating that he held a meeting with Jamshed Cheema in jail. “I am confident that he would quit PTI as soon as he comes out of jail,” he said. Cheema's lawyer further said his client is upset over the attacks on military installations on May 9.

Jamshed Cheema has been detained for 12 days in the wake of the May 9 protests that had erupted following the arrest of PTI chief Imran Khan in a corruption case related to the Al-Qadir Trust. Several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders including, Malik Amin Aslam, Dr. Hisham Inamullah, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, Ajmal Wazir, Faizullah Kamoka, Jay Parkash, Dr Muhammad Amjad and others have strongly condemned the May 9 events and quit the party.



RAWALPINDI: 1st Deputy Minister of Defence of Republic of Azerbaijan / Chief of General Staff of Azerbaijan Army, Colonel General Karim Valiyev called on General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff at General Headquarters. During the meeting, matters related to defence and security cooperation between the two brotherly countries were discussed with emphasis on enhancing mutual cooperation in military and professional matters.

Country burning due to PDM, PTI fight: JJ F.P. Report

LAHORE: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has said that if the PTI made the government in 2018 with the backing of the establishment, the incumbent alliance of the PDM and the PPP also come to power by adopting the same pattern, holding the troika responsible for the prevailing economic and political crises.

Presiding over the party meeting at Mansoorah on Tuesday, he expressed concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in the country and particularly the rise in terrorism incidents in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The meeting condemned the Zhoib suicide attack on the JI Emir, demanding a transparent investigation into the terror incident. It welcomed the release of Maulana Hidayatur Rahman Baloch from jail on Tuesday at the order of the Supreme Court. Sirajul Haq congratulated the people of Gwadar on the release of Baloch, asking the government to honour the agreement it signed with the Gwadar Rights Movement. He called for the restoration of subsidies on electricity, gas and other basic needs in the budget.

He said the country was burning due to the fight between the PDM and the PTI, as neither side was willing to adopt the seriousness and come to the table for dialogue. He said the destruction of the economy was the direct result of the prevailing political crises. He said the gap between the poor and rich had widened to a dangerous level, vanishing the middle class.

The JI chief said the prices of the basic food items were beyond the reach of a common man. He said the large population was living without education and health facilities, and even clean drinking water was not available to over 70-80 per cent public. He said the law and justice served the rich, depriving the poor. The general public, he said, was simmering with sorrow and anger, which was on the verge of erupting.

PTI's ex-MPA Arbab Jehandad held F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The former Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) of PTI from Peshawar Arbab Jehandad was arrested from Murree by police for instigating workers for violent protests on May 9 in the provincial capital.

According to city police here, it was the first arrest of a politician of PTI from Peshawar in the case since all the PTI's former ministers and lawmakers went underground due to fear of arrest. The PTI's MPA was arrested by Punjab police from Murree in a case of vandalism on Motorway (M-1) on May 9, registered against him in Chamkani police station here.

Former lawmakers from Peshawar Fazal Ilahi, Malik Wajid and Asif Khan and a former provincial minister Ishtiaq Urmur were also booked in the case but still not arrested. Meanwhile a PTI worker Zeeshan resident of Pashtakhar here, jumped from third floor of a building in Nowshera when a police team conducted a raid to arrest him.

The accused was critically injured during the escape and shifted to hospital in an unconscious condition. He was involved in various attacks on public and private properties on May 9 in Peshawar and was identified through CCTV footages.

Mily awards to Shuhada Next of Kins conferred

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Corps Investiture Ceremony held at Corps Headquarters Peshawar to confer military awards to Shuhada Next of Kins and serving military officers acknowledging their gallantry acts and sacrifices in the line of duty.

Commander Peshawar Corps Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat was the Chief Guest at the occasion. 62 Kins of Shuhada and one veteran



soldier received Tamgha-e-Basalat while Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) was awarded to 19 officers and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz (Military) to 19 officers.

Govt believes in freedom of press: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb has rejected a notion that journalists were missing during the rule of the incumbent government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif which has rather brought 7 points improvement in the country's ranking in the index for freedom of speech and media independence.

"Name me one journalist who is missing. Imran Riaz is a spokesperson of a political party now," she said while talking to a journalist of a foreign media outlet trying to build a wrong perception about media independence and freedom of speech.

"No, you really have to draw the distinction. You name one person who is missing, one journalist who is being shot, one journalist who has been kidnapped, one journalist whose ribs are broken," she said while responding to a query. She further said, "Now, listen to me, you have to differentiate between a journalist and former journalists who have joined a political party. Once they have joined political parties, they are inciting violence, they are

spokespersons of these political parties".

Marriyum said the parallel should not be drawn among the parties' spokespersons and "independent journalists who report and who believe in true journalism." Imran Khan was called "media predator" while under Shehbaz Sharif's government, media freedom had improved by 7 points in less than one year time and the same organization "which called Mr Khan a media predator" had significantly improved rating of Pakistan in freedom of expression and media independence.

She recalled journalists were arrested and silenced while their programs were sent off air and their channels faced suspension during the tenure of Imran Khan. "All the anchors today talk their minds, they are not silenced and I said before... name a journalist who is missing, none...", she remarked.

"If a person has gone missing, be it any person, I condemn that," the minister said adding there were cases against Imran Riaz and he has to give answer before the court. "I will not stand by any stance that is

otherwise which I have been voicing but you have to really differentiate between the party spokespersons and journalists," she maintained.

The minister pointed out that the freedom of expression and media independence index would not be improved by 7 ranks if there was no improvement in freedom of media and expression.

Judge gives last chance to Buzdar

LAHORE (PPI): The continuous non-appearance of former Punjab chief minister Usman Buzdar before the accountability court invoked a stern reaction on Tuesday from the indignant judge who gave last chance to him to appear before the court on May 25, rejecting all his 'ill health pretences'.

At the outset of the hearing on an assets beyond means reference filed by the NAB against Buzdar, accountability court Judge Sajid Ahmad Sheikh inquired about the whereabouts of the former Punjab chief minister.

India abusing G20

(Continued from Page 1)

When we talk of the Kashmiri people and their rights, they accuse us of representing terrorists. How can they accuse us of engaging in terrorism when we ourselves have been impacted by it and are the victims? Two Jiyalas from Bagh accepted martyrdom on 18 October, 2007. It is not our problem that India is governed by a political party that is religiously-motivated and Islamophobic. They label me, the son of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, a 'terrorist' when I call a 'butcher' by his name, Chairman FM Bilawal said. He said that India has developed a habit of receiving demure responses. The real faces of those who labelled us extremists and terrorists have been revealed before the world. They put a price on the head of the Foreign Minister of Pakistan. Owing to the struggle of the Kashmiri people, the world has started accepting the real face of India. We have not let the world forget Kashmir any opportunity we get.

When we were presiding the sessions of the G77 or the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, we were doing so to raise the issue of your right to plebiscite. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto had strived for her Kashmiri brothers to have an 'observer status'. We had the OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting be concluded through the address of the President of Azad Kashmir. Recently, it was decided that we attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's conference

in Goa despite not resuming meaningful dialogue with India since August 2019. The decision was made with the foresight to not let India enjoy an open pitch and to present the case of Pakistan in India, before its representatives. We interacted with the Indian media and its people to advocate for peace. We conducted ourselves in a manner that complied with the SCO's rules and regulations as an effort to portray the real image of Pakistanis, Kashmiris and Muslims, who are not terrorists. If there are terrorists, they are the ones who spread terror in Gujarat and over the Samjhauta Express. When the status of Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir is reversed, we, as the pro-peace party in the dialogue, would be willing to talk. Who are they to hold a tourism workshop in Srinagar? The Kashmiri people should be the ones enjoying the fruits of their labour, not Delhi. When half of Occupied Kashmir is imprisoned, and there are ninety thousand soldiers, what kind of tourism are they trying to endorse? The Kashmiri people should not be deceived. If there is any obstacle in resolving the Kashmir conflict, preventing terrorism and allowing for the economic prosperity of the region, it is the Modi rule.

The day that the Kashmiri people utilize their right to vote and plebiscite to attain freedom is not far. The Kashmiri people wish to obtain freedom not through the terror of the gun, but the power of democracy. If the so-called 'longest running democracy of the world' is as it claims,

why is it afraid of the Kashmiri people and their freedom?

Chairman FM Bilawal raised slogans in favour of plebiscite and voting. The labourers, merchants and workers of Srinagar too raise the same slogans as us. We are grateful to all the nations that have adopted a principled stance as per the resolutions of the UN and international laws. They decided against attending this tourism conference. On my visit to India for the SCO meeting, we had said that they would receive less guests than expected. We would like to salute our Chinese, Saudi and Turkish brethren including all other countries who refused Modi and G20's invitation for the sake of the Kashmiri people. The countries that did attend either downgraded their participation, or are present in protest. You can take any international publication and see whether their [Indian] aim to portray Kashmir as a normalised region has been achieved. How can they send a message of normalisation when thousands of their soldiers are still in Kashmir?

PPP and its Jiyalas will stand with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters till their last breath. He mentioned that this is the first time in history that a Pakistani Foreign Minister has addressed the Kashmiri legislative assembly. Chairman FM Bilawal thanked Zia Qamar for inviting the PPP to Kashmir to protest Modi's actions. He thanked all political parties, including the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Kashmir and Muslim Conference for helping send a unified message to the world.

President for end to prevailing crisis F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that national priorities needed to be reviewed to get rid of the socio-economic and political problems faced by the country. He urged the leaders of all institutions to focus on addressing the major challenges, including overcoming poverty, improving the economy, checking population growth, providing health and education facilities, and eliminating inequalities from society, especially in the rural areas of the country.

These views were expressed by him while talking to the participants of the Senior Officers' Leadership Course (SOLC-10), who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Arif Alvi underlined the need for inculcating the spirit of forgiveness and love for humanity to promote tolerance and harmony in the society. He said that he was deeply hurt by the incidents on 9th May and urged the need for upholding the rule of law and holding only peaceful protests in the country. The President deplored the fact that delayed decision-making had arrested the country's progress, adding that Pakistan needed to make faster decisions to keep pace with the exponential developments taking place in the world.

He said that rapid advancements in the fields of Information Technology (IT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cloud and Quantum Computing, and Cyber Security necessitated that Pakistan should invest in the education and skill development of its youth. While highlighting the importance of Cyber Security, he stated that Pakistan should focus on strengthening its cyber capabilities to protect the country and its people from the threats of cyber warfare.

Terming education and health as the central pillars to address poverty and ensure socio-economic development, the President underscored the need for checking population growth and providing quality education and health services to the people. He regretted that almost 27 million children in Pakistan were out-of-schools and stressed the need to impart education to such children by adopting innovative solutions, especially online education, in addition to brick-and-mortar infrastructure development in the education sector.

ECP rejects PTI's plea in prohibited funding case

ISLAMABAD (PPI): While announcing the reserved decision, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Tuesday rejected the plea of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the prohibited fund confiscation case. The ECP ordered the PTI to submit a reply to the show cause notice by May 30 next. A period of four months should be given to collect the information, the PTI requested.

Meanwhile, the ECP also ordered the PTI leaders including Imran Khan, Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry to appear in person in the contempt of election commission case. The contempt of the election commission case against Imran Khan, Asad Umar and Fawad Chaudhry was heard by a three-member commission headed by

Member Election Commission Nisar Durrani. Lawyer Faisal Chaudhry appeared before the ECP on behalf of Imran Khan and Fawad Chaudhry while the assistant lawyer appeared on behalf of Asad Umar. Lawyer Faisal Chaudhry told the commission that the order of the ECP had been received the previous day. "How could we prepare when the order was received late?"

Member Election Commission Ikramullah Khan said that Imran Khan had been given an opportunity to appear in person at the previous hearing as well. "There are 150 cases against us; 36 cases [are heard] every day," the lawyer said.

Member Election Commission Shah Muhammad Jatoti said that even when there were not

150 cases, he did not appear. Lawyer Faisal Chaudhry pleaded that the hearing be adjourned to the first week of June. "Things are not in our hands. The election commission should stop thinking that we are insulting them. This case has been pending in the election commission for six months," he added. Member Election Commission Ikramullah Khan said that in the previous hearing, an arrest warrant had been ordered over non-appearance.

The ECP ordered Imran Khan, Fawad Chaudhry and Asad Umar to appear in person and warned them to issue their non-bailable arrest warrants if they did not appear at the next hearing. Further hearing of the case was adjourned till June 5 next.

CDWP clears 15 development projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) has cleared 15 development projects worth Rs 249.21 billion during its meeting held on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary Planning Ministry, Chief Economist, Members Planning Commission and representatives from the various ministries and divisions, said a press release issued here. The forum considered 15 projects related to the Ministry of Housing and Works, ministry of national health services regulations and Coordination, Ministry of Communication, Power Division and Ministry of Railways.

The forum has recommended Umbrella PC-1 of the Flood Protection Sector Project-III (FPSP-III)-Updated worth Rs 194.6 billion to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for approval. The Ministry of Water Resources is the sponsoring agency of the project while Provincial Irrigation Departments will execute the project.

The main objective of the implementation of Umbrella PC-I of FPSP-III of NFPP-IV is the improvement of country-wide comprehensive flood management approaches on the integrated and innovative basis by the implementation of structural as well as non-structural interventions proposed under the National Flood Protection Plan NFPP-IV. The major objectives of the project are to reduction in flood losses to private & public infrastructure in an economically sound manner, protect urban & rural bodies, and agricultural lands besides, vital infrastructure installation, Technical feasibility & detailed design studies of Barrages/Bridges and hydraulic structures which need to be remodelled and upgradation of existing flood forecasting & warning facilities for better flood forecasting.

The CDWP also recommended a revised Sehat Sahulat Program as per its approved cost of Rs 31.93b to the ECNEC. Similarly, the forum also approved the

Construction of an Interchange on Hazara Motorway which connects Abbottabad & Sherwan Road right after the first Tunnel (Shimla Hill Tunnel worth Rs1.82b, D.I Khan Road Development Package Rehabilitation & Upgradation of Kundal Interchange (M-14) to Chashma-DI Khan Road (Revised), worth 2.80 billion, Construction of Railway Underpass Gojra, District Toba Tek Singh worth Rs1.44b, D.I Khan Road Development Package Revised PC-1 for Rehabilitation & Upgradation of Pezu – Tank Road worth Rs 4.87b, Renovation and Construction of offices, Women Barracks & Multi-Purpose Training Rooms at the office of the Superintendent Railway Police, Rawalpindi (Revised) worth Rs 310.375 million, Establishment of Capacity Building & Institutional Strengthen in Planning Commission worth Rs 2.02b, Electrification of villages at Dera Bugti –Package worth Rs 960.093 million, Re-commissioning of 5 no Accidental Diesel Electric Locomotives (Revised) worth Rs 2.48b, Rehabilitations of Firefighting system at KMC worth Rs 1.83b, Provision of Missing Facilities of Swabi University worth 2.03b, Establishment of Photar Campus of Punjab at Gujar Khan worth Rs 638.45million, Construction of Academic Blocks of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University worth Rs 2.89b, Updation of Rural Area Frame for the conduct of Censuses/Surveys worth Rs 361.736million.

Federal budget 2023-24 to be presented on June 9

ISLAMABAD (INP): The economic team briefed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif about preparation of the budget for financial year 2023-24. The briefing session was informed that the Budget 2023-24 would be presented on 9th of next month in the National Assembly after approval by the federal cabinet. The PM was briefed about revised estimates of revenue and expenditures and target estimates for the next year. "The economy has been on a positive trajectory toward financial stability and decrease in deficit," the meeting was informed.