

Hike in power tariff
KARACHI (INP): The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has approved an increase in the price of electricity by Rs1.25 per unit under quarterly tariff adjustment. According to the regulatory body, the new tariff will come into effect immediately. The increase in electricity tariff will be applicable to all the consumer categories except lifeline consumers and KE users.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with families of Shuhada at Azmat-e-Shuhada Convention.

Fawad 'parts ways' with Imran

Asad Umar steps down as PTI's secretary general and core committee member

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In the latest blow to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, its Senior Vice-President Fawad Chaudhry has announced "taking a break from politics" and parting ways with PTI chairman Imran Khan over May 9 mayhem when party workers and supporters attacked public and military installations across the country.

"I am parting ways with (sic) Imran Khan and stepping down from party position," he said in a tweet Wednesday following the mass departure of leaders from the party over the May 9 vandalism. Fawad — a politician hailing from Jhelum — is a vocal critic of the incumbent rulers and a close aide of the PTI chief. He had also served as the information and law minister during his party's government.

The PTI's chief spokesperson referred to his earlier statement wherein he "unequivocally condemned" the May 9 violent protests triggered by the arrest of party chief Khan in the Al-Qadir Trust case. The PTI stalwart's decision came a week after he was released from police custody on the Islamabad High Court (IHC) order and termed the May 9 events "extremely shameful".

"Pakistan exists because the Pakistan Army exists and we must devise our policies keeping this point of view at the front," the seasoned politician said while speaking with journalists outside the IHC post-midnight on May 17. He was among the thousands of party workers and leaders who were arrested during the crackdown on the PTI since May 9 for the party's alleged involvement in the riots that claimed at least 8 lives and injured dozens of others. Since being released from prison, the outspoken leader of the former ruling party kept a low profile and did not make any political statements.

Meanwhile, PTI leader Asad Umar also announced that he was stepping down as the party's secretary general after serving in the position for the last 17 months.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, he said he would also no longer remain a part of the PTI's core committee.

95 pc people involved in May 9 incidents identified

ISLAMABAD (APP): The federal cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday was apprised that about 95 percent people involved in violent incidents on May 9 were identified whereas 60 percent of the miscreants involved in the incidents had been arrested.

The cabinet directed for expediting the identification process and arrest of people involved in May 9 incidents, stressing that no innocent citizen should be arrested in the backdrop of such incidents, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Addressing the participants, the prime minister said that the entire nation was standing with its shuhada and their families. These martyrs had sacrificed their lives and left their orphan children behind to save the future of young generations. The prime minister also stressed that all legal requirements should be fulfilled during proceedings against the elements involved in the criminal incidents. Only those people were arrested who had been involved in the incidents, he added.

A detailed briefing was given over the damages inflicted upon the private

and public properties during the unfortunate incidents of May 9. The meeting was apprised that miscreants of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf had attacked civilians and personnel of law enforcing agencies on May 9 and damaged properties, besides torching vehicles of the armed forces, police, ambulances and other public transport.

Sensitive installations, police stations, Jinnah House Lahore and Radio Pakistan, Peshawar were attacked and burnt to ashes, it was added. It was informed that contrary to the PTI's ongoing propaganda campaign, cases were being registered against the attackers under Pakistan Penal Code and Anti-Terrorism Act for staging attacks on civil and private buildings and properties. Only those people would be tried under the Army Act against whom there were solid evidences that they had been involved in attacks on the sensitive installations.

The right of appeal at the higher judiciary was available against the decisions taken after proceedings under the Army Act, it was further added. The meeting was also briefed over facial

recognition by NADRA. Videos and pictures along with places related to May 9 incidents were also screened during the meeting.

The cabinet reaffirmed strict implementation of decisions taken during a meeting of the National Security Committee on May 16. It also directed for making the unanimously adopted resolution to condemn May 9 black day incidents by the National Assembly as part of the record. The cabinet further directed to effectively counter the PTI's propaganda being churned out in different friendly countries.

The meeting was briefed in details about the Road to Makkah Project and about its implementation under a memorandum signed on May 17. Under the project, the intending Pakistani pilgrims would be able to complete their immigration in Pakistan, thus saving them from the process in Saudi Arabia. Five special counters had been established at the Islamabad airport for the purpose where a total of 2450 pilgrims had been facilitated in the current Hajj season. A total of 26000 pilgrims would be facilitated from this project in the current year, it was added.

PM's son-in-law acquitted

LAHORE (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has acquitted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's son-in-law Haroon Yousaf of money laundering charges. An accountability court disposed of Haroon Yousaf's interim bail as withdrawn.

The court was hearing a money laundering reference against Shehbaz Sharif and others. The court directed to provide a copy of the supplementary report to the suspects. The accountability court judge said that on the next hearing, the court will review the indictment based on the record.

The court then adjourned the hearing on the money laundering reference till May 31. Shehbaz Sharif's representative appeared in court and completed the attendance procedure. Earlier this month, the National Accountability Bureau submitted a supplementary report in the accountability court, declaring PM Shehbaz Sharif and his son, Hamza, "innocent" in the money laundering reference.

Money-laundering case against Sharifs adjourned: An accountability court in Lahore on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of assets beyond means and money laundering reference against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Hamza Shehbaz until May 32. The court also approved Hamza Shehbaz's application seeking exemption from hearing for one day.

The court ordered provision of copies of NAB's supplementary investigation report to all the accused. Earlier, the court disposed of the interim bail petition filed by Haroon Yousaf, son-in-law of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, after the latter said he was withdrawing it. Judge Qamaruz Zaman of the accountability court No 9 heard the case.

Speaking on the occasion, Yousaf, who was hitherto a proclaimed offender in the case along with another suspect Syed Tahir Naqvi, said that since he had been declared innocent in the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) supplementary report, he did not require bail in the case. Co-suspect Naqvi also withdrew the interim bail application.

Besides Yousaf and Naqvi, PM Shehbaz is also a suspect in the money laundering case. The court ordered distribution of supplementary report's copies to 16 suspects in the case. The judge remarked that now the question was whether other suspects in the case could be indicted. He further said that if proofs were found to be inadequate, the suspects could be set free. Hamza Shehbaz, son of the prime minister, on the occasion filed an application for exemption from appearance in the court today. NAB's report has also given a clean chit to Hamza and PM Shehbaz in the reference. Later, the court adjourned hearing of the case until May 31.

The Frontier Post

LHC bars by-polls on 2 seats

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court on Wednesday suspended by-elections in two National Assembly constituencies — NA-108 Faisalabad and NA-118 Nankana Sahib. The LHC judge Justice Shahid Karim issued the verdict on petitions filed by PTI leaders Farrukh Habib and Ijaz Shah. The petitioners argued that by-elections in both constituencies were scheduled to be held on May on May 28.

Nation can't tolerate May 9 like 'barbaric incidents': Shehbaz

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressing his resolve to bring the elements behind May 9 arson and vandalism attacks to justice, reiterated that the entire nation would not let such 'barbaric incidents' happen in future.

The prime minister assured that as chief executive of the country, it was his onus to ensure legal proceedings under the law and constitution, against all those rioters and miscreants who had planned, abetted and executed attacks on different civilian and military installations across the country. The prime minister was addressing "Azmat e Shuhada Convention" held here to pay tribute to the country's martyrs.

The convention was attended by a large number of families of shuhada, governors, members of parliament, ministers, provincial ministers, ambassadors, legislators, civil society members, ulama and senior officials. The prime minister said that incidents of May 9 were intolerable and unpardonable as the monuments and statues of Shuhada of armed forces and law enforcing agencies were vandalized.

"We will not let it happen again and will keep the national flag high. We will not allow anyone to malign our armed forces," he said, adding that they would bring all the perpetrators of May 9 incidents to face the law. As the prime minister, he assured that the law would take its course, stressing that people behind the incidents would not be given any concession and would not be pardoned as 'they had crossed the red line'.

He said, those elements also hurt sentiments of the families of shuhada. A heart wrenching spectacle was never witnessed in the past.

However, the prime minister reiterated that no innocent would be framed in these criminal cases. Referring to the unfortunate incidents on that day, he said if Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Niazi had instigated his followers to create such a mayhem.

He said country's history was replete with different cases of politicians. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Shaeed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif faced arrests and trials upon baseless allegations, but their followers never went violent and damaged the country. "During the previous tenure of PTI, the entire opposition was pushed to the wall, but they faced all the ordeals with fortitude and never thought to mount any attack on any civilian or military installations," he maintained.

Terming May 9 incidents as 'highly lamentable' in the country's history, he said on the other hand, the PTI's chief was arrested in a corruption case, but prior to it, he was inciting his followers to spread violence by attacking different civilian and military installations in case of his arrest. The prime minister said the whole nation wanted an answer from the PTI's leadership as to why Quaid's House, Radio Pakistan and other buildings were ransacked and torched to ashes.

He further said even India could not achieve its nefarious designs after waging 1965 war, but the leadership of PTI and its followers inflicted huge damage to the country, adding "The nation will not forgive it." The prime minister said Quaid's Pakistan existed due to the sacrifices of shuhada, they had left behind their orphan children but saved the coming generations.

Paying tribute to martyrs, he said the martyrs of the nation, even did not care for their lives thus securing

peace for the nation. It was all due to their precious blood they shed for the nation and its future. Business of life went on due to their sacrifices, he added. The prime minister said that these shuhada did not belong to one party or group, they were respected by the nation and it should be borne in mind that by holding of shuhada convention, they reaffirmed their resolve that such esteem and affection for the shuhada would be maintained forever.

The prime minister said if there was any trouble inside the country or at the country's borders including threats of terrorism, the officers and personnel of the armed forces, law enforcing agencies and police force faced them with valour. The prime minister also stressed upon inculcating the young generations with the ideals of the founder of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah including the democratic norms, patience and tolerance.

The prime minister also went to the different members of families of shuhada and interacted with them. Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, in his address, condemned the May 9 attacks on state buildings and military installations in several cities.

Paying tributes to the country's martyrs, he reiterated firm commitment not to tolerate such illegal and unconstitutional acts in future. Samar Bilour, a leader of Awami National Party, Maulana Raghib Naeemi, a renowned religious scholar, Minister for IT Ameen ul Haque, and Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman also spoke on the occasion. They paid tribute to martyrs and their families and denounced the incidents of May 9 which amounted to anti-state activities.

'We are sitting here with a clean heart,' CJP tells AGP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) plea asking the top court to revisit its April 4 order of holding elections to the Punjab Assembly on May 14 till Thursday (May 25).

A three-member SC bench comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar heard the case. During the course of proceedings, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan said the bench during the previous hearing had questioned why points raised by the ECP in its review petition were not raised earlier.

He said the government had also mentioned the majority judgment in its response. The CJP said the court was here to hear all parties. If a reasonable point was raised, the court

would review it and take a decision. He said the court had discussed the jurisdiction of review petition during yesterday's hearing. The bench would not use the past against the government as the judiciary was there after rendering several sacrifices, he added.

The CJP said the reports attributed to the court regarding the provision of Mercedes car on May 11 to the PTI chairman were not always correct. He even himself did not use a Mercedes car. It was the police which had arranged the Mercedes car for Imran Khan, he added. Advocate Sajel Swati, counsel for the ECP, said the apex court had always interpreted the Constitution as a living document.

He said the scope of Supreme Court could not be limited as it was the ultimate institution of justice. No other court had the authority to dispense complete justice and use Article

190, he added. Justice Munib Akhtar said if the ECP's argument regarding the jurisdiction of a review and appeal was accepted, it would nullify the Supreme Court's rules.

He said no amendments had been made to the jurisdiction of review in the SC rules yet. If the jurisdiction was expanded, it would reopen cases dating back to several years, he added. Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan said the scope of the review was clearly mentioned in the Supreme Court's rules. The CJP said the use of Article 184(3) had increased a lot.

He asked the counsel to present his arguments on the actual case. He asked why ECP didn't advise the president to hold one-day polls and pointed out that President Arif Alvi was kept unaware of security and funds for polls. The president was not told about the 1970 elections nor Article 218(3), he added.

Govt considering ban on PTI: Khawaja Asif

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As the country's political crisis deepens, the incumbent government is mulling a possible ban on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Wednesday, in light of the May 9 protests against party chairman Imran Khan's arrest in the £190 million settlement case.

He, however, said that the matter will be referred to the Parliament for approval in the government finally decides to ban the former ruling party. The move comes days amid political instability in the country by Khan's arrest on May 9 on corruption charges, before he walked free on bail as per court orders.

Responding to the leaders' call for countrywide protests, the PTI workers and supporters took to the streets, but the demonstrations turned deadly as they attacked public and private

property including military installations and buildings. They also resorted to arson and burned the Corp Commander House, also known as the Jinnah House, in Lahore. The armed forces have, since then, resolved to try the arsonists and those involved in anti-state activities on the day of the protests under relevant laws, including the Pakistan Army Act and the Official Secrets Act.

"The PTI has attacked the very basis of the state, that never happened before. It can't be tolerated", Asif said while addressing a presser in Islamabad on Wednesday. "Is there a crime that didn't happen on May 9?" he asked.

Asif said that the miscreants involved in the violent episode had nefarious motives. "The PTI has challenged the state's writ. He has nefarious ambitions that could only be of an Indian and not a Pakistani," the minister said. He said whatever Khan did was "celebrated in India".

Referring to the events that unfolded ahead of the vote of no confidence against Imran Khan in April last year, Khawaja Asif said: "All the steps taken by Imran Khan after April 9 have cost him. We did not harm him. He is suffering due to his own actions." "All the evidence is surfacing that the May 9 events took place under a plan, he said, adding that the miscreants had been facilitated.

He said that the planning for terrorist acts had been going on for a year. The suspects who had been arrested in relation with the incidents of violence revealed that the attacks were pre-planned. "Attacking military installations was Imran Khan's last resort. The events of May 9, challenged the writ of the state," Asif said.

The minister went on to say that PTI had challenged the state. The minister then announced that May 9 will be observed to honour the martyrs as the entire world respects their martyrs.

Imran ready to negotiate 'with anyone' in power

E.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said Wednesday he is ready to speak to "anyone who is in power" after his party's top leaders began jumping ship following the May 9 riots.

"I am forming a committee. It will talk to 'anyone who is in power' on two things — if it helps the country according to 'them', I will leave politics. Second, how is it beneficial for the country if elections are held in October," Khan said while addressing his supporters. "Convince us on these two things. If they believe and satisfy the committee that my leaving politics will benefit the country, I will step back and leave politics," he said.

A slew of leaders has been leaving the PTI after party workers ransacked and burnt military installations, including the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, following Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust case earlier this month. The latest setback the party suffered was earlier today when outspoken PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry said he was parting ways with Khan, just a day after Shireen Mazari, who held the same post, quit.

As many as 30 PTI leaders — from all four provinces — have left and more are expected to follow suit, with thousands of workers behind bars for their alleged involvement in the vandalism. Without specifying, the former prime minister said "they" have benefitted from the arson at the Lahore Corps Commander House (Jinnah House) and used it to crack down on his party.

"[Such] a crackdown has never been seen in the history of the country," he said. "They have jailed the entire leadership and even those who are not even a part of the party. There is only one way out, that they utter the magic words of 'I am leaving PTI.'" PTI leaders — Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Maleeka Bokhari, Musarrat Jamshed Cheema, and others — have been rearrested minutes after they were released on bail.



Punjab CM orders early arrest of miscreants involved in May 9 protests

LAHORE (PPI) Punjab caretaker Chief Minister (CM) Mohsin Naqvi Wednesday ordered to ensure immediate arrest of the miscreants involved in the violent protests of May 9.

He issued these orders while chairing a meeting at Circuit House Gujranwala where he was briefed about the law and order situation and the legal proceedings against the miscreants.

"Indiscriminate crackdown should be continued against the miscreants and their facilitators. Every criminal involved in terrorist incidents will be put behind bars. The process of investigation and prosecution should be carried forward in an efficient manner," Mohsin Naqvi said.

"Gujranwala will be linked to Sialkot Motorway through Benazir Road. The meeting also considered plans for a Burn Unit in New Teaching Hospital and a university over 1,000-Kanal land near Morr Aimanabad.

It gave approval to Wazirabad

Bypass and decided to reconstruct GT Road from Chan da Qila to Aziz Cross. "The ongoing work on Gujranwala to Hafizabad and Gujranwala to Sheikhpura road will be completed soon," Mohsin Naqvi said.

"The work on Muridke to Kartarpur and Alipur Chattha to Hafizabad road will be completed," he added and directed to complete the public welfare projects within the stipulated period. Senior police officers of Punjab police and other officers concerned attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, the chief minister approved several decisions in a meeting of the governing body of the Lahore Development Authority (LDA).

The CM reviewed the amendments to Building and Zones Regulations and approved a Rs2 billion investment in the Bank of Punjab through Term Finance Certificates.

He also approved amendments to LDA Regulation 1978 for

Appointment and Employment and directed to pay the money for the land taken by the LDA according to the market rate.

"Compensation is the right of the people from whom the land has been taken," he said and directed immediate payment to the affected party on the court order.

The meeting decided to entrust LDA Auction Committee with the authority to auction the shops of Park and Ride Plaza Liberty. It also approved the revised plan for the construction of a flyover at Akbar Chowk and reexamined the four-lane Ravi Ravi Bridge project.

The meeting also approved hiring a marketing consultant or transaction advisor for the LDA projects, appointing an environmental consultant and heat management officer, and reviewing the allotment of land for setting up petrol pumps at transportation terminal sites. The officers concerned had attended the meeting.

Punjab announces summer vacation

LAHORE (PPI) Punjab Schools Education Department Wednesday announced summer vacation for two and a half months.

According to Schools Education Secretary, the summer vacation will start from June 6 and will end on August 20. The Schools Education Department announced that during this period all government and private educational institutes will remain closed.

Education boards have changed the examination policy under which students have been allowed to sit in exam of an additional subject. The new policy will take effect from the annual exams of 2024.

The policy will enable millions of students to sit in exam of an additional subject. Under the new arrangement, science students will be able to opt for an additional art subject and vice versa.

The Punjab Board Committee (PBC) has approved the new policy. According to the PBC, students are not barred anywhere in the world from opting for an additional subject. It has hoped that the new policy will be of benefit for students.

Governor Sindh for stringent security around Maweshi Mandi Krachi

KARACHI (APP): Governor of Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has directed Additional Inspector General of Police (IGP) Javed Alam Odho to beef up security in and around the cattle market so as to ensure the safety of sellers and buyers of sacrificial animals.

Police patrolling should also be enhanced on the routes of the cattle market, he said this while talking with AIGP Karachi, at the Governor House here on Wednesday.

Governor Sindh further directed for improving the monitoring system through surveillance cameras and taking further steps to curb the menace of street crimes. Community policing was of immense importance in controlling street crimes and as such it should be spread in all areas of Karachi, he maintained.

Governor Sindh said that due to the actions of some

black sheep in police, the entire image of this important institution is being maligned.

"Culprits should be afraid of the police, not the common man," he observed. Governor Sindh said, "Steps are needed to improve the image of the police force so as to convince people to extend their full cooperation towards police personnel."

9/5 attacks were orchestrated: Tessori LAHORE (NNI): Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori said on Wednesday that the May 9 vandalism was planned.

Speaking to media, Mr Tessori berated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, saying, "Imran Khan and his party have betrayed the people."

Heaping praise on the army, Mr Tessori said, "The army has foiled the conspiracy attempts." "It is impor-

tant to highlight the truth behind the May 9 mayhem. The nation will never forget the attack on Jinnah House," maintained Mr Tessori.

Recalling the demand to bring the miscreants to justice, Mr Tessori said, "Today we are facing a situation of peace due to the sacrifices of the martyrs. The rioters have been trained to serve a foreign agenda."

On Tuesday, Mr Tessori urged the religious scholars to share the true message of Islam. A delegation of religious scholars met Mr Tessori, during which the May 9 attacks were discussed. Acknowledging the role of religious scholars, Mr Tessori said, "Religious scholars have always contributed to solving the problems of the country". Condemning extremism, religious scholars said, "The rioters must be brought to justice."



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan chairing a meeting of Apex Committee. Corps Commander 11 Corps Lt. Gen. Hassan Azhar Hayat also present.

Kundi lauds Bilawal's stance on Kashmir amid G20 conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi has lauded Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for reiterating Pakistan's unstinted support to the Kashmir Cause

amid G20 conference held in Srinagar the other day.

Addressing a press conference here, he said Bilawal Bhutto had participated in the rallies held in Muzafarabad to draw world attention that steps like the Srinagar G-20 meeting can neither vali-

date the Indian occupation nor dampen the spirit of Kashmiri people.

He said that India had staged a drama by organizing the G-20 Conference in the disputed area of Kashmir which was a sheer violation of the United Nations Security Council's resolutions.

He stressed that India should let the Kashmiris decide their fate as per the UN resolution. "The world should also play their due role in resolving the long-standing issue of Kashmir".

Faisal condemned the May 09 mayhem saying that such shameful acts defame the nation before the world. He demanded Imran Khan seek forgiveness from the nation over

the May 9 incidents.

He said that Imran Khan also misled the nation about American Cipher, adding that dialogue was the only option to end political crises.

Kundi was accompanied by Minister of State for Water Resources and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial President Muhammad Ali Badshah, and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Usman Tarkai who joined the PPP.

Tarkai thanked the PPP leadership for inviting him to join the Party. He said his entire family had a strong bond and affiliation with the PPP. He added that his brother was a close friend of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto.

Healthy discussions vital for solving societal problems: KU VC

KARACHI (APP): The University of Karachi's Department of Islamic History, and Karachi University of Center of Excellence for Women Studies in collaboration with the Islamic Academic Forum (Sindh) organized a day-long national seminar on "Transgender Act 2018 and Sida Domestic Violence Bill 2020: research overview and recommendations" at the CEWS Auditorium.

KU Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi said that society should arrange seminars on such topics from different aspects so that people could learn more about the real issues, said a spokesperson of the KU on Wednesday.

He termed that healthy discussions with positive mindsets are essential for solving the problems faced by the people living in any society. He urged that people should have the ability and capacity to listen to others' points of view and also respect their vision regardless they agree with their logic or not. Meanwhile, a member of the Islamic Ideological Council of Pakistan Dr Umair

Mahmood Siddiqui while discussing the decision of the Federal Sharia Court highlighted various aspects of the Transgender Act and especially a provision in the bill according to which a transgender person will have the right to be identified as male or female, whereas in Islam, gender is determined only on the basis of biological composition.

He shared that Islamic orders and rituals depend on gender and not on inner feelings. Another speaker, Shoaib Madani from Shaoor Foundation and other experts on Islamic and social sciences spoke about the topic and informed the participants about the implications of the Transgender Act. They shared that violence against women is clearly against the teachings of Islam and there is no justification for beating females of any age. They observed that the Domestic Violence Protection Bill has the greatest impact on the family system. The bill proposes stringent penal measures against all forms of domestic violence, while the wording 'definition of violence' is also worth considering.

LHC stops by-polls in NA-108, NA-118

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday stopped by-polls in two constituencies of the National Assembly, NA-108 Faisalabad and NA-118 Nankana Sahib.

Justice Shahid Karim passed the orders on petitions filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders, Farrukh Habib and Ijaz Shah. The court also sought reply from the Election Commission of Pakistan and other respondents.

The court had reserved its verdict on the plea to stop the elections after hearing arguments of the parties, a day earlier and it was announced on Wednesday.

The petitioners' counsel had submitted that the by-polls were scheduled to be held in NA-108 and NA-118 on May 28. He submitted that the by-polls could not be held as there were less than 120 days in the completion of tenure of the National Assembly.

He pleaded with the court to cancel the schedule of the elections and stop the by-polls till the final decision of the petition. However, ECP's counsel opposed the plea and submitted that all preparations were complete for the by-polls.

PTI govt acquired Rs24tr loan in four year tenure: Aisha Ghaus Pasha

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Aisha Ghaus Pasha said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government acquired Rs 24.2 trillion loan in their four year tenure.

As per details, the state minister presented the details of loans taken by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government in their four year tenure, to National Assembly.

She said that the loan amount was not spent on development projects as they did not start a big project in their tenure and the current government had to pay a hefty amount in interest on that loan.

The report revealed that PTI government took Rs 14.6 trillion loan from national institutions while more than Rs 9 trillion from international organizations.

Earlier sources revealed that Pakistan is now looking towards friendly countries for more funding following the delay in the revival of \$6.5 billion International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme.

The staff-level agreement between International Monetary Fund and Pakistan is being delayed from February 9.

The current loan pro-

gramme with the IMF will end on June 30, 2023, and Pakistan is now 'considering' a new IMF programme on renewed conditions.

The fund is delaying the ninth review with Islamabad which has 'forced' Pakistan to get rid of the current loan programme and generate more funds from friendly countries, sources said.

It is worth mentioning that the IMF has asked Pakistan to arrange \$6 billion in external financing till June 2023 to avoid default. Due to a delay in arranging these funds, the 9th programme review worth \$1.2 billion remains incomplete.

PIA planes suffered 29 bird strikes in 5 months

KARACHI (NNI): Overall 29 Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) planes suffered bird strikes in the past five months at different airports across the country while seven aircraft were affected by bird hits.

Sources said that 29

bird strike incidents were reported from January to May 2023 including 10 bird-hit incidents this month. The bird-hit incidents took place at the country's airports in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad, Sukkur, Quetta,

Peshawar, Gilgit and Multan. Mostly bird strike incidents were reported at Karachi and Lahore airports. Seven PIA planes suffered partial and heavy damages while 22 aircraft remained undamaged after being struck by birds.

**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

1. 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 (Multiritor)	500
g.	Generators Stationary and Mobile (76 - 100 KVA)	500
	Generators Stationary and Mobile (41 - 50 KVA)	
h.	Collapsible Ladder	500
i.	Taser (Advanced Pistol)	500
j.	Ballistic Shield III A-NIJ (upper body protection)	500
k.	Road Spike Belt	500
l.	Truck Water Canon, Soft Skin over 5000 Liters & upto 10000 Liters	500
m.	Bus (29 passengers capacity)	500

2. 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).

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. For further details please contact on telephone # 99205285-7 (Extension # 3095). PID(K) 3343/22

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

**F.No.1-36/2022/A-I
Government Pakistan
Ministry of Human Rights
Directorate General of Special Education**

SITUATIONS VACANT

The Directorate General of Special Education, Ministry of Human Rights invites applications from Pakistani Nationals to fill the following posts on temporary basis. The test and interview of the post wise to be processed as per Government Policy.

S. No.	Name of post	Age Limit	No. of Vacant Posts	Qualification & Experience	fall under quota
1.	Junior Teacher (BS-14)	18-25	03	i. FA/FSC with CT ii. 03 years' experience in teaching	Islamabad(merit)=02 Punjab(merit)=01
2.	Prosthetics/ Orthotics Technician (BS-11)	18-25	03	i. Matric ii. 03 years' experience in prosthetic in a well-organized institution	Islamabad(merit)=02 Punjab(merit)=01
3.	Driver (BS-04)	18-30	02	i. Primary pass ii. Valid (HTV) Driving license holder and well versed in the Traffic Rules.	Islamabad(merit)=02
4.	Attendant/Aya (BS-02)	18-25	06	Middle Pass	Open merit=01 Islamabad(merit)=02 Islamabad(women)=01 Punjab(merit)=01 KPK(merit)=01

Terms & Conditions

- The selection shall be made purely on merit basis observing regional/provincial quota with 10%, 5% & 2% quota for women, minorities & disabled candidates respectively as per Govt. Policy
- Interested candidates can apply online through National Job Portal at website www.njp.gov.pk within 15 days from the date of publication of advertisement. Applications by post/by hand will not be entertained.
- Advertisement can be downloaded from websites www.dgse.gov.pk or www.mohr.gov.pk.
- Only short listed candidates will be called for written test/ interview. The eligible candidates will be informed for test / interview through post or on the given Email.
- Candidates already in Government Service should apply through proper channel, along with NOC from their organizations clearly stating the length of service and other particulars.
- Candidates will have to produce original documents at the time of interview. Candidates already in Government Service, will also have to produce original NOC from their departments/organizations.
- The general age relaxation of 5 years and others in upper age limit would be granted as admissible under the rules.
- No TA/DA shall be admissible for appearing in test/interview.
- If a candidate is interested to apply for more than one post, he should apply separately.
- The competent authority reserves the right to cancel the process of recruitment at any stage without citing any reasons.

Director (Admin)
Directorate General of Special Education
Hanna Road, G-8/4, Islamabad, Ph.051-9107537

PID(I) 7207/22



Governor visits Jail, checks barracks and food items

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has visited the Central Jail Peshawar and inspected various barracks.

According to an official handout issued on Wednesday, he also met the prisoners and checked the food items being provided to them.

Caretaker provincial ministers Justice (Retd) Irshad Qaiser, Abdul Halim Kasuria, Advisor to the caretaker Chief Minister on Prisons Haji Hidayatullah Khan and former provincial minister Ziaullah Khan Afridi also accompanied him on his visit.

On their arrival at the Central Jail Peshawar, the governor and provincial ministers were received by Inspector General Jail Usman Masood, Superintendent Jail Maqsood ur

Rehman and presented a bouquet to him.

On this occasion, the Superintendent of the Jail gave a detailed briefing to the governor and the ministers about the number of prisoners in the jail and the nature of the crime, the available resources, the security system and the number and services of the jail staff.

They were also briefed on details regarding the Skill Development Center in the jail for the prisoners, rehabilitation center for the drug-addicted prisoners, treatment facilities, and a dental chair for female prisoners.

The jail administration also presented demands to the governor regarding the shortage of medical supplies in the jail, the installation of jammers, the installation of a water filtration

plant, the establishment of a conference room and computer laboratory, and construction of road.

Addressing the event, the governor said that the provision of basic amenities to prisoners was their responsibility, saying after assuming the office of the constitutional head of the province, he had paid several visits to Central Jail Peshawar and resolved various hardships and problems including the construction of Masjid.

For the provision of clean drinking water, he announced the installation of a solar tube well, besides announcing the provision of 3,000 plants to protect the prisoners from the hot weather.

The governor also directed the jail administration to establish a green garden on the vacant land.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Caretaker Chief Minister Malik Meher Elahi presenting a shield to Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Turi.

Health Dept to take action against absentees, leaving duty without approval

PESHAWAR (APP): The Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has decided to declare the employees who leave the duty station without approval or resignation as absconders.

In this connection, Director General Health Services Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has sent a letter to all DHOs and MS of Hospitals besides directing them to submit complete details of employees leaving duty stations without approval of resignations from DHOs and hospitals.

The Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a letter directed MS of all DHOs and Hospitals to provide details within one month and employees leave duty station before resignation or sanction of long leave would be declared as absconders.

It is against the law to leave the duty station before approval of long leave and resignation, the letter said, adding, "grant or cancellation of resignation or leave is the discretion of the Competent Authority.

As per the rules and regulations, the petitioner will perform the duties until the acceptance of resignation or long leave and those who leave their jobs without accepting their resignations will be treated as fugitives.

The Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would also take disciplinary action against such employees while MS of DHOs and Hospitals will be responsible for not providing details in case of failure of providing complete detail.

Jamaat-e-Islami Election Convention begins

PESHAWAR (APP): Nominated members of the National and Provincial Assembly from across the province are going to participate in the Election Convention 2023 continued in Nishtar Hall here with Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Siraj-ul-Haq will address.

Jamaat-e-Islami top leadership including Liaquat Baloch, Professor Ibrahim Khan and other leaders are present in the JI Election Convention.

There will be 12.6 million voters in the upcoming national elections, local leaders said in their address during the convention.

The speakers said that in the upcoming elections, 48 percent of young voters will vote while efforts should be made to bring the youth closer in the upcoming elections. It was also decided that in the next four months, communication would be speeded up with the people.

Jamaat-e-Islami former Provincial Minister said that after the 18th constitutional amendment, the provinces got many powers and we did succeed in launching the roadmap when we were in the first coalition government.

He said there is not a single case of corruption against Jamaat-e-Islami members

Pakistan has an Islamic state and an Islamic constitution and if we come to power through people's votes all the posting and transfers would be made online in order to ensure transparency.

He said the Public Accounts Committee will be strengthened, followed by the establishment of the National Accountability Bureau.

He said efforts would be taken to bring the province toward financial independence while literacy rate will be taken to 80 percent and more than 1 million female students will be given higher education.



PESHAWAR: President Transgender Association Farzana addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

PHC suspends imprisonment of alleged robbers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has suspended conviction of seven culprits involved in looting of tourist at Bahrain and Ghalegay areas of Swat, on Wednesday.

The accused were convicted for 245 years of imprisonment collectively as lifetime imprisonment along with penal-servitude including Ali Rehman and six others.

The counsel Abdul Fayyaz and Muhammad Hamza Advocates appeared before court in the appeals by the accused while argued that prosecution claims contradicting with evidences and witnesses.

The divisional bench comprising of Justice Naeem Anwar and Justice Muhammad Shahid Khan suspended the conviction after conclusion of arguments.

Police held wanted drug smugglers

PESHAWAR (APP): The Sarband Police in a successful operation have arrested two inter-provincial drug smugglers here on Wednesday.

According to Police control Peshawar, the Sarband Police in a successful operation have arrested Naveed and Muhammad Hussain, the alleged drug smugglers. Among the arrested alleged drug smugglers one of the arrested accused belongs to Punjab while the other belongs to Khyber district, Police said.

The accused were trying to smuggle drugs to other cities of the country by rickshaw from Khyber district and used to change vehicles for every attempt, Police informed the media men. During the important operation, the alleged drug smugglers were arrested during the blockade of the old Bara check post, police said.

A total of more than 7 kg of high quality hashish has been recovered from the secret compartments of the rickshaw, police official said, adding, "investigation started after registering a case against the arrested accused."

Dr. Sajid successfully defense his PhD thesis

PESHAWAR (APP): Dr. Sajid Khan, a PhD scholar from the Department of Agriculture, University of Agriculture, Peshawar, completed his Ph.D in Agronomy under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr. Ahmed Khan.

His research paper title was "Wheat Productivity and Soil Fertility in Response to Stimulated Manure Decomposition."

His thesis was confirmed by the famous scientists of Turkey and Australia. In the defense seminar, Dr. Sajid Khan successfully defended his research paper by answering the questions raised by the participants and later qualified him for the Ph.D degree.

Among the results of their research is the addition of farmyard manure to soil microbial respiration, the availability of net mineral nitrogen and the reduction of gaseous nitrogen losses.

Organic manure should be applied 28 days before sowing to improve soil fertility and wheat productivity.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali talking with prisoners during his visit to Central Jail Peshawar.

PHC orders to resume works on Utla Dam

Humayun Khan

Swabi.

The Writ Petition filed by some inhabitants of area for closure and cancellation of the project has been dismissed.

Briefly the facts of the case are that it was necessitated and deemed appropriate to make suitable arrangement for the provision of clean drinking water inter-alia for Utla and surrounding union councils.

The work was initiated at site and land measuring 1181 kanal was acquired on 4-12-2019. However some of the political motivated persons challenged the initiation of entire project on flimsy ground and got stay order suspending the entire process and work for many months.

However when the matter came up before the division bench of Peshawar High court, Mr. Abdul Rauf Rohaila, representing con-

Review meeting held to assess development matters

PESHAWAR (APP): The Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Janat Gul Afridi, presided over a progress review meeting on Wednesday to assess the advancements made in five social sector schemes in Malakand Division.

These schemes include the Reconstruction of ARI

Mingora, Swat, Rehabilitation of veterinary Research and Disease Investigation Center Balogram Swat, Upgradation of BHU Hayaserai to Category-D Hospital, Dir Lower, Malakand Division, Construction of Thalassemia Department in District Headquarters Batkhela, Malakand and Construction of Special Children School with special Children Teacher Training School, Swat. These projects have been generously funded by the Saudi Funds for Development.

The meeting provided an opportunity to evaluate the progress and identify any necessary adjustments required for the successful execution of the schemes.

DG PDMA emphasized the importance of these



PESHAWAR: Students painting on wall of GPO during city beautification campaign organized by DC Peshawar. — F.P. photo

PDMA releases Rs350m for financial assistance

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released around Rs350 million funds for financial assistance to over 17000 registered victim families of Operation Zarb-e-Azab in North Waziristan, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

The funds will be released during the next two days (Thursday to Friday).

The financial assistance will be transferred to registered victim families through their mobile phone SIMs.

According to the Director General PDMA Jannat Gul Afridi, said would be distributed through a message on mobile phone at the rate of Rs20,000/- per family of each registered affected family of North Waziristan. The amount includes Rs12000 as cash financial assistance and Rs8000/- as ration allowance.

He said that the recently released funds are the 105th installment of the series which has been given to the displaced people of North Waziristan regularly every month since the beginning

tractor urged that the writ petitioners gave no cause of action and locus standi to question the entire process as the project was for the betterment and benefit of public at large.

The learned division concurred with the view point and held that it is the prerogative of the provincial government to initiate and acquire land and blanket coverage to illegal actions cannot be granted.

projects and stressed the need to expedite progress to ensure the highest quality of work.

Additionally, a productive meeting was held with a delegation from the IRC to foster collaboration and discuss ongoing activities in the province.

During the meeting, representatives from both organizations engaged in fruitful discussions, focusing on strategies to strengthen coordination and ensure the successful implementation of various initiatives, including the Disaster Management Information System. The gathering served as a platform to explore opportunities for enhanced cooperation between the organizations.

Ex-PTI MPA among 25 sent on judicial remand

PESHAWAR (APP): An anti-terrorism court here on Wednesday sent the former lawmaker of PTI Arbab Jahandad and 25 other party workers on judicial remand in the May 9 case of vandalism, arson and violent protest.

The ex-MPA was allegedly involved in blocking the M-1 Peshawar-Islamabad motorway and instigating protesters for damaging public and private properties in the city.

He was arrested from Murree by Punjab Police and handed over to Peshawar police where a case was registered against him in Chamkani Police Station.

The police presented a total of 27 accused in the May 9 case before the ATC judge, who after hearing the arguments sent 25 accused, including Arbab Jahandad, on judicial remand while two accused were referred to police on physical remand.

Suspension of power supply announced

PESHAWAR (APP): Due to maintenance work, Power Supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Rehman Baba Grid Station on May 25 and May 29th from 8:00 am to 2:00pm, resultantly consumers of 11KV Kachori, Shalozai, Safdar Abad, Khanmuri, New Hazar Khwani, Surizai, Phandu Baba, Umar 2, Hazar Khwani, Yakatoot, New Chairman Daftar, Jameel Colony, Ring Road, Beri Bagh, Rashid Ghari, Surizai, Akhon Abad, Ring Road 2, SIDB feeders will face inconvenience.

According to PESCO spokesman, Power Supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Kohat Road Grid Station on May 25 and May 29 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, resultantly consumers of 11 KV PAF Express, Kohat Road, Wazir Bagh, Somehri Masjid, Bana Mari, Civil Quarter, Nothia, Murshad Abad, Abasin, Old Deh Bahadar, Deh Bhadar, Wazir Abad, Ameen Jan Colony Bara, Nodhya Payan, Murshid Ababad, Dora Road, Nodiya Bahadar, Lundi Arbab 1, 2, 3, Sheikh Muhammadi, Pishtakhar, Swati Gate, Gulbarg, Scheme Chowk feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, the Power Supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Peshawar City Grid Station on May 25 and May 29 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Sikhandar Abad, Zaryab, Phandu Road, City Home, Bana Mari, Umar, Islamabad, Faqir Abad, Sheikh Abad, Molvi G, Nishtarabad, NHA feeders will face inconvenience.

Similarly, Power Supply will remain suspended from 220 KV Mardan Grid Station on May 27 and May 31st from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Muhabat Abad, Sheikh Maltoon, Express, Industrial, SIDP, Jan Abad, Pakistan Chowk, Canal Road, Bacha Khan MED College, Benazir Children Hospital, Bank Road, Nissata Road, Sheikh Maltoon, Ahmad Abad, Misri Khan, Rural 1, PRC, Bagh Iram, New Turo, Nawa Kale, Eid Ghah, Gujar Garhi feeders will face inconvenience.

Power Supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Mardan Grid Station on May 27 and May 31st from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, resultantly consumers of 11 KV SIDB, Bashakhan, Pakistan Chowk, Canal Road, Charsadda Road, New Manga, Saleem Khan, Gujar Garhi, Town, Muslim Abad, New Saleem Khan feeders will face inconvenience and Power Supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Abbottabad Grid Station on May 25 and May 30 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, resultantly consumers of 11 KV Jhangli, Banda Pir Khan, APS, Jinnah Abad, Mandyan, SE, Comsats University, INOR, AMC, PMA 2 feeders will face inconvenience.



In brief

Woman kills stepson

LODHRA (INP): The police have arrested a woman who allegedly killed her 10-year-old stepson in a Lodhran. Police confirmed on Wednesday. According to Deputy Superintendent o Police (DSP) Lodhran, the accused woman poisoned his stepson by giving him poisonous chips and when the innocent failed to go completely unconscious, She gave him electric shocks to death. DSP said that when the child did not die with electric shock, the accused strangled him. After the death of the child, his stepmother tried to cover up the incident and took his dead body to hospital for treatment, but the autopsy of the dead body exposed the cause of death. DSP said when the police detained the accused and interrogated her, she confessed everything. "The accused wanted her son to inherit the entire property of the father. A case has been registered against three persons including the father and step-mother of the deceased child.

Class XI papers leaked

LARKANA, BENAZIRABAD (INP): The Class XI physics and chemistry papers were leaked Wednesday in Larkana and Benazirabad, respectively, before the start of the exam. The question paper was widely shared in WhatsApp groups before the exam even started. Besides the paper leakage, the cheating mafia helped the students solve the question paper within minutes through WhatsApp groups. The students were to solve the question paper in two hours and 40 minutes. Similarly, tall claims of the education board about the best arrangements to prevent cheating during exams were dashed to pieces as the Class XI chemistry paper was leaked in Benazirabad district. The question paper was widely shared in WhatsApp groups before the start of the exam, and the students at the examination centres were seen solving the question paper through cell phones. Besides, the students taking the exam suffered a great deal of inconvenience and some of them fainted due to the absence of drinking water at the examination centres amid power loadshedding in the hot weather.

14-year-old boy burned to death

GUJRANWALA (INP): Police has confirmed on Wednesday that a charred body of a 14-year-old boy was found at an abandoned ghee mill in Gujranwala. According to police, after receiving information that a dead body was lying in the premises of forsaken gee mill, a police team aided by the forensic teams reached the crime scene and taken the dead body of the boy in custody. Police and forensic experts collected possible existing evidence. Police found the victim's hands and legs tied and body parts burned. Police shifted the accused dead body to hospital for autopsy. Police suspected aspect of rape before murder. The body of the victim is yet to be identified.

Man kills wife for honour

KHANEWAL (INP): A man killed his wife in the name of 'honor' in Pakpattan in Jahanian city of Khanewal and police after registering the case has started the search of murderer. Police confirmed on Wednesday. The suspect attacked his 28-year-old wife at Chak-104/10-R and subjected to her severe torture and later strangled her to death.



KOHOT: Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, Vice Chancellor Kohat University of Science and Technology chairing Finance and Planning meeting to recommend budget for the Financial Year 2023-24.

Mehsud Press Club Ladha inaugurated

F.P. Report

LADHA: Inauguration of Mehsud Press Club Ladha was held with cooperation of Security Forces. The ceremony was attended by local Malik, Mashraan, Press Club Members and Assistant Commissioner Ladha Mr Anees ur Rehman.

The President Mehsud Press club Mr Ishtiaq Mehsud and Chairman Haji Khalil appreciated the



efforts of Security Forces for cooperation in construction of Press Club which

will help to highlight issues of locals to the concerned authorities.

KKKUK convenes 14th F&P Committee meeting

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak (KKKUK) has held its 14th Finance and Planning Committee Meeting at Peshawar, under the chairmanship of Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Sardar Khan.

The meeting was also attended by other members including the nominee of HEC Chairman Islamabad, Director QEC KKKUK Muhammad Shah Din, Treasurer Hafiz Ismail Khan, Registrar Muhammad Khattak, HoD CMS Dr. Muhammad Anwar, Deputy Registrar Meetings KKKUK Abdus Salam, Deputy Director Audit KKKUK Mr. Farid Jalal, Consultant Finance University of Haripur as

well as nominees from the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Department Peshawar and HED Peshawar.

The primary agenda of the meeting was to deliberate upon the financial matters of Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak and recommend the revised Budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023, along with the Budget estimates for 2023-2024, to the Syndicate. This collaborative effort aimed to ensure effective financial planning and allocation of resources for the university's continued growth and development.

The participants critically analyzed the budget proposals, taking into account the university's academic and administrative requirements, as well as the pre-

vailing economic conditions, after careful examination the financial aspects, the committee aimed to optimize resource allocation while prioritizing the university's objectives.

Prof Dr. Sardar Khan, the Vice Chancellor of Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak, expressed his satisfaction with the active participation and valuable contributions from all the members of the F&P Committee. He emphasized the importance of prudent financial management and transparent decision-making processes in achieving the university's long-term goals. The recommendations arising from the Finance and Planning Committee Meeting will now be forwarded to the Syndicate of the university.

PTI Buner leadership obtains relief till 6th June

F.P. Report

BUNER: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership got relief in Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) from High Court Mingora Bench till 6th June, on Wednesday.

Those got the relief in term of protection bail date extended included PTI district president Riaz Khan, Syed Dakhar Jihan, Bakhrad Khan, Subhan Khan, Sher Alam Khan, Haji Rozi Khan, Syed Salar Jighan, Haji Sharif Khan, Aurangzeb Khan, Samiullah, Ashraf Khan, Fazal Ahad, Sabir Bacha, Haron Zada and others.

On the occasion the PTI Buner legal team and other key activists were there to extend all sorts of help and to encourage the leadership and to firm commitment they would stay with I.K till last breath and to fight for due constitutional rights from courts and to remain peaceful.

Six killed in different mishaps

F.P. Report

LARKANA: In Last two days 6 people were killed in various accidents and incidents in Larkana and its surroundings yesterday, while more than 60 people were injured and were shifted to hospital for treatment.

The one-year-old boy Hasnain Muhammad Ali Abaro was killed while the young motorcyclist Yasir Ali hulio Tamoor of village Rasool Bakhsh Halio near Khair Muhammad Arjia died on the spot after hitting a tractor due to high speed. Chandka College, Larkana died on the spot. I was a medical student while the resident of village Ghulam Muhammad Bilidi near Garilo, a frail elderly person, Muhammad Acher Bilidi, died after being hit by a high-speed motorcycle. Shaman Rustam Ali died on the spot while six people including Noor Khan Al-Baili Horan were injured who were shifted to the hospital for further treatment as many were seriously injured.

Anti- polio campaign from 29th

F.P. Report

WANA: District Health Officer Lower South Waziristan arranged a program regarding the sensitivity of journalists on behalf of COMNET. Journalists belonging to District Press Club Wana participated, on Wednesday.

Provincial Training Officer Dr. Waleed Hassan, EPI Coordinator South Waziristan Lower Dr. Hidayat Ullah, DHCSO Upper South Waziristan Riaz Mehud and DHCS Amir Abbas Wazir of Lower South Waziristan was present.

In order to make the upcoming polio campaign in various tehsil of Lower South Waziristan a success, WHO polio trainer Dr. Waleed Hassan and in-charge Muhammad Amir Wazir said during the media briefing that WHO had sent 10 environmental samples of polio from Lower and Upper South Waziristan this year. In which one sample has come positive, that is, the sample taken from Wana Wacha Khowara Kandhari? neighborhood was found to be polio virus. After which, in the upcoming polio campaign, children from 4 months to 5 years of age will be given polio drops as well as injections, for which an 8-day polio campaign will be started from May 29 to June 5.

Students protest against murder of teachers

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: In Kurram Parachinar, college students staged a protest against the killing of teachers and blocked the main road by burning tires.

The students of Government Post Graduate College Parachinar College took out a procession protesting against the killing of four teachers and three laborers in Teri Mangal High School Kurram and blocked the traffic by burning tires on the main road of Parachinar Peshawar in front of the college.

After covering the distance, they reached the city of Parachinar, where the students protested outside the press club. In their address, the tribal leader Haji Ali Jawad and the student leaders said that after the killing of a person by unknown persons on May 4. Armed men entered Teri Mangal School and killed four teachers and three workers in the presence of teachers and staff, which is a very sad act. The speakers

demanding the immediate arrest of the killers and bringing them to justice.

Meanwhile, Local government representatives of Kurram district have expressed their regret for the killer of eight people including teachers and said that they have strongly condemned the killing of innocent teachers as a land dispute.

Addressing a joint press conference in Parachinar, the chairmen of various councils, general councilors, farmer councilors and leaders of youth councils Syed Akhlaq Hussain, Jameel Hussain, Arif Hussain, Sabir Bangash, Malik Zartaj Hussain, Sajid Hussain, Syed Shah Mohsin and Syed Sadaqat. Gul said that May 4 was the darkest day in the history of Kurram district, in which after the murder of a person named Muhammad Sharif by unknown persons, armed men entered Teri Mangal High School and opened fire and wielded axes in the presence of teachers and staff. Four teachers and three laborers

were brutally killed by a sword, which is a very sad incident, but another injustice was done to the slain teachers, that is, the responsible authorities declared this great tragedy of murder as a land dispute.

Which is condemnable. The leaders said that if the relevant institutions cannot arrest the killers, false statements should not be acted upon. The leaders also condemned the role of the people who issued statements in support of the killers. Fathers and the killing of their teachers in the presence of students and staff members is very sad, so the real culprits should be arrested immediately and an investigation should be done without delay to make this tragic incident of killing of innocent teachers a land dispute and The elements involved in the incident should be exposed. The leaders announced that the administration should inform the relevant authorities about the facts and the local government representatives will continue to protest until a correct report is issued regarding the incident.

Residents condemn arrest of a prayers' leader

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The arrest of a prayers' leader in the Bar Maidan area of Lower Dir on the charge of killing a stray dog sparked widespread condemnations in various circles here on Wednesday. The cleric, according to official sources, was released on bail from a local court here the other day. Through different social media platforms the citizens demanded the government and high ups of the police department to immediately release the mosque's imam as according to them he had saved many people from being bitten by the stray dog.

The Zaimdara Maidan police in Lower Dir arrested a prayer leader identified as Qari Abdullah s/o Sarbiland Khan, a resident of Satara Maidan and sent him to police lock up here the other day. The police also registered a case under sections PPC 429-SPCAA against the accused for killing a stray dog on May 16 that had bitten him on the face and other children in the area.

A western non-governmental organization working for the security of pets took notice of the incident and stressed the Pakistani authorities to arrest the accused after a short video showing the killing of the dog went viral on social media. In a tweet the NGO alleged the accused had first slaughtered the innocent dog and then brutally killed it with hard sticks in Lower Dir Bar Maidan just because they did not like the dog's existence. In the dog killing video released by the Mullah himself he is

shown holding the dog tightly from its head while other people hitting it with sticks while the Mullah's face and nose are bleeding.

Later in a video message the accused clarified the dog had bitten him and people were behind it to kill it as it was a mad dog. He said that he had held the dog dangerously, putting his life at risk and saved many others from being affected. The Lower Dir residents condemned the arrest of the Mullah and said the west cared for pets but not for human beings. They said that several people in Maidan, Lajbok and Khall had been affected by stray dogs while the majority of the government hospitals were short of anti-rabies vaccine and the affected people including children and women had to purchase it privately.

BISE dismisses exam staff for malpractices in hall

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Chairman Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) dismissed the staff of the examination center for using mobile phones in the examination hall, banning them from performing future duties.

The CCTV camera was recorded in the action board. Farid Ahmad Khan suspended examination center superintendent Wajid Ali subject specialist, deputy superintendent Abdul Ghaffar, duty attendants Azeem Shah and Aziz Gul for using mobile phones despite the ban on the examination staff in the hall of the examination center number 389 in Lighthouse School System Kalo khan Swabi.

According to the SOPs issued by the Mardan Board, the use of mobile phones by staff in the hall has been prohibited, while the staff members were using mobile phones in the ICT control CCTV cameras of the board monitoring room, on which the chairman board immediately while taking action the entire staff of the examination

hall was relieved from duty.

Trader held rally in honor of martyrs: Markazi Tanzeem-e-Tajirran (Zahir Shah Group) Organized, a rally was held to honor honorable martyrs. It was led by Provincial General Secretary of Markazi Tanzeem-e-Tajirran and President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce, (MCCI) Zahir Shah along with Chairman Ghulam Sarwar Saraf, Waqar Bacha and hundreds of other business community, civil society also participated in large numbers.

Hundreds of traders marched from PRC Chowk to the gate of Punjab Regiment Centre. The National Anthem was played and flowers were showered on the Pak army shouting slogans of Pakistan and Pakistan Army Zindabad. The participants carried placards and national flags in their hands. On which the slogans "Pak Army Zindabad" and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Zindabad" were written. The participants shouted slogans of Pakistan Army Zindabad and reached the

Punjab Regiment Center Ayub Gate where miscreants had burnt and vandalized the statue of Kargil hero karnal Sher Khan Shaheed on May 9. Addressing the participants on this occasion, Zahir Shah said that the Pakistan Army is the pride of Pakistan and it is not acceptable to slander it, we stand by the side of the Pakistan Army and emphasized the atrocities that happened on May 9. Condemn.

The role of Pakistan Army in the security of the country is not hidden from anyone. Pakistan Army is the pride, glory and life of Pakistan, we all are proud of our forces, we sleep peacefully in our homes because Pakistan Army secures the borders. During this time, the soldiers of the Pakistan Army mixed in the rally and the traders threw flowers on the soldiers. The Pakistan Army is the guardian of our borders. The sacrifices of our forces in the war against terrorism are immeasurable. Zahir Shah further said that evildoers are not worthy of any kind of concession, they should be targeted as a lesson 'We Proud of the Pak Army'.

Workshop on IDPs settlement held

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Mayor Mardan Himayat ullah Mayor said that during operations in various regions of the province, approximately 1.5 million IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) were relocated to different areas, and during this time, the people of those areas cooperated fully with the IDPs.

Expressing these views during a two-day workshop on IDP settlement, current issues, issues of hatred Crimes and violence prevention, Mayor Mardan Himayat Mayor stated. He further stated that in the previous government, as a District Nazim complete facilities, problem-solving measures, and all possible hospitality initiatives were taken for IDPs, people of the different areas in Mardan also provided shelter to IDPs in their homes. "The biggest challenge during the operations was the entry of criminals those areas"

He added. Mayor Mardan said that during operations in different areas of Province, it is essential to arrange alternate places for IDPs where fully facilities are available. Provides Employment opportunities and make arrangements for the education of their children, which are often affected by operations.

The purpose of the seminar is to raise awareness among the community and work together for IDPs to address the issues, he added. "In the two-day workshop, mayors from various districts of the province, Former member of the Provincial Assembly Nisar Mahmand, Chairman khadokhail Buner Gulzar Hussain Babak, Chairman tehsil Katlang Mufi Hammadullah, Chairman tehsil Garhi Kapoor Bakhshtar Khan, Chairman Department of Journalism and Mass Communication Professor Farhad Safi, and Chairman Department of Sociology Professor Rashid presented various statistics on the topic.



Thursday, May 25, 2023

Najwa, a Palestinian woman paralysed in Israel's assault on Gaza

GAZA CITY (Agencies): Najwa Abu Aisha, 48, is lying in a hospital bed, surrounded by family. She has been there since May 11 when Israel bombed empty farmland near her Gaza home, sending her hurtling from the second-floor rooftop of her house. She was left paralysed by the fall. "I had gone up on the roof with my 14-year-old son to check the water tank," Najwa told Al Jazeera.

"Suddenly, while I was leaning against the wall, an Israeli bomb hit near our home. All I remember is the wall falling and falling off the roof with it. When I woke up, I was here in the hospital," she said. Her son, who witnessed the bombing and her fall, is still suffering from trauma and is not able to sit with or talk to anyone. Najwa was flung from the roof and landed on her back in the next-door neighbours' yard. Besides injuries to her spinal cord, she also suffered severe fractures in her pelvis and rib cage, according to doctors at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

About 33 Palestinians, including children, were killed and 147 wounded in the besieged enclave in the latest escalation between Israel and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad organisation. The fighting ended only after a truce after four days of fighting. One Israeli was also killed. When the family talks about Najwa's condition, they whisper so she does not hear them because they do not want to cause her distress. Her children also try to act normally in front of Najwa, but she told Al Jazeera tearfully that she is very aware of her condition because she cannot feel or move the lower part of her body.

"I am not complaining about what happened to me, but I am in a lot of pain," she said, explaining that as a Muslim woman, she is content with her fate. But, she said, "No one feels the extent of the psychological and physical pain inside me." "An Israeli



missile was enough to change my life from an active, upright woman to a disabled, helpless woman," she added, bursting into tears. Najwa has five children. The youngest is seven years old. She was the family's sole breadwinner because her husband lives with a disability and relies on a cane to move around. Before her injury, she had a cleaning job in a kindergarten for nearly three years. Standing next to Najwa's bed is her sister Um Issa, 47. She never leaves Najwa's side after the "great shock" of her injury.

"We used to eat together, drink together and go out together," she said. "The news came like a thunderbolt to all of us. This was unimaginable." "My sister Najwa used to move like a bee among us. She was working hard to support her family in their difficult living conditions, but regardless, she loved taking care of herself and loved clothes and looking good." Um Issa looked away for a second. "I can't stop thinking about her children." Her husband, Mazen Abu Aisha, 50, comes to the hospital to

see her often, leaning on his cane with tears running down his face. "I feel like I'm in a nightmare. My heart hurts so much for her. She put up too much with me, bore the burdens of my family and children, and never complained. I feel so helpless," he said.

"What sin did we commit in Gaza for all this to happen to us?" The Gaza Strip has effectively been under an Israeli siege for more than 15 years, and its health sector has deteriorated due to limitations on imports and freedom of movement. That means there is not much that can be done for Najwa here. She and her family hope she will be allowed travel to receive medical treatment abroad, but Israel severely limits the freedom of movement of all Palestinians. "The doctors told me they couldn't do anything for me here," Najwa said. "All I hope for now is getting treatment abroad to rehabilitate my body, so I can walk and go back to serving my children and my family."

Russia to move newest nuclear sub to Pacific

MOSCOW (Agencies): Russia plans to move its newest nuclear submarine to a permanent base in the Kamchatka Peninsula in August, according to Russia's state-run TASS news agency, as Moscow steps up its military presence in the Pacific. The Generalissimo Suvorov, which entered service at the end of 2022, carries up to 16 nuclear-tipped Russian Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles, each of which can carry more than one nuclear warhead.

"The submarine Generalissimo Suvorov will make an inter-naval transition from the Northern Fleet (in the Arctic) to the Pacific Fleet in August," TASS said, citing a source close to the military department. "The transition will be carried out along the Northern Sea Route, including in a submerged position." Russia has been boosting defences in its vast far eastern regions bordering the Asia-Pacific, raising security concerns in Japan and across the region at a time of heightened worry over China's growing military might. The United States has also been increasing its presence in the region, this week signing a security pact with Papua New Guinea.

The Generalissimo Suvorov was among several new vessels commissioned by Russian President Vladimir Putin at the end of last year as he promised to further strengthen the country's navy, with Russian news agencies reporting it was meant to bolster the nuclear-powered fleet at the Rybachiy submarine base on the Kamchatka Peninsula. "We will increase the pace and volume of construction of various ships, equip them with the most modern weapons," Putin said at the time. "All in all, everything to reliably ensure Russia's security, the protection of our national interests in the world ocean," he added. The submarine is the sixth in vessel of the Russian Borei class of smaller and stealthier submarines, Russian agencies have reported. They will replace the country's previous generations of ballistic missile submarines.

'South Africa could become failed state'

LONDON (BBC): South Africa could become a "failed state" but has yet to reach that point, a senior official of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has said. The admission by ANC secretary general Fikile Mbalula comes as South Africa experiences power cuts, known as load-shedding, of up to 10 hours a day. "This load-shedding has just made a mess of our country," he told the BBC's HARDtalk programme.

The power cuts have worsened South Africa's economic crisis. The country is also battling high levels of corruption, all of which has damaged confidence in the ANC government. "If certain things are not resolved, we will become a failed state, but we are not journeying towards that direction," Mr Mbalula said in an exclusive interview with BBC HARDtalk's Stephen Sackur. "South Africa is undergoing challenges like many other countries but I think to put it into the category of a failed state is an exaggeration," he added.

While external forces such as global economics, the impact of Covid and the war in Ukraine had all played a role in battering South Africa's economy, blame also lay partly with "some of our own weaknesses in terms of managing the economy well", Mr Mbalula acknowledged. South Africa has an official unemployment rate of about 33%, one of the highest in the world. One in two young South Africans is unemployed and 60% are living under the poverty line. Yet Mr Mbalula maintained the country was "recovering well" and defended the ANC's economic record. The party took power in 1994, following the end of the racist system of apartheid. "We have been able to cushion our people from the worst," he said, after a legacy of "300 years of deprivation and a mismanaged country and economy".

NDMA Pak delegation attended World Bank partnership days event

F.P. Report

WASHINGTON: A two-member delegation comprising of Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, Chairman NDMA and Mr. Idrees Mehsud, Member Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) attended Partnership Days Event of Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) on invite of World Bank in Washington DC.

The Chairman as panelist highlighted the requirements for making Pakistan a resilient country, "Developing economies critically need innovative DRR approaches based on local challenges and necessities" he mentioned. Chairman unveiled the way forward for a remodelled NDMA that will be able to tackle upcoming challenges owing to multiple hazards, particularly climate change induced.

He emphasized need for collaboration to incorporate community centric AI based/tech driven early warning capabilities to forecast disasters, which also could be a key solution to minimize time and again financial assistance by donors in affected regions. The Chairman, during panel discussion also suggested that the World Bank financial strat-



egy developments for DRR and other frameworks must include spontaneity and shared DRR instruments. Pakistan has demonstrated default resilience and adaptation, which requires support in value addition of protocols, he added.

At later part of the day, the delegation also held productive sessions with Ms. Afreen Akhter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at the US state Department and Ms. Marcia Wong, Deputy Assistant to the Administrator, in USAID HQs Washington. During meetings the NDMA delegation discussed crucial

need to collate with academia and DM responders of vulnerable countries with global universities, for building forward on existing knowledge and capitalization of existing indigenous capabilities.

They further specified requirement to formulate and connect a team of all DM stakeholders including local/global partners working in silos, for pre-identifying risks and preparation of plans of actions for foreseeable potential disasters. NDMA delegation is currently representing Pakistan in sessions/meetings pertaining to disaster risk management and financing, organized by global partners/stakeholders.

Modern slavery most common in NK, Eritrea

SEOUL (Agencies): North Korea, Eritrea and Mauritania have the highest prevalence of modern slavery in the world, according to the 2023 Global Slavery Index, which notes a "worsening" situation globally since its last survey five years earlier. The report published on Wednesday said an estimated 50 million people were "living in situations of modern slavery" in 2021, an increase of 10 million over 2016 when the problem was last measured.

The figure includes some 28 million people in forced labour and 22 million living in a forced marriage. The situation is worsening "against a backdrop of increasing and more complex armed conflicts, widespread environmental degradation" and effects from the coronavirus pandemic, among other factors, the investigation said. Compiled by the human rights charity Walk Free, the report defines modern slavery as encompassing "forced labour, forced or servile marriage, debt bondage, forced commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking, slavery-like practices, and the sale and exploitation of

children". Slavery's core principle entails "the systematic removal of a person's freedom" - from the right to accept or refuse labour to the liberty to determine if, when and whom to marry.

By this benchmark, reclusive and authoritarian North Korea has the highest prevalence of modern slavery (104.6 per 1,000 population), according to the report. It is followed by Eritrea (90.3) and Mauritania (32), which in 1981 became the last country in the world to make hereditary slavery illegal. The 10 countries with the highest prevalence of modern slavery have some common characteristics, including "limited protections for civil liberties and human rights". Many of the countries are in "volatile" regions experiencing conflict or political instability, or are home to a large population of "vulnerable people" such as refugees or migrant workers. Also in the top 10 globally were Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, where migrant workers' labour rights are restricted by the "kafala" sponsorship system.

Other countries in the top 10 are Turkey, "which

hosts millions of refugees from Syria", Tajikistan, Russia and Afghanistan. While forced labour is more common in low-income countries, it is "deeply" connected to demand from higher-income countries, the report said, noting that two-thirds of all forced labour cases are linked to global supply chains. The report said G20 countries - made up of the European Union and the world's 19 top economies - are currently importing \$468bn worth of goods that are at risk of being produced with forced labour, up from \$354bn in the previous report.

Electronics remain the highest value at-risk product, followed by garments, palm oil and solar panels, in a sign of high demand for renewable energy products. "Modern slavery permeates every aspect of our society. It is woven through our clothes, lights up our electronics, and seasons our food," the group's founding director Grace Forrest said. "At its core, modern slavery is a manifestation of extreme inequality. It is a mirror held to power, reflecting who in any given society has it and who does not," she added.

Canada didn't ignore election interference intelligence

TORONTO (Agencies): Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government did not ignore evidence of Chinese meddling, a special rapporteur said after probing media reports based on leaked intelligence that said Beijing sought to influence elections and policy. Trudeau welcomed the report but opposition parties continued to push for a public inquiry.

In March, the government appointed David Johnston, formerly Canada's governor general, as a special rapporteur to investigate media coverage of intelligence reports that alleged multiple cases of Chinese meddling. Johnston was also tasked with advising on whether to conduct an official public inquiry. "I have not found instances of the government knowingly ignoring intelligence, advice or recommendations on foreign interference, or making decisions based on partisan considerations in dealing with these issues," said Johnston in a 55-page report.

China has repeatedly denied any interference. Beijing's embassy in Ottawa again denied meddling and a spokesman said the leaks were part of

a campaign "to smear China". Johnston had access to classified memos and conducted interviews with the prime minister as well as other Cabinet members and top intelligence officials. He found many of the leaks to have been based on "limited and partial intelligence" or even false information. "However, there are significant governance shortcomings in the way intelligence is communicated from security agencies to the various government departments," he added.

The prime minister has come under pressure from opposition parties in parliament to open a public inquiry into foreign election interference. But when Johnston recommended against one in report, Trudeau said he would follow his advice. A public inquiry "would prolong, but not enhance, the process", the report said. It explained that most of the inquiry would necessarily be secret because of the classified nature of the information. Johnston urged opposition leaders to get clearance to read the secret parts of his report but if they do so, they would be constrained by law not to speak about those details in public. "I will not be silenced," said

Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre. "This report was rigged from the start and has zero credibility", Poilievre accused Johnston of being a friend of the Trudeau family, which Johnston denies. Conservatives alleged Trudeau ignored the intelligence reports because the meddling benefitted his Liberal Party in elections. Members of the left-leaning New Democrats, who support Trudeau's minority government in parliament, also want an inquest.

"We remain resolute that a public inquiry is necessary to restore the confidence in our electoral system," New Democrat leader Jagmeet Singh told reporters. Earlier this month, Trudeau's government expelled a Chinese official after it emerged he had sought information about Conservative legislator Michael Chong's family, prompting China's tit-for-tat expulsion of a Canadian diplomat. Instead of a new public inquest, Johnston said he will spend the next five months holding public hearings on the issue because "foreign governments are undoubtedly attempting to influence candidates and voters in Canada".

World is failing to protect millions of civilians caught in conflicts: UN

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The UN chief decried the "terrible truth" that the world is failing to live up to its commitments to protect a growing number of civilians caught in conflicts. The International Committee of the Red Cross, the guardian of treaties enshrining those commitments, lamented that countless civilians are experiencing "a living hell." From Ukraine and Sudan to Africa's Sahel and the Mideast, civilians are scrambling to evade missiles and explosives and to find food and medicine - and the humanitarian situation is deteriorating.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the Security Council should urge countries to respect the rules of war. "Governments with influence over warring parties should engage in political dialogue and train forces on protecting civilians," he said. "And countries that export weapons should refuse to do business with any party that fails to comply with international humanitarian law." His recent report on the protection of civilians in conflicts in 2022 points to over 100 conflicts worldwide and an

average duration of more than 30 years. Last year, though, saw new highs for the number of people forcibly displaced and a 53% increase in UN recorded civilian deaths to nearly 17,000, including almost 8,000 in Ukraine.

Mirjana Spoljaric, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said during recent visits to Africa, Europe and the Mideast she saw a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation with "entire regions trapped in cycles of conflict without an end in sight." Spoljaric said many of the conflicts are compounded by climate shocks, food insecurity and economic hardship. She issued an urgent call to countries to protect civilians and critical infrastructure in urban areas, pointing to large-scale destruction in Sudan, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen. She also urged that food be provided to all civilians in conflict areas and for access to be given to humanitarian workers. "We need to break the pattern of violations, and this can be done through strong political will and sustained action," she said.

Switzerland, which is serving its first two-year

term on the Security Council, chose the protection of civilians in conflict as its showcase event. Representatives from over 80 countries were scheduled to speak, a reflection of widespread concern. Swiss President Alain Berset, who chaired meeting, said that as the depositary state for the Geneva Conventions and the home of the Geneva-based ICRC, respect for international humanitarian law was a long-standing priority for the country. The number of people facing acute food insecurity rose to 258 million last year, which he noted was "30 times the population of New York City. More than two-thirds of them live in conflict zones, including in Congo, Sudan, the Sahel, Somalia, Myanmar and Afghanistan, or in countries where violence is widespread such as Haiti, Berset said. He urged all countries to implement a 2018 Security Council resolution against the use of starvation as a method of warfare and unlawfully denying humanitarian access and life-saving supplies to civilians, and a 2021 resolution condemning unlawful attacks that

deprive civilians of essential services.

The meeting saw clashes between Ukraine's Western supporters and Russia, as the council has seen at many sessions since Moscow's Feb. 24, 2022, invasion of its neighbor. US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said the increase in civilian deaths shows the human toll of the war. She also accused Russia of pushing millions of people in Africa and the Middle East into food insecurity by using "food as a weapon of war in Ukraine," including blocking Ukrainian grain shipments for months. She said the agreement allowing the shipment of Ukrainian grain from Black Sea ports, which was extended for two months on May 17, was a "beacon of hope to the world." Russia's UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia claimed very little of the more than 30 million tons of grain shipped under the Black Sea deal has gone to developing countries, and that the shipment from Russia of ammonia - a key ingredient of fertilizer - that was supposed to be part of the July 2022 deal "has effectively not even begun."

Blinken warns rival Sudanese generals to respect latest truce

CAIRO (AP): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned Sudan's rival generals to abide by the latest cease-fire or face possible sanctions, as residents reported sporadic fighting between the sides in the capital of Khartoum and a northern city. Sudan descended into chaos after fighting erupted in mid-April between the country's military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.

The fighting has killed at least 863 civilians, including at least 190 children, and wounded more than 3,530 others, according to the Doctors' Syndicate, which tracks civilian casualties. The toll could be much higher, the medical group said. The conflict has also turned Khartoum and other urban areas into battlefields. Early on, foreign governments reacted to evacuate their diplomats and nationals as thousands of foreign residents scrambled to get out of Sudan. More than a million Sudanese have been

forced from their homes by the fighting, including over 840,000 who have sought shelter in safer parts of the country, and another 250,000 crossed into neighboring countries, according to the UN figures. Over the past weeks, the United States and Saudi Arabia have been mediating in talks between the warring sides, held in the kingdom. A new truce was announced over the weekend - the seventh attempt so far to stop the deadly violence in the East African nation. It went into effect on night. All previous cease-fires have been violated.

In a video message posted by the US Embassy on social media, Blinken said the fighting has been "tragically, senseless and devastating." The truce, he said, is meant to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance and restore essential services and infrastructure destroyed in the clashes. A remote mechanism, backed by the US, has been established to monitor the truce. Blinken added - a 12-member monitoring committee consisting of three represen-

tatives from the warring sides, three from the US, and three from Saudi Arabia. "If the cease-fire is violated, we'll know and we will hold violators accountable through sanctions and other means," he said. "We facilitated the cease-fire, but it's the responsibility of the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces to implement it." Both sides agreed to stop hostilities and the looting of civilian properties and humanitarian supplies, as well as seizing civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, power plants, water pumps, and fuel stations.

Aid workers and civilians have reported widespread looting in Khartoum and elsewhere across the country, along with dire lack of basic services, medical care, food, and water. The Doctors' Syndicate has also said that the RSF has seized hospitals. Allegations of sexual violence against women, including rape and gang rape in Khartoum and the restive western Darfur region, have also been reported. Doctors Without Borders said in a statement

its staff has been harassed, and its medical premises and other facilities have been repeatedly looted and occupied since the fighting began. The charity, known by its French acronym MSF, runs medical projects in 10 of Sudan's 18 provinces, including the capital. "We are shaken and appalled by these deplorable attacks," said Jean-Nicolas Armstrong Dangelser, MSF emergency coordinator in Sudan. "We are experiencing a violation of humanitarian principles, and the space for humanitarians to work is shrinking on a scale I've rarely seen before."

Residents, meanwhile, said they heard gunfire and explosions in parts of Omdurman, a city next to Khartoum, with military aircraft flying overhead. They also reported sporadic clashes around the military's headquarters in Khartoum. "Sounds of firefight are very close," said Babak Abdel-Rahman, an Omdurman resident, speaking over the phone, with loud sounds of gunfire and aircraft heard in the background. "They don't respect people's lives."

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Politics of forced marriages and obliged divorces

PAKISTAN Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has termed his party leaders' exodus as forced divorce after senior vice president Shireen Mazari also jumped ship following the May 9 riots. The PTI leader said that he had heard about forced marriages in Pakistan but for PTI a new phenomenon of forced divorces has emerged. The proclaimed change advocate wondered about this newest kind of transposition during which his close confederates separated their ways from the party leaving him alone. Mr. Khan was worried at the absence of human rights organizations in the country and offered sympathies to all those who left the party under pressure and appreciated the senior members who stood fast against the pressure so far.

Pakistan Tahreek--Insaf (PTI) is currently passing through a disintegration crisis and critical changes as several senior leaders in the center and provinces announced their separation from the party in a protest of vandalism brought by the PTI workers/supporters across the country following the arrest of Imran Khan on May 9. Reports suggest that over two dozen PTI leaders including senior vice President Shireen Mizari, PTI Karachi President, and others had come to the media to announce their disassociation with the group. The majority of the renegade leaders cited PTI's narrative against the military as the main reason for their divorce while others accused the leadership of betrayal from the Party's manifesto of justice, democracy, and equality along with the rising radicalization and intolerance of PTI leaders/workers that led the party to this day.

Interestingly, Mr. Khan, a 73 years old former cricket star, one-time Prime Minister, renowned philanthropist, and longstanding advocate of change/Tabdili is currently embarrassed and unhappy over the ongoing meltdown and bifurcation in his political group. The so-called reformist leader is currently astonished over the sequence of events and unable to witness the repercussions of hate, violence, and destruction waged by his party workers on May 9, and thereafter. At the same time, Khan is still not ready to face abroad the spectrum accountability, prosecution, and onward justice/penalization to himself, his colleagues, and supporters that had been demanded and struggled for by his party for their opponents, alleged corrupts, and criminals over the past decades.

Mr. Khan rightly insists that forced marriages, as well as forced divorces, are common in Pakistani society, while this deplorable trend had been introduced by the establishment in the politics during the early 21st century by creating PPP parliamentarians out of the Pakistan Poppe Parry (PPP). Similarly, this illegal practice was repeated before the 2018 general election when dozens of electables and disgruntled politicians from other parties took refuge to the PTI and bartered top positions in the party, while pushing Party's ideological workers out of the decision/policy-making process. In fact, Forced marriages are as bad as forced divorces and Mr Khan knows about this well. He should have not agreed to forced marriages in 2018 and that is why 3.5 years of his meritorious political journey washed away his 19 years of principled struggle for change and justice. At the time, the previously washed and substantially purified PTI leaders again turned to corrupt and impure after the recent exodus from the party, despite the fact, they had championed an anti-corruption war against their opponents and chased party's agenda during the three-and-a-half rule of Pakistan Tahreek-e- Insara.

Realistically, it is time to end forced marriages and forced divorces through the introduction of fresh blood, talented, and faithful minds in national politics as the country has plenty of brilliant, and honest faces in every field. Meanwhile, Khan still has the option to induct fresh political strategists to get out of the current backlash after the group launched countrywide violent protests on May 9 and afterward. Interestingly, the Shehbaz government tactfully used the PTI-establishment gap and tried to label IK as an anti-state and anti-army leader but it is hard to believe for the masses as well as the PTI supporters who know about IK's long history of services and sacrifices for this country and the public. However, the May 9 riots and attacks on military installations badly tarnished the image of the PTI Chairman and introduced the party as a Nazi group in national politics. At time, Imran Khan must condemn recent violence and support the fair investigation into the May 9th incidents and help the LEAs and the judiciary as Chairman of a lessening political party to bring perpetrators of those heinous crimes to justice.

Currently, Pakistan is passing through a crucial period in its history and national leadership must come out of their political camps to forge consensus on the national issues including the economy, upcoming elections, and electoral code so the country could be rescued out of the prevailing chaos and uncertainty. The incumbent government has badly failed to resolve the country's economic issues, curb inflation and provide relief to the masses so far. People are living in the worst conditions, therefore, Shehbaz's aides must focus on public problems and service delivery if they desire to pursue their political career in the future, otherwise public will throw them in the Arabian sea in the next general election.

We know Boris Johnson is a liar but Sunak promised truth and integrity. Where is it?

FOR all Rishi Sunak's claims to be a trustworthy prime minister, he is, in fact, in the mould of Boris Johnson. He has made misleading claims from the start of his premiership, and continues to do so. Take his first prime minister's questions on 26 October last year. To murmurs of approval from Conservative MPs, he told Labour's Richard Burgon: "We will always support our hardworking nurses."

To drive home his support, Sunak added: "That is why, when I was chancellor, we reintroduced the nurses' bursary." This was a misleading claim, as the new prime minister would have been well aware. It is true that, as chancellor, Sunak offered a new educational grant of £5,000 a year (increasing to £8,000 in some cases) for all nursing students on courses from September 2020. However, this fell significantly short of the bursary system, which had earlier been scrapped by the Conservative government.

It then got worse. In the same PMQs, Sunak told MPs that there had been "a record number of new homes built in the last year". This claim was false. As a report by the due diligence website Full Fact later concluded: "The most recent published data shows 173,520 new homes were completed in England in the year to June 2022, slightly down on the previous year." This false claim quickly became an important test for Sunak. His predecessor, Boris Johnson, made scores of such boasts, leaving them on the Hansard record even after they'd been exposed as false. Had Sunak corrected his relatively minor mistakes, as both parliamentary convention and the ministerial code demands,

he could have sent a powerful signal. By choosing not to do so, he raises the question: does he share Johnson's contempt for integrity, even as he claims to lead a government of "integrity, professionalism and accountability at every level"?

The following month, Sunak made another misleading claim in the House of Commons: "Let us remember one thing: we had the fastest vaccine roll-out in the world because of

Had Sunak corrected his relatively minor mistakes, as both parliamentary convention and the ministerial code demands, he could have sent a powerful signal. By choosing not to do so, he raises the question: does he share Johnson's contempt for integrity, even as he claims to lead a government of "integrity, professionalism and accountability at every level"?

our freedoms after leaving the European Union." In fact, the UK's vaccines were procured while still a member of the single market and the European Medicines Agency (EMA). Further, the UK's early roll-out was secured by the use of regulation 174, an EU provision allowing member states to bypass the authorization of the EMA and issue their own medicines.

Sunak entered Downing Street on the back of a promise to bring an end to the apparent disregard for the truth that was a defining feature of the Johnson and Truss premiership. He launched his campaign for the Tory leadership with a pledge to "restore trust, rebuild the economy and reunite the country". But his claims regarding the truth do not bear serious interrogation.

I assert this with confidence because I have been keeping a record of false

claims uttered by British prime ministers ever since the Iraq war began in 2003. My file indicated that Tony Blair's successors, Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Theresa May, were relatively honest. This is not to say they were perfect. But they were certainly not habitual and shameless liars. All this changed the moment Boris Johnson walked into Downing Street in July 2019. Sunak

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has surprised me. In common with almost everyone else, I thought he would represent a reversion to traditional politics after the malign chaos of Johnson and Truss. But that has not been the case. Take the promise to "reduce debt", one of Sunak's five pledges at the start of 2023. Neither Sunak nor his chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, plan to reduce debt, as the March budget statement made explicit. On the contrary, it appears they mean to increase it substantially, while telling voters the opposite. According to the latest figures from the Office for Budget Responsibility, net debt stood at £2.5tn at the time of the budget, and is projected to rise every year till 2028, by which time it will have advanced to £2.9tn. Sunak should be all too familiar with these numbers.

One former

Conservative party communications expert told me that reducing debt "sounded better to voters". Sunak's apparent readiness to mislead on such issues could send a message to cabinet subordinates to follow suit. The biggest culprit is the home secretary, Suella Braverman, who seems to operate in a post-truth world: denying that Brexit is to blame for Dover delays, and making inflam-

Had Sunak corrected his relatively minor mistakes, as both parliamentary convention and the ministerial code demands, he could have sent a powerful signal. By choosing not to do so, he raises the question: does he share Johnson's contempt for integrity, even as he claims to lead a government of "integrity, professionalism and accountability at every level"?

matory claims about Pakistani "grooming gangs" that have been proved false by her own officials. The controversy over her speeding fine is the latest test of Sunak's frequently broken promise to bring integrity back to government. At the G20 summit in Bali, Sunak was asked whether leaving the EU had contributed to Britain's economic woes. The prime minister responded by talking about the global context, Covid and the war in Ukraine, but not Brexit. This strategy is known to lawyers as suppressio veri (the misrepresentation of the truth by withholding of relevant facts). During international trade week last November, Michael Gove boasted on Twitter: "We've secured new free trade deals with over 70 countries since 2016. That's over £800bn worth of new global trade." His statement was not cor-

rect. Robert Chote, chair of the UK Statistics Authority, has since stated that "it is misleading to describe the £800bn figure as a measure of 'new global trade' resulting from the recent deals."

The health secretary, Steve Barclay, is one of a number of ministers who have made the wild claim that accepting public sector pay demands would cost £1,000 per household. Leading the way in this was Sunak, who appeared in front of an RAF base in Lincolnshire to announce: "What I'm not going to do is ask ordinary families up and down the country to pay an extra £1,000 a year to meet the pay demands of the union bosses." This prime ministerial claptrap has since been magisterially demolished by Chote. It's as if Sunak and his ministers don't respect facts at all.

Or take the environment. Sunak said that "I care about the climate and the environment I'm leaving [my daughters]." His Downing Street spokesman insisted that Britain is "committed to net zero". Yet as prime minister he has ejected the Cop26 president, Alok Sharma, and the climate minister, Graham Stuart, from the cabinet. He almost did not attend Cop27 and advised King Charles against attending. He is pressing ahead with the opening of a new coalmine in Cumbria.

There's a further category of misleading or false comments from Sunak: tactical. The Tories are determined to turn Keir Starmer's role as lieutenant to Jeremy Corbyn in the 2019 general election into a liability. This may explain why the prime minister asserted during PMQs late last year that Corbyn's national security agenda involved "abolishing our armed forces, scrapping the nuclear deterrent, with-

drawing from Nato, voting against every single anti-terrorism law we tried, and befriending Hamas and Hezbollah". Labour's 2019 election manifesto proposed none of the above. Sunak has not corrected these false statements, despite being asked to do so by Jeremy Corbyn. Note, however, that Starmer also emerges poorly from this exchange: the opposition leader did not correct Sunak.

Britain therefore has a monstrous problem. Before Sunak turned up in Downing Street, it was just about possible to explain the collapse of integrity after 2019 in terms of Johnson's incorrigible personal dishonesty. But Sunak appears to be yet another compulsively dishonest prime minister. This suggests a deep-rooted structural problem not just in the Conservative party but also in the House of Commons. Hence the importance of the ongoing House of Commons privileges committee investigation into allegations that Boris Johnson misled parliament about parties held in Downing Street during lockdown. The committee cannot reach a conclusion about Johnson without making a wider judgment about whether a prime minister should be permitted to mislead the Commons. So the question will arise: what about Sunak?

Sunak's pledge to bring back trust in British politics, reasserted so many times, appears itself to be insincere. This brings personal discredit, makes good government impossible and demonstrates how deeply political deceit has become embedded in our national life. Something has gone horribly wrong with the British system of government.

The Guardian

Gaze down the list of 500 Americans banned from Russia, and a pattern emerges

AS Russia prepares for an imminent Ukrainian counteroffensive, and America's 2024 presidential race takes shape, it is becoming increasingly apparent that Russian President Vladimir Putin believes one possible path to victory in his so far unsuccessful war runs through the US election.

The latest evidence that Putin may just expect Western support for Ukraine to end - if only Russian forces hold on until there's a new president in the White House - came tucked away in a blistering announcement from Russia's Foreign Ministry on Friday, declaring entry into the country would be "closed for 500 Americans." The blacklist, Moscow explained, targets individuals "involved in the spread of Russophobic attitudes and fakes," as well as principals in companies supplying weapons to Ukraine.

A look at the lengthy document can be, at first, a perplexing experience, but then a rather illuminating one. The hundreds of names are mostly members of American think tanks, along with dozens of members of Congress, current and former government officials - including former President Barack Obama -

a smattering of journalists and even some comedians. There's CNN's Erin Burnett and Nick Paton Walsh - a UK citizen - both of whom have reported extensively from and about Ukraine. One can see a dictator's logic in going after journalists who tell the truth about his regime. The same can be said of late-night comedians. Tyrants are not known for their sense of humor.

But then there are some very intriguing choices. Why would Putin have any reason to target the secretary of state of a Southern US state? Does the name Brad Raffensperger ring a bell? Raffensperger, as it happens, is a well-known figure among anyone who has followed recent US history. He became one of the most prominent figures in former President Donald Trump's effort to overturn the 2020 election. The recordings of a telephone conversation in which Trump tells him to "find" him enough votes to win the state is evidence in a criminal investigation that could result in the former president's indictment this summer. In fact, some of the oddest selections in Putin's blacklist are connected to Trump's troubles and those of his most fervent supporters. Putin has blacklisted Letitia James,

the New York Attorney General who filed a civil law suit against the former president and his adult children and his company for what she called "astounding" fraud.

There's John Smith, better known as Jack Smith, appointed special counsel by the Justice Department to oversee criminal investigations into, among other possible crimes, whether Trump mishandled classified materials, another case that is gathering pace and reportedly creating high anxiety in Trump world. In its blacklist, the Kremlin appears to defend the January 6 pro-Trump insurrectionists who tried to stop the certification of Joe Biden's electoral victory. It bans from Russia Americans in law enforcement, "who are directly involved in the persecution of dissidents in the wake of the so-called storming of the Capitol." The list includes David Sundberg, the assistant director in charge of the FBI's Washington office, which led the January 6 investigation. It's a list filled with intriguing choices. Perhaps not surprisingly, we see names that became famous during Trump's first impeachment, such as Russia-expert Fiona Hill

Frida Ghitis

and former US ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch. Is Russia signaling its support for Trump?

The signaling was hardly necessary. The former president has made it very clear that if he wins another term, US policy toward Ukraine would be sharply different. In a March interview with Sean Hannity of Fox News, Trump predicted that "Ultimately [Putin] is going to take over all of Ukraine." During CNN's recent town hall, he was asked if he supports sending military aid to Ukraine. After launching into a wild diatribe, complete with insults against former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, he showed his hand. Trump seldom answers with a clear yes or no, leaving himself room to deny. But the answer did not leave much doubt. "We're giving away so much equipment," he lamented. And asked if he wants Ukraine to win the war, he refused to say, offering instead, "I don't think in terms of winning and losing... I want everybody to stop dying." (He claims he could stop the war in 24 hours.) If Russia and Trump have already made their preferences, however indirectly, per-

fectly clear, the ones who may have needed some nudging are Americans who oppose aid for Ukraine and are undecided between Trump and his main Republican challenger Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. DeSantis, who is about to announce his candidacy, has been working assiduously to cement his position as a standard-bearer of ultra-conservative social views. Some of those views, by the way, particularly those hostile to LGBT minorities, lean in the direction of Putin's assault on LGBT rights, which is far more draconian than what Florida has done.

But DeSantis is not Putin's man - unless he reverses his stance on Ukraine yet again. A few months ago, the Florida governor sparked a furious reaction from hawkish Republicans - and GOP donors - when he answered a questionnaire from the fired Fox firebrand Tucker Carlson, describing Russia's brutal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine as a "territorial dispute." DeSantis presumably wanted to sound skeptical of Washington's strong backing of Ukraine but he went too far.

Scrambling to repair the damage, he said he had been misunderstood. Putin,

DeSantis declared, "is a war criminal." With that, DeSantis made the Kremlin's choice much easier. It looks like now the Kremlin is none-too-subtly signaling to the US far right that it has made its choice. If Russia's preference became a big issue in the US the first time Trump ran for president, America's choice is even more important for Russia this time around. Russian officials had told Putin that their army could conquer Ukraine rather easily. Even America's generals believed Moscow's forces would take control of Kyiv in a few days. Instead, almost 15 months in, the war has become an embarrassing debacle for Putin, sharply eroding Russia's standing abroad, even if Putin remains popular at home. But no matter how badly the invasion is going, Putin surely believes that accepting defeat in Ukraine could prove disastrous for him. He now seems to be betting he can outlast Biden, who has led the West's muscular support of Ukraine. That's why the upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive is so crucial. As the US election ramps up, Putin is betting that the runway is growing shorter for Ukraine.

CNN

Why global hunger is a national security threat

THREATS to US national security are not just measured in missiles, armies and terrorists. Political and economic turmoil, in countries that are important to America and its allies, can also be overwhelming. That's why fighting hunger and thirst is no longer just a challenge for aid workers. The scale of the global crisis is so great that hunger now represents a threat to our security, our borders and our projection of power.

Don't take a chef's word for it. Over the past decade or so, the US intelligence community assessed the likely impact of global food and water insecurity. US security agencies predicted a world, right around now, when water shortages and floods would "risk instability and state failure, increase regional tensions, and distract them from working with the United

States on important US policy objectives." They forecast that in countries of strategic importance to us, "declining food security will almost certainly contribute to social disruptions and political instability."

I have argued for a national security adviser for food and a secretary of food. I have proposed the creation of a National Food Agency to center food policy on the needs of American citizens. But I have not succeeded in convincing my friends on either side of the aisle on Capitol Hill or at the White House that food must stop being a policy afterthought. The time has come for us all to prioritize food in our public policy - at home and internationally. Consider one of the most divisive factors in politics today, both in the United States and in Europe: immigration from the Global South.

What is driving so many

families to risk their lives on perilous journeys through the jungle, across rivers or on the open seas? Violence, corruption and lack of opportunity are nothing new in the Western Hemisphere. Though they are clearly factors in the surge to the US southern border, there is something new about what is moving so many people today. That is food. To be precise: malnutrition, hunger and food price inflation. Three years ago, the majority of migrants came from the Northern Triangle countries: Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. Now, most migrants at our border come from other countries, including Venezuela, Colombia, Nicaragua and Cuba.

What ties these countries together? Cuba is suffering extraordinary food shortages and price hikes. About

three-quarters of Venezuelans live on less than \$1.90 a day, which, economists say, is nowhere near enough to feed one person, never mind a family. In some regions of Nicaragua, almost 1 in 4 children under the age of 5 has chronic malnutrition. I could tell you the same stories about the Northern Triangle countries a few years ago. Or I could tell you about the Honduran family we fed as they sheltered under a bridge in McAllen, Tex. They recognized the logo of World Central Kitchen, the non-profit I founded, because we had fed them in Honduras the year before, when back-to-back hurricanes wiped out their farm. As severe drought devastates crops across South America, the World Food Program recently warned that "the whole continent is

on the move."

We cannot build a wall high enough to stop the army of mothers with hungry children in their arms. Our problem is not that we lack the resources or know-how to relieve these unbearable pressures. Our problem is that we lack focus. The United States spends around \$25 billion a year on Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Texas alone wants to spend \$4 billion on the border. That's what the United States spends on feeding the whole planet through the World Food Program in a normal year. It's four times what the administration proposes to spend on stabilizing the democracies and economies of Central America to help stop migration.

Food is not just an existential challenge beyond our borders. In the United

States, about half of the adult population either has diabetes or is prediabetic. Two in five adults are obese. Last year, supplies of baby formula collapsed because of contamination at one factory, and the shortages endure. The Government Accountability Office recently found that the federal government leads 200 different efforts across 21 different agencies to improve our diets. Yet we still cannot match our farming subsidies to our nutritional needs. Everybody and nobody is in charge of food. Food can be the solution to multiple crises: from our health to our climate, from immigration to global security. But only if we think differently and prioritize our food. Our global food systems are broken, and we urgently need structural change. That starts right here in Washington.

The Washington Post

What did the Hiroshima G7 summit accomplish?

Takatoshi Ito

GEOPOLITICS dominated the just-concluded G7 summit in Hiroshima, where the most prominent participant was not a G7 leader, but Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. The leader of a country under threat of Russian nuclear attack visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial was the summit's pivotal moment.

The choice of Hiroshima to host the summit was important for Prime Minister Fumio Kishida for two reasons. First, Kishida's constituency is in Hiroshima. Hosting one of the most prominent international events in his hometown will boost his popularity there. Second, bringing world leaders to the city where the first atomic bomb was used is important for any Japanese politician, and resonates even more when Russian President Vladimir Putin's nuclear threats are still echoing. Kishida's popularity had been declining since the start of his premiership in October 2021. His economic policy packages, such as "new capitalism" and "digital garden city," have had only a lukewarm reception. Between July 2022 and January 2023, his approval rating plummeted from 59% to 33%, before rebounding to 46% in May 2023 as the summit approached.

The impact of the summit on Kishida's popularity partly reflects a decisive shift in Japanese public sentiment towards a tighter security alignment with the United States. Faced with North Korean missiles frequently landing near Japan's territorial waters off Hokkaido, and armed Chinese coastguard ships regularly entering its territorial waters off the Senkaku Islands, the US presence is more necessary than ever. Likewise, the shift in South Korea from an anti-Japan administration to a pro-Japan administration has helped Kishida. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol bravely decided to honour the 1965 treaty that settled claims related to Japanese companies' wartime use of forced labour. The countries' tit-for-tat economic sanctions have ended, and bilateral visits by their leaders have resumed.

The Japanese public appears to support not only Kishida's solidarity with the G7 on punishing Russia for its attack on Ukraine, but also his stern warnings to China and his efforts to establish increasingly

friendly ties with South Korea. Diplomacy, not economic policy, underpins the rebound in Kishida's popularity, and the Hiroshima summit was the icing on the cake. Kishida could decide to capitalise on his rising approval rating by calling a snap election soon. While the economic impact of the

provoked attack by a neighbouring country - could happen in South Korea, or Japan. Russia shattered the illusion that having a peace constitution is enough to prevent a military attack from a hostile neighbour. International law and the United Nations seem powerless in the face of an aggressor that is a

The countries' tit-for-tat economic sanctions have ended, and bilateral visits by their leaders have resumed. The Japanese public appears to support not only Kishida's solidarity with the G7 on punishing Russia for its attack on Ukraine, but also his stern warnings to China and his efforts to establish increasingly friendly ties with South Korea. Diplomacy, not economic policy, underpins the rebound in Kishida's popularity, and the Hiroshima summit was the icing on the cake. Kishida could decide to capitalise on his rising approval rating by calling a snap election soon. While the economic impact of the Russian attack caused immediate problems for the European countries at this year's G7 Summit, for Japan and Asia, the fighting in Ukraine still seems far away. Japan is not sending any military equipment to Ukraine, owing to a longstanding interpretation of the 1947 "peace" constitution. The threats from China and North Korea are much more immediate, and Japan's decisive alignment with the G7 in support of Ukraine reflects a realisation that what happened there - an unprovoked attack by a neighbouring country - could happen in South Korea, or Japan.

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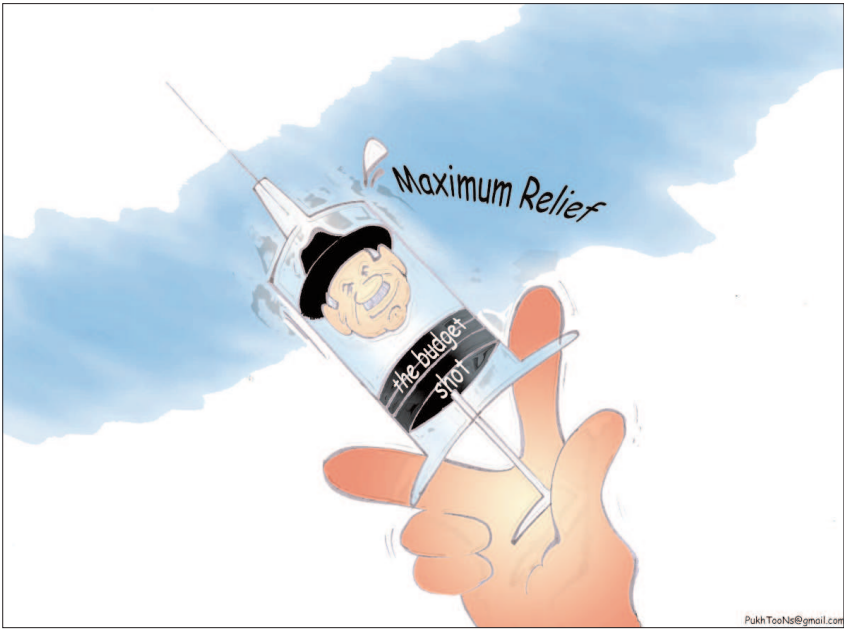
permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. Given Putin's repeated nuclear threats, it is no surprise that Kishida brought the G7 leaders to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which displays exhibits that reveal the hellish impact on people and physical structures caused by just one bomb. Russia's behaviour in Ukraine has made the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear disasters a portent with which the world must reckon.

Even so, the Japanese public's

support for Ukraine is somewhat surprising, given the country's pacifist history since 1945. Nuclear disarmament movements in Japan were traditionally a mixture of two civil groups. One, comprising victims from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, maintained close ties with communist and socialist parties. The other, more idealistic, believes that abolishing all nuclear weapons will ultimately lead to global peace. The former camp implicitly criticized the US for using nuclear bombs against Japanese civilians. When the leftist movement was strong from the 1950s to 1970s, a visit by a US president to Hiroshima was unthinkable. Only when the anti-nuclear movement became more non-partisan did a US president feel able to pay a visit to Hiroshima without feeling that the US was apologizing. And it didn't happen until 2016.

Many people interpreted US President Barack Obama's visit to Hiroshima and Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's visit to Pearl Harbor as the two countries' quiet closure of the "Pacific War" and the legacy of the nuclear attack. Today, Russia's attack on Ukraine and its threat of using nuclear weapons has transformed Japan's nuclear disarmament movement into an anti-Russian movement. On the first day of the G7 Summit, leaders issued a report entitled "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament." The declaration is pragmatic, although the ultimate goal is idealistic: "achieving a world without nuclear weapons with undiminished security for all." And it condemns Russia, whose "irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, undermining of arms control regimes, and stated intent to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus are dangerous and unacceptable."

The G7 Summit in Hiroshima achieved more than a powerful demonstration of the continuing solidarity between the G7 and Ukraine. It also enabled countries that have been sitting on the fence, most prominently India and Brazil, to grasp the real cost that Ukraine is paying and the threat the invasion poses as a precedent. For Kishida, the summit turned out to be a major political success. But the gathering's geopolitical ramifications could turn out to be even more positive.



Japan must rein in irresponsible move before it's too late

Li Yang

AT the G7 summit held in Hiroshima last week, Tokyo failed in its attempt to "whitewash" its plan of draining the nuclear contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific. The opposition from its allies was so strong that the summit's joint statement did not include any endorsement of the plan. Instead, it said that the G7 group supports an "independent investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency" into the matter.

That's not surprising. The Japanese government intended to include in a joint statement of the G7 Ministers' Meeting on Climate, Energy and Environment it hosted in Sapporo, Hokkaido, in April that the G7 group supports, if not welcomes, its disposal of the contaminated water by discharging it into the ocean. However due to the fierce opposition of other countries, particularly Germany, the Japanese government was unable to do that. At the G7 summit, food, wine and

snacks made in Fukushima Prefecture were offered to the participants as well as representatives of foreign media who were covering the event. However, this publicity stunt backfired as the food and drink was not popular, as no third-party had been invited to test the products from Fukushima to see whether they contain radioactive materials. Meanwhile, what is known is that a growing number of studies by other countries have indicated that the contaminated water from Fukushima contains at least 60 radionuclides, and the concentration is too high for them to be completely filtered out. That means directly discharging the water into the ocean, a process that would take decades to complete, would likely cause unimaginable harm to the marine ecology and human health.

Refusing any third-party probe, Japan has instead fabricated a series of lies to justify its waste water disposal plan, which serves its own political

and financial interests. Except the United States, which chooses to endorse it in exchange for Japan doing its bidding in geopolitical games, almost all parties, including the Japanese people, oppose, or have concerns about, Tokyo's cost-cutting plan for ridding itself of the nuclear contaminated water.

As the only country in the world that has been attacked by nuclear weapons as well as one renowned for its culture stressing harmony between humans and nature, Japan should handle the issue with due prudence and responsibility. But although the IAEA has yet to release its assessment of Japan's plan, the Japanese government has already made its wheeler-dealer attitude on the issue clear to all. With the pipelines to be used to discharge the water into the sea being completed by the end of next month, it will only be a matter of time before Tokyo makes its irresponsible waste water disposal plan a fait accompli.

The China Daily

Africa's ongoing conflicts: A continent in turmoil

Ashok Swain

Aviolent conflict in Sudan has been ongoing for over a month, and it refuses to end. The country has already witnessed massive infrastructure destruction, the deaths of many civilian populations, and tens of thousands of Sudanese fleeing from their homes.

The two years of war in neighbouring Ethiopia's Tigray, which saw an end to the hostilities only six months ago, was the deadliest of conflicts of the 21st century, with more than 600,000 civilian deaths. Violent conflicts in Africa are not limited to Ethiopia and Sudan only. Several other countries are currently caught in conflict traps, including South Sudan, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, the Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, and Nigeria.

As the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) points out, Africa is the region that witnesses most state-based and non-state conflicts globally. After some normality returned to Iraq and Syria, Africa has also overtaken the Middle East in the number of civilian deaths. Corruption, poverty, and ethnic and religious divides are often given as reasons why Africa has become the home of so many intractable and violent conflicts. But the high presence of these conflict-causing internal factors in Africa is seen to be due to

the presence of external actors and their past and present engagement in the continent. Colonial drawing of the border in Africa has been arbitrary, and it has overlooked the pre-existing sociocultural, ethnoreligious groups in the African countries.

The insecurity among African countries about their national legitimacy makes their leaders see any cross-border interaction or migration as a security threat. Moreover, the colonial-inherited administrative structure has kept the presence of the state limited to a few urban centres, resulting in the state failing to provide basic services to many of its people and forming powerful non-state actors and armed groups. Africa owes vast natural and human resources and, if managed well, can become a continent of peace and prosperity. Instead, it has become the epicentre of conflicts and humanitarian crises. Africa has the world's almost one-third of mineral reserves. The continent is rich in gold, diamonds, platinum, uranium, cobalt, chromium, and platinum. Africa has 65 per cent of the world's arable land and 10 per cent of freshwater.

With this huge natural resource, Africa's predominantly young population can bring a substantial demographic dividend to the region and even the world. But Africa's extreme poverty rate is six

to seven times the world's average. And its economy is highly dependent on foreign assistance, as the continent receives one-third of the world's aid. Despite having everything, Africa is suffering from poverty, underdevelopment, and large-scale violence. The African Union (AU) is celebrating its 60th Anniversary this week, as it was established on May 25, 1963 in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. The AU member states are expected to observe the commemoration of Africa Day under the theme of "Our Africa, Our Future."

Ten years ago, on the 50th Anniversary, African leaders had solemnly pledged to work towards ending armed conflicts in the continent and not to leave the burden of conflicts to the next generation. Three years after, in 2016, the leaders adopted the Lusaka Road Map with 54 practical steps to end the conflicts by 2020. The deadline passed three years ago; the continent is nowhere near ending its conflicts. Instead, it is witnessing an increasing number of conflicts, which have become more violent. For more than two decades, the AU has had a mandate allowing it to intervene in the internal affairs of member states. But it has been extremely reluctant to do so and has remained absent even from proactively trying to mediate in a few recent violent conflicts. It has also failed to take a principled

position on military coups in several countries. The world is happy to endorse the AU slogan "African Solutions for African Problems" as it sees this policy as an escape from committing its military, diplomatic, and economic resources to manage Africa's conflicts.

Though the slogan sounds legitimate, it is not even a preferred option for all parties to the African conflicts. In some cases, when it has happened, the interventions of African states have also become as controversial, if not more than foreign interventions. Many African troops lack the training and equipment to effectively participate in a peace operation. Moreover, most of the conflicts in Africa have international dimensions; thus, it is not viable to expect these conflicts to be managed by Africans without international assistance. The AU sees itself as Africa's primary interlocutor of peace and security but lacks a clear mandate, diplomatic heft, and military strength to play that role effectively. Member states, seeking immediate and preferred solutions, align with subregional power or international actors. Thus, to manage the complex conflicts in the continent, the AU must be open to working with subregional and international organisations and powers. In a globalised world, in their pursuit of peace and prosperity, the African Union and its member-states must keep their options for partnership open.

Why the panic over rising immigration?

Jonathan Portes

THE UK public policy landscape is littered with disasters. From record NHS waiting lists to the de facto legalisation of petty crime and serious sexual assault, to the environmental damage created by the privatised water and sewerage companies. With immigration figures on Thursday likely to show that net migration in 2022 was the highest level on record, it's tempting for politicians and commentators to add immigration to this list - although many have already done so on the basis of what, charitably, are wild, uninformed guesstimates. For Labour, immigration levels play into the narrative that 13 years of Tory rule have broken the country. For the ethno-nationalist right inside and outside government, well represented at the National Conservative conference last week, the idea that our culture and national identity are threatened by an influx of mostly dark-skinned foreigners is foundational.

The truth is very different. In fact, the migration statistics reflect something that is rare indeed in the UK right now - a successful policy implemented efficiently and effectively and, even rarer, the crystallisation of a genuine "Brexit opportunity". First, those figures. Some of the rise is temporary, driven by special visas for those coming from Hong Kong and Ukraine. The relatively low profile of these schemes is itself a success, reflecting the fact that, despite the rhetoric around those crossing the Channel, in the rare cases when the UK does open "safe and legal routes" for refugees, it works well. The impact of rising international student numbers on net migration will also reverse over time, since most will depart after finishing their studies. But what about the new, post-Brexit migration system? On the one hand, the numbers of those coming to

work and study have risen; on the other, businesses, especially those in the food and hospitality sector, continue to complain about labour shortages.

Some of this is normal. Anti-immigration politicians and lobby groups, and the Home Office, always complain the numbers are too high, while business, and other government departments such as the Treasury and the Department for Health, always want a more liberal system. But these longstanding conflicts have been brought into sharp relief by two things. First, the current state of the labour market, with labour demand high after the pandemic, and domestic labour supply constrained by the rise in ill health and early retirement. And the end of free movement was always going to reduce the flexibility of the UK labour market. Second, Brexit. The government has been forced to make policy choices around which occupations and sectors should be open to migrant workers. And this in turn has heightened the political saliency of these choices and the associated lobbying. So the complaints from both sides represent, in a political and democratic sense, success: a feature, not a bug. This is also true of the economics. The vast majority of economists, including me, thought Brexit would make the UK considerably less open to both trade and migration with the EU, but somewhat more so to the rest of the world. We were right. We also thought that the downsides of the former would outweigh the upside of the latter. We were wrong.

In fact, the new post-Brexit migration system has achieved its key objectives. By ending free movement, it has reduced the flow of relatively lower skilled and lower paid workers to some sectors. But by liberalising migration flows from the

rest of the world, it has substantially increased those coming to work in the NHS, the care sector, and high-skilled and high-paid roles in information and communications technology, finance and professional services. It's too early to say what the overall balance sheet will look like - but as well as alleviating workforce pressures on the NHS and social care sectors, the rise in skilled worker inflows, alongside the rise in international students, is likely to have increased not just GDP but GDP per capita, benefiting the UK economy and public finances. And, most of all, public opinion appears to be intensely relaxed about rising inflows when the economic case is clear. It's not all good news. So far, at least, there's little to suggest that ending free movement has pushed up wages in the sectors most affected; indeed, wages in hospitality have fallen relative to other sectors. And it's strikingly hypocritical for the government to tell employers in that sector to recruit Britons, while in the care sector, where it has far greater control over wages and conditions, it's encouraging employers to pay migrants a pittance.

So what should the government - or the next one - do about immigration? As little as possible. There are some useful tweaks that could be made to the system. But where there are serious systemic problems, as with social care, the lack of good quality training in some sectors, or the excessive dependence of some of our universities on lucrative international students at the expense of loss-making Britons, the solutions are almost entirely outside the immigration system. We've had the biggest shake-up to immigration rules in half a century, and, broadly, it's working. Let's breathe a sigh of relief and let it bed in. Meanwhile, there are plenty of more urgent things to worry about.

Dedollarization and collapse of the West

Gregory K. Tanaka & Edward Miamme Salce

WITH foreign countries dumping dollars and foregoing future purchases of US Treasury bonds, a "domino effect" has been triggered that is now causing hyperinflation in the US and may one day result in the collapse of the West. As more nations join Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa using their own currencies or the currencies of BRICS nations to conduct foreign trade instead of the US dollar, this process of "dedollarization" is depriving the US of its future ability to "export" inflation abroad. This is how the US has exported inflation in the past:

For three decades, foreign nations have been loaning money to the US by buying 10 or 20 year US Treasury bonds. This enables the US to take that infusion of capital and use it to power its economy and military machinery. But with the US paying foreign nations back in dollars that will have lost much of their value during the ensuing 10 or 20 year period of the loan-due to inflation-the original lenders are

getting back only a fraction of the amount they loaned initially to the US. In this way, the US has been "exporting" its inflation abroad. But with dedollarization-or "disintermediation" as economists might describe it-the inflation the US once exported abroad now has nowhere to go. This means that inflation stays at home in the US where it harms US consumers. In effect, US consumers must now use dollars that are declining in value due to inflation to buy foreign goods and services that are costing more and more. The economic and emotional pain of this on the American public is unimaginable and will cause a panic not seen since 1929 and the Great Depression. Following the recent insolvencies of Silicon Valley Bank, Republic Bank, and Signature Bank, 16 other intermediate size US banks have asked the Federal Reserve Bank and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a lifeline of support in the amount of \$32.6 billion. When news of this reaches the public, depositors may

begin withdrawing funds from banks considered "too big to fail"-like JP Morgan Chase, Citigroup, Bank of America, and Wells Fargo. The accelerating pattern of bank deposit withdrawals is now spreading to banks in Europe and elsewhere.

In fact, the combined depth of financial difficulty faced by the US and Europe raises the question of whether this development may ultimately signal a decline of the West itself. Social scientists will want to watch carefully to see if the economic breakdown spreads to the political and social arenas. If that occurs, it could well mark the end of a 500-year period of Western colonialism launched when Christopher Columbus "sailed the ocean blue" in 1492. And with global economies far larger than in 1929, the overall effect of a burgeoning economic breakdown could be far greater in scale than experienced during the Great Depression. In addition, \$2.5 quadrillion in razzle-dazzle instruments called "derivatives" will

magnify this problem of scale. Should derivative holders panic and collect on their holdings, this will cause a liquidity shock to large US and European banks who are holders of "counterparty risk" for these derivatives. The great question the world is now facing is, therefore, whether or not to simply let the global financial system collapse of its own accord. This is what Iceland did following the financial crisis of 2008. After letting their banks fail, Iceland rechartered them a few months later-and voila, the economy was quickly back to operating on all fours. The problem with the Iceland model is that it brings with it a corresponding "debt jubilee" where outstanding consumer loans like mortgages, credit card debt and student loans are all forgiven and erased from the books. Faced with the specter of a debt jubilee, global elites will likely go to Congress to ask for another bailout. They will learn, however, that this time the American voters will refuse to allow a second bailout that will only lead to higher taxes they must one day pay.

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Pro-business measures to be taken in upcoming budget, says Governor

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Wednesday said that Pakistan was passing through a critical juncture of its economic history and under the prevailing circumstances, the current budget would be an instrumental factor for setting up the future economic direction of the country.

Addressing the business community of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), he said that the business community was playing a key role in the economic development and social prosperity of the country, adding that maximum relief to be provided for local businesses for industrial growth and

economic development of the country.

He said that economic development was strongly related to political stability and the incumbent government was making every possible effort to bring the country out of all these challenges and put it back on track for development and prosperity.

He said, "Political instability in the past years has not only damaged the economic interest of the country but it promoted the politics of indecency, violence, and hater, adding that the incident of May 09 was an example of that politics."

"We strongly condemned the politics of violence, and intolerance and the

entire nation was standing with Pakistan and its valiant armed forces," he said.

"National interest was above all the political gains and we will work hard to protect the nation and national interest."

The Governor assured the business community of including their proposals in the federal budget, besides addressing their problems to revive trade and business activities for achieving sustainable economic development in the country.

Speaking on the occasion, President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtavari urged the government to incorporate the proposals of the business community in the budget-making process,

which would help the country to achieve sustainable economic development.

He urged for formulating long-term sustainable economic policies and ensuring their continuity to attain economic development and social prosperity in the country. He said, "All the incidents that have taken place on May 9 were destructive and painful for every citizen of the country."

"The business community of the entire Islamabad is standing with Pakistani forces, and in this regard, the Islamabad Chamber will organize a solidarity ceremony with the martyrs of armed forces and to pay tributes to their great sacrifices," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing meeting of Economic coordination committee of Cabinet.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, Santa Rose, MSC United-VIII, Bulk Paraguay, Stream Baltic and FSM carrying Containers, Coal, Edible oil and LPG, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Port Electric Power Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal and EngroVopak Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile, three more ships, Ocean Hope, Hafnia Providence and Nave Aquila with Chemicals and Gas oil also arrived at the outer anchorage of the port on the same day.

A total of 07 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Al-Thakira and Santa Rosa left the Port on Wednesday morning and two more ships, FSM and Stream Baltic are expected to sail today.

Cargo throughput during the last 24 hours stood at 137,246 tones, comprising 103,207 tones imports Cargo and 34,039 tones export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 3,320 Containers (1,673 TEUs Imports and 1,647 TEUs export) was handled at the port.

There are 08 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, BMC Crystal and Ocean Hope & another ship, Cussler carrying Palm oil, Chemicals and Containers are expected to take berths at LCT, EVTL and QICT respectively on Wednesday.

Malaysia's business expectation slowing down

KUALA LUMPUR (APP): Malaysia's business sentiments for the near term turned pessimistic as the confidence indicator decreased to minus 3.1 percent in the second quarter of 2023 from a growth of 3.6 percent in the last quarter, official data showed Wednesday.

This expectation is in line with global economic slowdown amid persistent challenges including inflationary pressures, the Department of Statistics Malaysia said in a statement.

Three sectors namely construction, wholesale & retail trade and industry anticipated challenging business conditions in the second quarter.

The construction sector's business confidence remained negative, with the confidence indicator recorded at minus 26.9 percent in the reference quarter.

Meanwhile, wholesale & retail trade and Industry sectors turned pessimistic in the same quarter.

Respondents within the wholesale and retail trade sector expect a less favorable business outlook with a confidence indicator of minus 10.2 percent in the second quarter as against 4 percent in the last quarter, where both of the sub-sectors posted discouraging perceptions.

The industry sector also foresees a less favorable business situation in the second quarter as the confidence indicator recorded minus 2.1% as compared to 1.1% previously.

However, the services sector continues to be optimistic about the business performance with a confidence indicator of 3.9 percent for the corresponding quarter as compared to 11.4 percent in the first quarter.

It is also noted that in the next six months, namely April to September, the business outlook remained positive with a net balance of 14.9 percent from 12.1 percent recorded previously.

Stock Exchange gains 18.02 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Wednesday witnessed a bullish trend gaining 18.02 points, with a positive change of 0.04 per cent, closing at 41,117.33 against 41,099.31 points on the previous day.

A total of 105,572,761 shares valuing Rs2,576 billion were traded during the day as compared to 91,494,440 shares valuing Rs2,390 billion the previous day.

As many as 309 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 135 of them recorded gains and 148 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 26 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Hascol Petrol with 21,513,500 shares at Rs5.22 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 6,250,538 shares at Rs1.12 per share, and HBL Total Treas with 5,005,000 shares at Rs11.20 per share.

Nestle Pakistan witnessed a maximum increase of Rs200.00 per share price, closing at Rs6700.00, whereas the runner-up was

Al-Abbas Sugar with a Rs30.38 rise in its per share price to Rs435.38.

Reliance Cotton witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs43.35 per share closing at Rs534.82, followed by Premium Tex with a Rs38.54 decline to close at Rs475.36.

Rupee gains one paisa against Dollar: Pakistani rupee gained 01 paisa against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs287.13 against the previous day's closing of Rs287.14.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs306 and Rs308, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 72 paises to close at Rs309.51 against the last day's closing of Rs310.23, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs2.07, whereas an increase of 71 paises was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at

Rs356.77 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs356.06.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham witnessed no change to close at Rs78.19 whereas the Saudi Riyal went down by 01 paises to close at Rs76.56.

Gold prices increase by Rs600 to Rs237,800 per tola: The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs600 and was sold at Rs237,800 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs237,200 the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs514 to Rs203,875 from Rs203,361, whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs186,886 from Rs186,414.

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 increased by US\$ 23 to \$1982 against its sale at \$1959, the association reported.

Iftikhar hands over SCCI presidency to BD

ISLAMABAD (APP): After the completion of his tenure, Iftikhar Ali Malik, outgoing President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry has formally handed over the prestigious portfolio of presidency of the SAARC Chamber to Jashim Uddin from Bangladesh for a term of two years.

Through a video link, he extended best wishes to the new president and assured full cooperation from the Pakistan side to make the forum a real success, said a news release on Wednesday.

In this regard, a ceremony was held in Dhaka wherein the new president expressed his gratitude to Iftikhar for extending greetings on assuming the coveted post. Malik during his term had made significant contributions to the chamber, particularly in his

capacity as a leader and advocate for business and trade promotion within the SAARC region. He played a crucial role in shaping the chamber's policies, initiatives, and strategies.

Malik has actively promoted trade and investment opportunities besides being instrumental in organizing trade exhibitions, business conferences, and forums to facilitate business interactions among the member countries. Through these efforts, he has worked towards enhancing economic cooperation and regional integration.

As a respected leader in the business community, Iftikhar Malik has been actively involved in policy advocacy at the SAARC Chamber. He has represented the interests of businesses from Pakistan and other SAARC member countries,

addressing issues related to trade barriers, investment facilitation, and regional economics.

He has also played a key role in fostering bilateral relations between Pakistan and other SAARC member states. Malik has led business delegations and participated in high-level meetings, promoting cross-border collaborations and partnerships. His efforts were aimed at enhancing economic ties and fostering goodwill among SAARC nations.

Malik has actively supported programs aimed at poverty alleviation, education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability.

SECP issues fraud alert

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) on Wednesday warned the general public against investing in any fraudulent investment schemes that promise hefty profits and unrealistic incentives.

The Commission has been constantly clarifying that mere registration of a company, does not authorize it to solicit deposits from the general public or offer investment schemes, said a press release issued here.

The SECP has noticed that a company, namely "Alliance in Motion Global (Private) Limited," is offering various packages to attract the public to its unlawful business activities of multi-level marketing (MLM), in violation of clauses of the memorandum of association.

The directors of the company include Raymond Asperin, Eduardo Cabantog, and Ahmad Muhammad.

Raising unauthorized deposits from the general public and indulging in referral marketing, MLM, pyramid, and ponzi schemes are unlawful activities in terms of the explanation of Section 301 of the Companies Act, 2017. The general public is hereby cautioned and advised not to invest in any such illegal investment schemes offered by the aforementioned company.

American Business Council of Pakistan conducts annual survey

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The American Business Council of Pakistan (ABC), conducted its annual survey among 60 companies in its association to assess the current business environment in the country.

The survey findings reveal that the companies have made significant contributions during the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022. However, significant apprehensions exist about the ease of operating business in the present and short-term future and concerns about Pakistan's international perception have been raised, emphasizing the need for immediate government support and policies to facilitate the investment and expansion plans of American companies operating in Pakistan for the FY 2023 and beyond.

Key findings from the annual survey include:

Contributions: The par-

ticipating companies have made substantial contributions to the Pakistan economy during the FY 2021-2022. This includes the cumulative revenue of PKR 847Bn, exports worth PKR 81Bn, a capital investment of 57 Bn in the L3Y and national exchequer amounting to PKR 159 Bn. These companies have also actively engaged in CSR activities, contributing significantly - PKR 1.6 Bn - to various social and community development initiatives. Their commitment to making a positive impact in Pakistan goes beyond business operations.

Future Investment: 61% of the companies expect a negative GDP growth in the FY 2023 and 83% have major concerns about operating business smoothly in this current short term economic scenario. 94% of the companies are, however, expect that the situation may turn around eventually and feel

more optimistic about the long-term future but not the short-term. Nonetheless, 67% of the companies have plans for further investments and expansion in Pakistan in the FY 2023.

Ease of Doing Business: 48% of the respondents expressed concerns about a drastic decline in the ease of doing business in Pakistan. Cumbersome regulatory processes, bureaucratic hurdles and inconsistencies may be causing obstacles that hinder business operations and growth.

International Perception and Business Climate: 71% of the surveyed companies expressed concerns over Pakistan's perception internationally. 79% felt that the overall business climate has become worse, considering the current challenges faced by the country. They emphasized the importance of addressing these challenges and creating a favor-

able environment to attract more foreign investment.

Considering these findings, ABC needs the support of the government of Pakistan to consider the following recommendations:

Streamline regulatory processes, reduce bureaucracy, and enhance efficiency to improve the ease of doing business.

Facilitate a favorable business climate by addressing the concerns raised by American companies regarding Pakistan's international perception.

"We believe that addressing these key areas identified in the survey will create a more favorable business environment in Pakistan," said Jamshed Salfar, President of the American Business Council of Pakistan. "Collaborative efforts between Pakistan and American companies can lead to increased investment, job creation, and economic prosperity for Pakistan."

PCJCCI to setup Pak-China Trade Portal to boost export

LAHORE (APP): China is a huge market for Pakistani mangoes and there is a dire need for joint efforts from China and Pakistan to glorify potential in this sector.

PCJCCI President Moazzam Ali Ghurki stated this in a think-tank session of the joint chamber held here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Wednesday. Ghurki said that although Pakistani mangoes were cheaper compared with mangoes in other countries but now the Chinese people pay more attention to quality than price. Therefore, Pakistan should diversify its varieties and produce high-quality mangoes.

He added that similar to Pak-China Knowledge Portal and Pak-China

Technology Portal, PCJCCI is planning to initiate Pak-China Trade Portal as Chinese people prefer online shopping, and in this way Pakistani exporters could use this platform for mango exports.

Fang Yulong, Senior Vice President PCJCCI shared his views by saying, "We should put more efforts in mango packaging, preservation, deep processing and transportation." Three-dimensional transportation channels by land, sea, and air should be fully utilized for rapid delivery. Especially in terms of packaging, the maturity and appearance of each box is the key to boosting sales.

He mentioned, "At the same time, we can establish

large warehouse supermarkets in major Chinese cities. With the improvement of people's living standards and the pursuit of nutritional diversity, the consumption of the king of fruit is increasing year by year in China."

Hamza Khalid, Vice President PCJCCI, said that as per the sources, Pakistan has exported 37.4 tons of fresh and dried mangoes to China in the previous years. At present, Pakistan's mangoes account for only less than 0.36 percent of China's total mango imports.

In some major Chinese cities, most mangoes are imported from Southeast Asian countries. On the other hand, Chinese people

are expecting more delicious, high-quality fruits from their friendly neighbour country.

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI, added that PCJCCI aims to provide a one-stop solution for both the Chinese and Pakistani business community. "Last year, we also conducted various B2B seminars and webinars to facilitate Pakistani mango exporters and Chinese mango importers because due to catastrophic flood the mango yields were badly damaged. We are also planning to organize such webinars and seminars again to establish long-term relationships between Pakistani exporters and Chinese mango importers."

Mobile phone imports decreased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed a decrease of 73.84 percent during the ten months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Pakistan imported mobile phones worth US \$ 473.287 million during July-April (2022-23) as compared to the imports of US \$ 1809.219 million during July-April (2021-22), showing a decline of 73.84 percent, according to PBS.

Meanwhile, on a year-to-year basis, the import of mobile phones also dipped by 95.03 percent during the month of April 2023 when compared to the same month of last year.

The import of mobiles into the country during April 2023 was recorded at \$ 10,587 million against the exports of \$212.881 million in April 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, the imports of mobile phones also witnessed a decrease of 28.69% during April 2023, as compared to the imports of US \$14.846 million during March 2023, according to the data.

Stocks sink over US debt ceiling concerns

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets slipped on Wednesday as investors grow increasingly concerned about stalled US debt ceiling talks aimed at averting a painful default.

Traders were also digesting inflation data in Britain and waiting for the release of minutes of the latest Federal Reserve policy meeting for clues about its interest rate plans.

Wall Street extended losses at the open while European equities were sharply lower in afternoon deals and Asian indices closed lower. Optimism that flowed through trading floors at the start of the week has given way to trepidation, with several Republicans questioning a June deadline over the debt ceiling -- and some saying the country is nowhere near running out of cash.

The stock market "is seeing the walls close in on the debt ceiling uncertainty", said Briefing.com market analyst Patrick O'Hare.

President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy have had a number of meetings to find a

path to lifting the borrowing limit from the current \$31.8 trillion. Republicans have set cutting spending next year to 2022 levels as a "red line", but Democrats have so far refused to commit to that.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said an agreement must be reached by June 1, otherwise the United States risks defaulting on its debt repayments, which most economists warn could spark turmoil in the global economy and markets.

"Even though there is a strong belief that the US politicians are not foolish to trigger a self-induced economic crisis and that they will reach a deal just before time, appetite in risk assets looks weakened," said Ipek Ozkardeskaya, analyst at Swissquote Bank.

SPI Asset Management's Stephen Innes said the debt limit debate "highlights the political polarisation that persists in the US, and casts a cloud over the political process in Washington".

"The repeated brinkmanship could catch the eye of the rating agencies once

again" after S&P downgraded the US credit rating during a similar standoff in 2011, he said.

He added that back then, "the underlying issue was the worsening political polarisation, and it's hard to argue that the process has done anything other than continue to worsen since 2011." Inflation and central bank monetary policies also remained in the spotlight.

Falling US inflation and worries about the banking sector have fanned bets that the Federal Reserve would pause its rate-hike drive.

But recent data pointing to a still-strong US jobs market, as well as comments from top officials, have traders worried another increase is on its way.

In Britain, data showed inflation falling under double digits to its lowest level in more than a year, but it remained elevated at 8.7 percent as high food prices offset weaker energy costs.

Analysts said they expected the Bank of England to raise its key rate again as the BoE and the markets had expected consumer prices to fall further.



In brief

Wapda, Army advance to finals of tennis even

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Wapda and Pakistan Army made it to the finals of both men's singles and women's singles tennis events of the 34th National Games after defeating their respective opponents at PTF Tennis Complex, Garden Avenue, here on Wednesday. Wapda maintained their unbeaten run in the men's singles event, overpowering Pakistan Air Force (PAF) 2-0. Pakistan No.1 Aqeel Khan downed Muhammad Shoaib 6-1, 6-2, while Muhammad Abid beat Yousaf Khalil 6-4, 7-5 in a well-fought contest. In the best match of the day, Abdullah Adnan of Army beat Barkatullah of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 7-5, 6-2, after fighting back from 0-4 in the first set. In another match, Army's Huzaiifa Abdul Rehman defeated Hamid Israr of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 6-0, 6-0. The finals will be played on Thursday. Following are the results of the matches played on Wednesday.

Yasin wins Mr Pakistan Olympic title

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): In a major achievement, renowned bodybuilder Yasin Khan — who represents the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) — won Mr Pakistan Olympic 2023 title during the ongoing 34th National Games in Quetta. While competing among the top bodybuilders from across the country, the Peshawar-born athlete remained on top. In the final round of the event, Yasin competed with Karachi's Fida Baloch. He was voted as the best poser which earned him the coveted title. "It's a very proud moment for me," the champion bodybuilder said. "It was a tough competition overall. I worked really hard to reach this stage. I am extremely thankful to my parents, trainers and friends for their all-out support," he added. After he was named the winner, the people took him on their shoulders and took a round of bodybuilding arena. "I didn't expect this much love from the people of Quetta. I would like to thank all of them for their support and appreciation," Yasin Khan, who has won several accolades previously, aims to represent Pakistan at the international level. "I want to represent Pakistan at the international level. I have won many titles before but I want to do much more than this for my country," he said. "Our government needs to support bodybuilders. Our sport is very expensive. We need financial support to represent Pakistan in the world," he concluded. It is pertinent to mention here that WAPDA earned 150 points to win Gold medal in team category of the bodybuilding event. Pakistan Army, with 76 points, bagged Silver whereas hosts Balochistan (15 points), managed Bronze medal.

Dainese takes stage 17 win

CAORLE (Agencies): Italian rider Alberto Dainese edged the sprint on Wednesday's stage 17 of the Giro d'Italia as Geraint Thomas finished in the pack to keep the leader's pink jersey. Mark Cavendish, who announced on Tuesday that he would be retiring at the end of the season, made an error a kilometre out from the finish of the flat 197km ride from Pergine Valsugana. The 38-year-old lost his lead-in man and finished well back, most probably ending his record of winning a stage at every Giro he has ridden unless he can survive the mountains over the next three days and take Sunday's finale in Rome.

Pakistan thrash Chinese Taipei by 15-1 in Junior Asia Hockey Cup

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan began their Junior Asia Cup Hockey campaign in style, beating Chinese Taipei 15-1 at Salalah in Oman on Tuesday.

Muhammad Sufyan and Abdul Hanan Shahid from Pakistan both made hat-trick. Pakistan will take on Thailand tomorrow.

It is pertinent to mention that the Junior Asia Cup 2023 is the gateway for securing the direct spot for this year's Junior World Cup in Malaysia.

Pakistan must finish among the top three to secure a direct berth.

While Pakistan haven't played against foreign teams for long, the only plus point for them is the presence of nine players from the senior team who have competed in international events like the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Champions Trophy.

Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) included nine junior players in the senior team when they

were teenagers, keeping in mind the future requirements. The other nine including the goalkeepers will make their debuts during the continental event.

The team, however, got a boost three weeks ago when internationally acclaimed coach Rolland Oldman joined the training camp.

Pakistan are placed in a very tough group with India and Japan.

They must defeat one of them to qualify for the semi-finals.

PBC Dera wins GU's 'Shuhada-e-Pak-Army' Badminton tournament

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The first 'Shuhada-e-Pak-Army' Badminton' tournament organized by Gomal University has been concluded here at its Quaid-e-Azam Campus.

The tournament, jointly organized by the varsity's Directorate of Sports and Department of Public Relations, was aimed to pay homage to the martyrs of the armed forces.

Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) team defeated the team of the local newspaper 'Daily Sangam News' in the final match of the tournament.

Gomal University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Shakeeb Ullah also congratulated the winning

team. The concluding ceremony of the event was attended by PBC Station Director at Dera Ismail Khan Station Syed Najmul Hassan, Deans of all departments and Heads of all departments in Quaid-e-Azam Campus besides print, electronic and social media journalists.

In the semifinal matches PBC team defeated the team of Dera Press Club while the 'Daily Sangam News' team defeated the team of another local newspaper Daily Tauqeer.

The vice chancellor, while addressing the ceremony, said the purpose of organizing this event was to pay tribute to our martyrs as the nation was living in a

peaceful environment due to their sacrifices.

He was of the view that the living nations never forget their martyrs.

Professor Dr. Shakeeb Ullah said that soldiers of the Pakistan Army were not only performing the security duties at borders but they always served the nation as frontline warriors to safeguard the lives and property of the citizens in case of any natural calamity including floods and earthquakes.

The vice chancellor, on behalf of all the teachers, officers, employees and students of Gomal University, paid rich tribute to the martyrs of all security agencies, including the Pakistan Army.

PFF combines election physical scrutiny, District C'ships

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has announced the integration of election physical scrutiny into the District Championships, a ground-breaking initiative endorsed by FIFA.

This decision not only fulfills PFF Constitutional requirements but also sets a new benchmark for transparent and representative elections in Pakistan's football community.

PFF Normalization Committee member Saud Hashimi said, "For the first time in Pakistan's history, physical scrutiny will be conducted through competition. This ensures that only genuine clubs meeting necessary requirements will qualify for voting rights in the upcoming PFF election."

By combining physical scrutiny with the District Championships, the PFF aimed to streamline the election timeline while upholding FIFA's mandate for free, fair, representative, and constitutionally valid elections.

District Championships served as a prerequisite for voting clubs, enabling on-ground assessment during the initial round matches. To accommodate over 140 districts and numerous teams, the PFF would organize a minimum of 140 District Championships in batches of 6-8 districts each weekend. The first-round matches, dedicated to physical scrutiny, would have shorter durations. Subsequent rounds would be full-length, culminating in a final match to crown the District Champion.

The Pakistan Football Connect (PFC) system, enabled compliance with FIFA's rules and regulations for organized football.

The implementation of one player, one club rules was vital for official football recognition, and these Championships were expected to revive Pakistan's standing in authentic FIFA club football.

During the initial round of scrutiny matches, the PFF would conduct a randomized draw. Each game would consist of two 25-minute halves, a 10-minute break, and a penalty shootout, if necessary.

The scrutiny protocol included comprehensive compliance checks for players and officials by the PFC team and match commissioner.

Mountaineer Jabbar Bhatti all set to attempt Nanga Parbat

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned Pakistani mountaineer Lt Col (R) Dr Jabbar Bhatti is all set to scale Nanga Parbat (8,126 metres) along with other four members of his team in the first week of next month.

"We will proceed to the expedition on June 2. Four seasoned climbers -Asif Bhatti, Dr Naveed, Saad Muhammad and Faheem Pasha will be accompanying me," Jabbar told APP on Wednesday.

With a death probability of 21%, Nanga Parbat - the world's ninth highest peak - continues to claim its place in the top five most dangerous mountains in the world. Till now 85 of the climbers have died while attempting it.

"I'm well aware of the challenges. Temperature may drop to -35C to -40 C, while wind can blow at a speed above 300 kph. But I feel myself well in shape and fully prepared for the task. This is what a mountaineer should always be ready to face," he added.

Jabbar's batchmates from Faisalabad Medical College remember him nurturing his urge to climb mountains but



not at the expense of his education. He surprised his fellow batchmates in 1981, when he as a final year student opted for a two-week climbing course through Alpine Club of Pakistan, yet ended up achieving The Best Graduate Award in MBBS.

Next few years were to define his future. In 1982 he joined the Pakistan Army and in 1983 he attended a climbing course at celebrated French National School of Mountaineering (ENSA). In 1984 all of a sudden, he ended up filling a vacant slot of military liaison officer with an expedition.

This very expedition, Gasherbrum-I & II, was being led by the world's renowned Reinhold Andreas Messner. After

having been baptized by nobody less than Messner he achieved his first climb of 8,000 meter in 1985, when he climbed Broad Peak (8,050m) and emerged as achieving the unthinkable.

In the mountaineering world, he stunned everyone by scaling his first 8,000 meters peak in alpine style i.e. with no help of porters and advance dumping of supplies. And in Pakistan he became the youngest Pakistani to do climb an 8,000 meters peak.

The Government of Pakistan acknowledged that by granting him President's Award for Pride of Performance.

Meanwhile, he volunteered to join Special Services Group (SSG) and also mastered the art of paragliding. From there on his life alternated between mountain climbing in military expeditions, service with SSG, serving in AMC (Army Medical Corps) as a doctor and perfecting in all disciplines of gliding. He honourably retired from the Army in 2007 as Lieutenant Colonel.

Shan Masood honoured to lead Yorkshire

BIRMINGHAM (Agencies): Pakistani cricketer Shan Masood says that leading a club like Yorkshire in English county cricket is a "great honour" and a matter of pride for him. Masood is the first Pakistani cricketer to captain in the club's history since it was established in 1853. Last year, he became only the second Pakistani player after Wasim Akram to lead a county team, when he was appointed captain for Derbyshire CCC for the T20 Blast tournament.

The southpaw, when asked about his decision to join Yorkshire, said that it was a huge opportunity which he is fully ready to embrace. Masood's remarks came while speaking to Geo News in an exclusive interview at Birmingham's Edgbaston stadium after Yorkshire Vikings defeat in the opening match of the T20 Blast tournament against Birmingham Bears which the home team won by 34 runs. "Indeed to be captain of a club like Yorkshire for which at least three previous captains of Pakistan team and someone like the great Sachin Tendulkar have played.

"Even some of the great English players from the past and present have represented this club." Due to his commitments with the national team, Masood missed the first few weeks of the current county season for Yorkshire. The Blast game against Birmingham was his second competitive game with the club, as its in-charge. "It's always difficult to adjust to conditions when you join the team when already few matches of the season are played.

"Unlike last year when I was available for Derbyshire CCC from day one, I've missed more than a month this season; it's not easy to settle down quickly". In the opening match of the tournament, Yorkshire won the toss and decided to field first. They were in a good position when Birmingham lost four quick wickets for just 51 runs.

However, the Bears still managed to score 200 runs. Masood termed losing the match after being in such a strong position as "unacceptable". "We will have to look into our weakness and the team will have to learn quick lessons as we move forward". The good thing is that we have to play 14 games in the group stage, he said. "Last year when I was leading Derbyshire Falcons we lost four out of six games in the beginning but when the group stage finished we managed to win nine games out of fourteen."

The Yorkshire skipper vowed to learn from the mistakes saying that they can afford such mistakes early in the tournament and hoped to perform well to generate positive results for the team. "We have a gap of a few days before our next game against Worcester Rapids so we will have some rest and more practice sessions".

Shan said that fans have high hopes for him, especially with the start Yorkshire have in this season which is no way near satisfactory. "Individual players and the will have to perform really well from now onwards, so we can get results in our favour.

We just need one good result to build the momentum. "A good team will always look to seize that momentum and achieve back-to-back victories".

HEC Squash team advanced to semis of national games

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) squash team reached the semi-finals of the ongoing national games by defeating Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Azad Kashmir.

The HEC team is participating in the National Games under the captaincy of Khushal Riaz Khan of University of Engineering and Technology, (UET) Peshawar, consisting of Uzair Rasheed from Lahore and Mutahir Ali and Jawad Khan from Peshawar.

While Zulfiqar Ali is the coach, and Shahram Changezi is performing the duties of the team manager.

The second match of the HEC squash team was against the Punjab squash team. This competition was also won by HEC by three



zero. In which Khushal Riaz defeated Mehmood of Punjab, and Mutahir Ali defeated Khaqan Malik.

On the second day of the National Games, HEC's squash team was first from Azad Kashmir, in which HEC played brilliantly and beat the competition by three to zero. Mutahir Ali defeated Hamid, and Jawad Khan defeated Dawar.

After three consecutive

victories, the Higher Education Commission's squash team has reached the semi-finals of the squash event of the National Games. On this occasion, HEC captain Khushal Riaz Khan said that his team is fully determined to win and will bring a medal for the Higher Education Commission and his university, The UET Peshawar.

Peshawar Zalmi decided to form four teams

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Zalmi decided to form four teams after 2 day Trials, twenty young cricketers will get training in the National Cricket Academy.

Trials continued at Hayatabad Cricket Stadium on the second day of Zalmi Talent Hunt organized by Pakistan Super League franchise Peshawar Zalmi. More than 10,000 young cricketers registered in the open trials. On the second day, more trials of the short-listed cricketers took place.

Peshawar Zalmi Director of Cricket Mohammad Akram said that after the trials four teams have been formed namely Babar Azam XI, Darren Sammy XI, Inzamamul Haque XI and Kamran Akmal XI. Matches will be held between these teams from



tomorrow.

Zalmi Young XI consisting of twenty young cricketers will be select after completion of practice matches & Coaching facilities will be provided to these twenty young cricketers at PCB's National

Cricket Academy Lahore.

Muhammad Akram said that the best talent was seen during the trials and he hopes that these young cricketers will be an asset for Peshawar Zalmi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and for Pakistan in the future.

Fatima Sana to captain Pakistan in emerging women's T20 Asia Cup

KARACHI (PPI) Fatima Sana will lead Pakistan in the upcoming ACC Emerging Women's T20 Asia Cup that will be played in Hong Kong next month. The national women's selection committee has announced 14-player squad, which includes four players who featured in the inaugural ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup earlier in the year, for the eight-team tournament that will be played from 12 till 21 June.

The squad has been put together after observing performances in the T20 phase of the Pakistan Cup Women's Cricket Tournament and emerging camp in Multan in March.

Fatima has played 31 One-Day Internationals and 24 T20 Internationals and the decision to name her captain for the tournament has been made after she captained Strikers, based on probabilities for this squad, to wins in all three matches

in the above-mentioned tournament and led Blasters' successful T20 Championship campaign in Lahore in December.

Squad: Fatima Sana (c), Anoosha Nasir, Eymaan Fatima, Gull Feroza, Gulrukh, Lubna Behram, Najiha Alvi (wk), Natalia Parvaiz, Sadaf Shamas, Shawaal Zulfiqar, Syeda Aroob Shah, Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani and Yusra Amir. Reserves: Amber Kainat, Dua Majid, Fatima Khan and Rameen Shamim

Pakistan are slotted in Group A with Hong Kong, India A and Thailand A. Pakistan will open their campaign on 13 June with the match against Thailand A, after which they play Hong Kong and India A on 15 and 17 June, respectively. Top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals which will be played on 19 June. The final of the tournament will be held on 21 June.

Chief selector Saleem Jaffer: "I want to congratulate all players who have been selected for the emerging Asia Cup and I am hopeful that they will perform to their full potential. We have some outstanding talent coming up and it was a tough call to select 14 players. I want to tell those cricketers who have not been selected for this tournament to keep their heads high and keep working hard and they will definitely get chances in the upcoming events.

"We have been observing these players since the camp in Multan and we have tested them in different conditions, with their most recent challenge being the three T20 matches against our top international players.

"Fatima Sana has displayed some outstanding leadership credentials in domestic tournaments recently, and I am sure she will lead this side with example."



CAORLE: Alternate crop) (L-R) Niccolò Bonifazio of Italy and Team Intermarché - Circus - Wanty, Alberto Dainese of Italy and Team DSM, Michael Matthews of Australia and Team Jayco AlUla and Jonathan Milan of Italy and Team Bahrain - Victorious - Purple Points Jersey sprint at finish line during the the 106th Giro d'Italia 2023, Stage 17 a 197km stage from Pergine Valsugana to Caorle.



In brief

ANF seizes drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in four operations recovered over 50 kg of drugs and arrested five accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that ANF in an operation at Multan Airport arrested two Qatar-bound passengers, residents of Khanewal, going on flight no QR-617 and recovered 215 Ice filled capsules from their possession. In another operation, ANF foiled a bid to smuggle drugs and recovered 1900 grams of Ice drug from the Peshawar 'Swati Phatak Old Bara' area from the possession of two drug smugglers, residents of Khyber. In the third operation near Quetta Qambrani Road, four kg charras was recovered from the possession of an accused resident of Qilla Abdullah while in the fourth operation, a 48 kg Ice drug concealed underground in the Gwadar Klak area was recovered. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

Police arrest five criminals

RAWALPINDI (APP): The district police in their ongoing operations against illegal weapons managed to net five accused and recovered three 30 bore pistols, a Kalashnikov, a 12 bore rifle and ammunition. According to a police spokesman, Rattaamral, Sadiqabad, Gujar Khan and Kalar Syedan police conducted raids in their respective jurisdiction and rounded up five accused namely Zulqarnain, Bilal, Hassan, Zulqarnain, and Qasier and recovered three 30 bore pistols, a Kalashnikov, a 12 bore rifle and ammunition. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigation is under process.

Man held for hurling threats

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a man for subjecting to torture and hurling threats to kill his father. The victim filed an application to Taxila police station that his son Bilal threatened him with dire consequences for not giving money. On the complaint, CPO Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, directed Taxila police registered a case under the Parental Protection Ordinance and arrested the accused. "The accused who violates the sanctity of relationships will definitely be punished." SP Potohar said violence against parents would not be tolerated.

164,800 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 164,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 186,700 cusecs. Water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1426.87 feet and was 28.87 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 64,500 cusecs and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1116.25 feet, which was 66.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 50,400 cusecs and 43,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 58,500, 61,100, 42,900 and 14,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 39,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 23,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Minister of Defence and Chief of General Staff of Azerbaijan Colonel Gerneral Karim Valiyev meeting with Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif. — APP Photo

Pakistan committed to improve health facilities: Minister

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Minister for National Health Services, Abdul Qadir Patel has expressed government's commitment to improve health facilities in the country.

Addressing the World Health Assembly in Geneva, the minister said Pakistan has now moved towards the implementation of its essential package of health services during this year, with enhanced investments by the government.

According to a statement issued here on Wednesday, he said the government has decided to increase the number of community-based lady health workers from 89,000 to 135,000 within five years.

Abdul Qadir Patel said Pakistan considers the implementation of international health regulations as a priority agenda as it has faced a number of health emergencies, including Covid 19 pandemic, Polio, floods, earthquakes and heat waves.

The Health Minister also attended side line meeting organized by the new established Pandemic Fund at

Geneva Pandemic Fund Board that will be reset in May 2023 for which Pakistan was approached by the Fund's Secretariat to either relinquish or retain the Co-investor seat. The meeting was informed that after deliberations at Finance Division and Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Pakistan formally opted to retain the seat.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also been requested to start canvassing with respective foreign relations ministries of the regional countries.

Pakistan has organized a formal regional consultation on May 23, 2023 in order to put forward its candidature for its constituency and to elicit the support of the countries in EMRO region.

Abdul Qadir Patel said that WHO being our core health partner, has also come forward to support Pakistan in providing technical guidance and input for developing Pakistan's proposal for the first Call of Proposal (FCFP) and also coordinating at the regional level with other

countries and respective WHO country offices to support Pakistan's decision to retain the sovereign co-investor seat.

Abdul Qadir Patel addressing the participants said that Pakistan will promote and protect the interest of the constituent countries individually and collectively in the region.

"Taking this opportunity, I would like the pandemic fund to advocate by aiding Pakistan's stance to muster support to retain our candidature as sovereign co-investor in the governing board of the Pandemic Fund", the Minister said.

He said Pakistan's effective and efficient response to COVID-19 has been acknowledged across the globe and despite challenges Pakistan was able to vaccinate more than 90% of its eligible population against the deadly disease. He hoped that Pakistan's performance and response to such a pandemic will lay out the foundation for additional support for strengthening Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response.

PAF pays tribute to Muniruddin Ahmed Shaheed

ISLAMABAD (APP): As a tribute to the bravery and valor of Squadron Leader Muniruddin Ahmed (Shaheed), Directorate General (DG) of Public Relations, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has released a special promo commemorating the heroics of the 1965 war hero.

During the war, Squadron Leader Munir Shaheed flew several combat missions causing significant damage to valuable enemy infrastructure, said a PAF news release issued here on Wednesday.

On 10th September 1965, he led his formation into Indian territory to seek out enemy fighters and shot down an Indian Air Force (IAF) Gnat fighter jet.

On the eve of 11th September 1965, he made the supreme sacrifice when his aircraft was fatally hit by the heavy concentration of enemy's ack-ack guns during a ground attack mission.

In recognition of his utmost professionalism and bravery, the war hero was honored with the prestigious 'Sitara-i-Jurat' posthumously.

NA passes two govt bills

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Assembly (NA) on Wednesday took up most of its agenda and passed two government bills.

Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain moved the National Skills University Islamabad (Amendment) Bill, 2023 which was passed by the House. He moved another bill – the NFC Institute of Engineering and Technology Multan (Amendment) Bill, 2023 – into the House which was also passed.

The House also passed a motion for consideration of the Control of Narcotics Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2022 in the joint sitting of Parliament.

The Half Year Report of the Board of Directors of State Bank of Pakistan on the State of Pakistan's Economy for the year 2022-2023 was also laid in the House. The House considered two calling attention notices and also took up the question hour.

Later, the House was adjourned to meet again on May 30, 2023 (Tuesday) at 01:00 p.m.

Asif reiterates Pak's desire to strengthen partnership with Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The first Deputy Minister of Defense and Chief of General Staff of Azerbaijan Colonel General Karim Valiyev called on Minister for Defense Khawaja Muhammad Asif.

Khawaja Muhammad Asif reiterated Pakistan's strong desire to strengthen its partnership with Azerbaijan in all fields

including defense cooperation, said a news release issued here on Wednesday.

The defense minister further said that both countries share common religions, cultures, and history.

Both countries would thus continue to support each other on various international fora, he added.

The visiting dignitary said, "Azerbaijan desires to

work closely with Pakistan."

"Azerbaijan considers Pakistan an important

because of its rich experience in various fields including Defense," Karim Valiyev said.

Both sides agreed to further strengthen the institutional framework for high-level bilateral coordination to achieve regional as well as global peace and prosperity.

Sheikh Rasheed skips NAB appearance in NCA £190 million scandal

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed on Wednesday 'skipped' National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) appearance for a probe in National Crime Agency £190m scandal.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had launched an investigation against Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi and others for the alleged gain of hundreds of canals of land in the name of Al

Qadir University Trust, which reportedly caused a loss of 190 million pounds to the national exchequer.

Sheikh Rasheed was asked to appear before the NAB today as a former member of Imran Khan's cabinet which passed the decision for the settlement of £190m from the United Kingdom.

Sheikh Rasheed in his response denied receiving any written notice from the NAB and added the name under which he received the notice, has

died a year ago.

Citing dire threats in response to the NAB, Sheikh Rasheed said police are raiding his house for the arrest.

The former minister said the record of the cabinet meeting is available with the government and added he will appear before the graft-buster body if required.

Meanwhile, the National Accountability Bureau has decided to resubmit the AML chief, the sources claimed.

MNA demands to discuss agricultural issues in NA before budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly Rao Muhammad Ajmal Khan on Wednesday demanded for debate on agricultural issues in the House before announcing the budget.

Speaking on a point of order, he said that two days should be reserved for debate on issues related to agriculture sector for preparing budget to resolve problems of farmers.

MNA Nawab Sher said that some of the farmers had not been given pay-

ment by sugar mill owners for around nine months and the government should look into this issue.

Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaz directed Minister for Parliamentary Affairs to contact cane commissioners and resolve the matter at earliest.

MNA Kesoo Mal Kheal Das spoke about the kidnapping incident of two-year old boy from an area of Kandhkot.

He said that forces were conducting operation in

Kacha area of Sindh and abducted persons should be recovered at earliest.

MNA Shamim Ara Panhwar condemned the attack on military and civil installations on May 9, 2023 by PTI miscreants.

She said that this day was black day in history of Pakistan and PTI should be banned for such chaos in the country.

She said that PPPP leadership rendered sacrifices for the country and they never exploited public sentiments.

NDMA team attends WB Partnership Days event

ISLAMABAD (NNI): A two-member delegation comprising of Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik and Member Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Idrees Mehsud on Wednesday attended the Partnership Days Event of Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) on the invite of World Bank in Washington DC.

The Chairman as a panelist highlighted the requirements for making Pakistan a resilient country, a news release said.

The NDMA Chairman said, "Developing economies critically need innovative DRR approaches based on local challenges and necessities".

The Chairman unveiled the way forward for a remodelled NDMA that will be able to tackle upcoming challenges owing to multi-

ple hazards, particularly climate change induced.

He emphasized the need for collaboration to incorporate community-centric AI-based/tech-driven early warning capabilities to forecast disasters, which also could be a key solution to minimize time and again financial assistance by donors in affected regions.

The Chairman, during panel discussion also suggested that the World Bank financial strategy developments for DRR and other frameworks must include spontaneity and shared DRR instruments.

Pakistan has demonstrated default resilience and adaptation, which requires support in value addition of protocols, he added.

In the later part of the day, the delegation also held productive sessions with Afreen Akhter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs at the

US State Department and Marcia Wong, Deputy Assistant to the Administrator, in USAID HQs Washington.

During meetings, the NDMA delegation discussed the crucial need to collate with academia and DM responders of vulnerable countries with global universities, for building forward on existing knowledge and capitalization of existing indigenous capabilities.

They further specified the requirement to formulate and connect a team of all DM stakeholders including local/global partners working in silos, for pre-identifying risks and preparation of plans of action for foreseeable disasters. NDMA delegation is currently representing Pakistan in sessions/meetings about disaster risk management and financing, organized by global partners/stakeholders.



ISLAMABAD: Portraits of soldiers, martyred during fighting against terrorists, displayed on Constitution Avenue in connection with observing Takreem-e-Shohada Day across country. — APP Photo

Minister unveils plan to attract foreign, domestic investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque Wednesday said the incumbent government was working on a strategy to attract more and more foreign as well as domestic investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI), considered a key element in strengthening economies in the modern world.

In a statement, he said, at least 60 countries, including India and Sri Lanka, have adopted the AI laws and policies since 2017.

The minister said Bangladesh's draft policy has recently been opened for public feedback and consultation.

The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication has also uploaded a draft of the Artificial Intelligence Policy (AIP)

on its official webpage, seeking public feedback and suggestions from public and private sector organizations, academia, civil society, and industry to finalize the document.

Artificial Intelligence Policy is a pivotal milestone for transforming Pakistan into a knowledge-based economy as it spells out a national strategy to establish an ecosystem necessary for AI adoption.

The policy will harness an agile framework to address different aspects of unique user journeys encompassing different market horizons and industry verticals by ensuring the responsible use of AI. The Ministry of IT&T is also forming a Policy Committee that will lead the policy consultation process and finalize the draft of the National AI Policy.

The Policy Committee will comprise experts from industry, academia, and government. Ministry of IT&T encourages top experts in the field of AI from Industry and Academia to become part of this Policy committee.

The minister said, to secure the economic future moving forward along with other fields adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) was indispensable in the current scenario.

"There is no doubt that all major fronts of national power like the economy, security, and military power depend on technological advancement" the minister added.

He said that Pakistan wanted to get its due share of the global Artificial Intelligence (AI) market which is likely to reach US\$ 1 trillion by 2030.

ANSA returns 36 tankers

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghanistan National Standards Authority (ANSA) has returned back 36 tankers of low-quality oil to Iran. 36 imported tankers of low-quality oil that did not comply with department standards were returned back to Iran, said the ANSA in a statement on Tuesday. Lately, the department take concrete steps to prevent low-quality materials from entering the country, according to the statement.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Zil-Qadah 04, 1444 — Thursday, May 25, 2023

Floods destroyed houses

GHOR-WARDAK (Agencies): Flash floods destroyed tens of houses and hundreds of acres of farmlands in Maidan Wardak and Ghor provinces. Monsoon rainfalls caused to flash floods, that hit parts of Maidan Wardak, no human casualties reported so far. Flash floods hit some districts of the province, destroying 30 houses and 200 acres of farmland said Mawlawi Faizullah Jalali, the head of Disaster Management of Wardak.

Six people publicly flogged for alleged crimes in Afghanistan

KANDAHAR (Khaama Press): Taliban's supreme court has announced that at least six people allegedly accused of abducting a woman and raping on Wednesday were publically flogged in a football stadium in Kandahar province.

Taliban's high court for the country's Southwestern zone on Wednesday in a statement said the sentence was implemented based on the guidance of the deputy judicial officer of southern Kandahar province.

As per the announcement, the alleged criminals were accused of kidnapping

a woman and a rape case, who confessed to their crimes during the investigation. It is reported that flogging took place in front of a huge crowd at Ahamad Shahi football stadium in southern Kandahar.

Prior to this, the supreme court of the Islamic Emirate had reported that a woman in Parwan province was flogged for committing adultery.

Taliban's Supreme Leader Hibatullah Akhundzada had previously ordered judges to implement "Sharia limits and retribution" throughout Afghanistan.

The implementation of lashing faced widespread condemnations in Afghanistan and overseas while some human rights advocacy organizations described it against human values and also described it as "hateful".

Despite the immense pressure from the international community on flogging, public execution, respecting human rights, the rights of Afghan women and girls as well as religious minorities and ethnic groups, the Taliban group has its own policies and priorities regarding Afghanistan's internal issues.

Over 65,000 Afghan refugees return from Iran: Deptt

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation announced that more than 65,000 Afghan refugees returned to the country from Iran through Pul-e-Abresham port in Nimruz province over the past month.

The refugee department of Nimruz province's data shows an increase in the number of refugees returning to the country from Iran in the past weeks.

Over the past month, at least 64,151 Afghan migrants repatriated to the country through the Pul-e-Abresham crossing point according to Mawlawi Abdullah Ryaz the head of refugee and repatriations of Nimroz, reported by Bakhtar news agency.

Some of the returnees were introduced to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to receive necessary aid, according to Taliban officials.

Taliban officials relate the increasing number of Afghan refugees returning from Iran and Pakistan to the overall security improvement in Afghanistan.

However, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced that the continuous return of Afghan refugees from neighboring countries is closely linked to the rising inflation and lack of employment opportunities in the host countries.

This comes as the influx of Afghan refugees once again increased to the neighboring countries of Iran and Pakistan after the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021.

In the recent past, the Taliban's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation has repeatedly reported on the return of Afghan citizens from Pakistan and Iran.

Some of these refugees have been forcefully deported, and others willingly left the host countries, according to a statement by the Taliban officials.

Journalism Students in Khost call for more training

KHOST (TOLONews): A number of students in the journalism Faculty of Shaikh Zayed University in Khost criticized the lack of practical training.

Also, according to the students, many of those who graduate cannot find a job in the field, and they are forced to work in another profession.

Hasibullah Ilham, a journalism student, said that he graduated from this faculty four years ago but due to the lack of work in his field of study, he had to turn to shopkeeping.

He asked that officials in addition to theoretical training focus on practical training. "Practical training is necessary for all departments and our department depends on this training," said Hasibullah Ilham.

"At Shaikh Zayed University, when students graduate from the journalism faculty they cannot find a job in their field," said Majeed Zaland, a student.

"In journalism, in addition to theoretical training, practical training is also very important, but we do not have the possibility of practical training in addition to theoretical training," said Elias Zarak, a student.

Meanwhile, the head of this university acknowledged these problems and said they will address these challenges.

"We have talked with some media in the field of action, to encourage them to use some students in the media and share their experiences with them," said Ahmad Zia Elham, head of the Shaikh Zayed University of Khost.

The journalist faculty of this university have a radio for practical training but due to lack of electricity its broadcasts have been stopped.

Iranian regime must stop Saber rattling over Afghan water rights: Khalilzad

KABUL (Khaama Press): Zalmay Khalilzad, the former US special envoy for Afghanistan reconciliation, said on Wednesday that Iranian leaders must not threaten Afghanistan over water rights.

Khalilzad said on Twitter, "Taliban authorities are being surprisingly restrained and statesman-like over the issue. They acknowledged the treaty while arguing that the lower amount of water is due to drought and climate change."

He also said that the Taliban authorities had acknowledged the 1973 water treaty and that the lower amount of water is due to drought and climate change.

"They have expressed sympathy for the difficulties and water shortage

places on civilians in Iran in Iran while pointing out that their civilians are experiencing the same," he tweeted. He also proposed recommendations for both sides while saying both countries remain committed to the 1973 treaty; they should follow the remedies envisaged in the treaty itself for circumstances of disagreement, and the two countries should:

1. Try bilateral diplomatic engagement to find a solution 2. Make use of the good offices of a third party. 3 if neither step works, the issue should be submitted to arbitration. He argues that none of these has been tried yet and urged that "the Iranian regime must stop Saber rattling."

Recently, Iranian officials reiterated Iran's water rights over the Helmand



River and said that the country is to make some crucial decisions to protect its water rights from the Helmand River in Afghanistan. "Some important decisions will be made in the meeting on how to solve the water problem in the east of the country," said Ali Akber Mehrabian, Iran's energy minister.

The interim regime in Kabul responded to the

Iranian officials that the "water agreement between the two neighbouring countries was signed half a century ago in 1973 and is still valid, and we are committed to implementing its obligations."

According to the agreement of 1973, Afghanistan committed to delivering an average of 820 million cubic meters of water to Iran annually.

Indonesia, Iran agree to support female education in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The government of Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed to support Afghan female education in Afghanistan and overcome the humanitarian crisis in the country.

During the visit of Iran's president Ebrahim Raisi to Indonesia, President Joko Jokowi highlighted the issue of female education in Afghanistan and said we agree to continue support for education access for women in Afghanistan and

to provide humanitarian assistance.

"We agree to continue supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people and address the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan by continuing to voice support for education access for women in Afghanistan and provide humanitarian assistance," Jokowi stated.

President Raisi, on his part, expressed his readiness to support female education at all levels.

"Afghan women and

girls could elevate the honour of the country because they are an honour for Islam," Raisi emphasized.

Meanwhile, Raisi stressed that Iran supports Afghanistan in realizing an inclusive government representing the country's ethnic groups, gender and faiths.

This is Raisi's first visit to Indonesia since he took office in 2021, and he accepted Jokowi's formal invitation.

Since the return of the

Taliban to power in August 2021, the de facto authorities wiped out women's presence from the public scene due to several degrees, resulting in restrictions on women, including education, working with aid organizations and gyms.

Despite massive criticism of the banned degrees of the Taliban by international and Islamic countries, the suppressive policies continue against Afghan females.

Women-only restaurant starts in Kabul city

KABUL (TOLONews): Samira Mohammadi, a woman in Kabul, has started a special restaurant for women and has provided work for more than 20 female workers, including many students.

Samira Mohammadi said that by given the current situation, she decided to open "Banoan Afghan" restaurant.

"We have women workers here, some of them were university students and some of them were school-age students and some of them are women who are the only breadwinners for their families," said Samira Mohammadi.

Khalida is working in this restaurant. She was a student in the law faculty and considered serving the country as a diplomat in the future. She says she was fed up with unemployment.

"It was my second class at my university when our university was closed to girls, I wanted to find a job because I was facing mental issues and now I am working here," said Khalida.

"We call on the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools



and universities for us and to provide work for everyone to get out of economic problems," said Rukhsar, a student.

Meanwhile, the establishment of this restaurant has attracted the attention of a number of girls and women. The women who come to eat at this restaurant are happy it exists.

"On the day I am free, I come here to the restaurant. This restaurant has to some

extent solved some women's economic problems," said Quraishi, a customer.

"We come here daily, it's a good place and has delicious food," said Omrah, a customer. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Women said that after the Islamic Emirate took over some women started businesses.

"We hold some exhibitions all over the country

and we will hold them in foreign countries... most of the exports are made by women," said Salma Yosifzai, CEO of the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Based on the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry statistics, more than 8,000 businesswomen are registered in this chamber and more than 120,000 women have informal business activities.

Acting Minister Nooruddin Azizi discusses trade issues

KABUL (TOLONews): The acting Minister of Industry and Commerce Nooruddin Azizi, in an interview with TOLONews, said that the amount of Afghan exports to Pakistan has increased.

In an exclusive interview with TOLONews, Azizi said that Afghanistan's exports to Pakistan in the previous year alone reached \$1.2 billion in value. Fresh fruit and minerals are Afghanistan's two most significant exports to Pakistan, according to this Islamic Emirate cabinet official.

"The amount of export business for many years never exceeded \$400 million. Thankfully, we were able to boost our exports to \$1.2 billion. According to the data we collected from our businesspeople, they were very satisfied this year, more than they had been the year before," Azizi said.

The acting Minister of Industry and Commerce further stated that during his trips to Russia, Pakistan and Iran, he tried to develop trade and commerce.

"The general discussions that we had on the sidelines with friends and countries were for the purpose of creating a connecting point between the north and the south that we should bring Afghanistan to the long-standing dream we have," he said.

In the meantime, several businesspeople asked the Islamic Emirate, particularly the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, to solve their problems in various commercial areas.

"Work should be done with the Ministry of Finance on some tax issues so that small and medium-sized businessmen and entrepreneurs can make



good moves in the growth of their daily activities," said Sieyar Qureshi, an economist.

The acting Minister of Industry and Commerce drew attention to the issue of Iran's water rights and said that if there is enough water in the Helmand River, Afghanistan will allocate Iran its share of water. He also remarked that the media has magnified the

issue of Iran's water rights. "During my trip to Iran, they even told us that they would pay a price for water from us," Azizi said.

Pakistan is one of Afghanistan's main economic partners, and the majority of Afghan products are typically sold in Pakistani marketplaces. Pakistan also exports its products and transit items to other nations via Afghanistan.

Dead bodies of 18 Afghan migrants transferred



KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday in a statement announced that the dead bodies of 18 Afghan migrants who were found in an abandoned truck near the village of Lokorsko outside the capital city of Sofia in Bulgaria in February were transferred to Kabul.

The ministry added the bodies were transferred through the state-owned Ariana Afghan Airlines and then moved to their respective places via special ambulances.

The spokesperson's office of the ministry of

foreign affairs of the Islamic Emirate stated the reasons for the prolonged delays in shifting the bodies linked to the Bulgarian court's decision and the "harsh" bank sanctions to transfer money to the companies involved in carrying the bodies to Afghanistan.

The ministry further added that the government has covered the expenses of carrying the bodies and handing them to their families. The Taliban authorities have repeatedly called on the people of Afghanistan to avoid risking their lives by taking illegal pathways and dealing with human

traffickers to reach Europe and other destinations.

It is believed that 18 Afghan migrants had died of suffocation and were found in an abandoned truck near the village of Lokorsko outside the capital city of Sofia on February 17.

Following the incident, Bulgarian authorities arrested at least seven suspects while smugglers had already fled the area after noticing the scene. The incident is reported to be the deadliest case of smuggled migrants in Bulgaria over the years, according to the Bulgarian officials.

‘Crops dying as Musa Qala River dry’

HELMAND (TOLONews): The residents of Musa Qala district in southeastern Helmand province are facing a dire situation as the only river in the district has recently dried up.

The residents said that they have suffered heavy losses. Agriculture is the only source of income for Abdullah, whose harvests have been destroyed due to lack of water.

"In Helmand, there is no water in general. The water in wells has also dropped. You see it here that the harvests of wheat have dried up due to lack of water," he said. The residents called on the Islamic Emirate to address their challenges.

"Here was a garden of

almond. The condition was good. But now due to lack of water, the almond trees have been destroyed," said Abdul Ahad, a farmer in Helmand, "You see the situation from up close here - what the situation is about. There is not even water for drinking," said a resident of Kabul.

According to the residents, many people living in Musa Qala also lack access to drinking water.

The head of the district's water manager, Mahir, said that the issue has been shared with the officials in Kabul. "We have discussed this with the Ministry of Energy and Water and asked for their attention. Our people are fleeing from

the area and many people fled due to drought," he said. The Musa Qala River is a tributary to the main provincial river of Helmand.

This comes amid tensions between Kabul and Tehran over Helmand water rights—with officials of the two countries making public remarks accusing each other of ignoring realities.

Speaking at a ceremony on the 7th anniversary of the death of former Islamic Emirate leader Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour, the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir Khan Muttaqi said that the Islamic Emirate is committed to the Helmand water treaty signed in 1973.

Flights between China, Afghanistan resumed

KABUL (Agencies): Direct flights between Afghanistan and China resumed on Wednesday when an Ariana Airlines plane left Kabul for Urumqi, China.

Officials of the Ministry of Transport and Aviation say that the start of direct flights between Afghanistan and China will have a positive effect on the country's economic and trade relations.

The head of Ariana Airlines Rahmatullah Aghan says that the company plans to purchase more planes in the near future.

The head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment Mohmmad Younos Mohmmad says that the Islamic Emirate will create a trade market for the

Chinese in Afghanistan.

The Chinese consul general in Kabul said that economic and trade relations with Afghanistan are developing day by day.

He added that the level of trade between the two countries is more than one billion dollars annually and there are good opportunities for Afghan businessmen in China. He also said facilities have been created in Afghanistan for Chinese businessmen and investors.

However, the officials of the Chinese embassy in Kabul say that currently the amount of trade between Afghanistan and China reaches one billion US dollars.

The consul of the Chinese Embassy in Kabul, says that: "We resumed the

flight from Kabul to Urumqi, and I see this as progress in Afghanistan-China relations, which both countries are committed to further strengthening."

This Chinese diplomat adds that in the meeting of the foreign ministers of China, Pakistan and Afghanistan held in Islamabad, it was emphasized on the development of economic relations with Afghanistan and the strengthening of trade cooperation and the connection of Afghanistan, as well as the initiation of infrastructure projects in cooperation with the countries of the region, and it was also agreed that Trade relations between these three countries should be further strengthened.



ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Asad Umar addressing a press conference.

Alleged embezzlement of Rs1.3 billion in ads

FIA turned blind eye to malpractices

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Information Welfare Association (IWA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has said that competent authorities didn't initiated proceedings against culprits involved in malpractices despite it was disclosed by Directorate of Information and Public Relation, on Wednesday.

IWA issued press statement following breaking of news story at Daily newspaper on 24th May stated that credit goes to information's officials because the malpractices were identified and concerned authorities were pleaded in written to initiate legal proceedings against culprits in the practice.

IWA meeting held chaired by the association president Atta Ullah demanded to initiate proceedings against Bank's staff, account holder and

anyone involved in alleged embezzlement in advertisement.

IWA argued to conduct independent audit for both embezzlement in advertisement as well as probe into vehicles obtain in Annual Development Projects and other assets to utilize national assets properly which will also lead to end the deprivation of Directorate General of Information and Public Relations. The officers claimed that Directorate has already forward the issue to Information Secretariat to take actions against alleged culprits involved in the embezzlement.

It is worthy to mention that on 3rd May 2023 Section Officer Admin has written a letter to Director Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for registra-

tion of case against Manager Bank Islami Pakistan Limited Dalazak Road Peshawar, Haider Ali, Shahanshah, construction and Co, staff of the department and other co-accused involved in the fraudulent deposit/withdrawal of cheques and for commission of fraud, forgery, misappropriation, embezzlement of public fund approximately to the tune of one thousand and three hundred million/Rs1.3 billion on account of advertisement charges payable to the media houses.

It is worthy to mention that after 20 days of letter neither case has been registered nor inquiry initiated against culprits involved in the alleged embezzlement in advertisements while the amount was payable to media houses as their arrears.

‘Qureshi is in Adiala Jail,’ AAG tells court

ISLAMABAD (INP): The additional attorney general has told the Islamabad High Court that PTI leader and former minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi is in Adiala Jail. He further said Qureshi is detained under Section 3 of the MPO, adding a total of eight cases are registered against him, as per a police report.

Two cases were registered on May 9 and 10, while six cases are old, the police said. The court disposed of the petition for providing the details of cases against Qureshi. Hearing the case, the IHC chief justice said the petitioners may approach the appropriate forum.

The additional attorney general, the assistant attorney general, the DSP (legal), and the state counsel appeared before the court. Advocate Taimoor Malik appeared in court on behalf of Shah Mehmood Qureshi. Earlier, the Islamabad police had expressed ignorance about the whereabouts of former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi.

The law enforcement agency was responding to a query during the hearing by Islamabad High Court on a petition of Qureshi seeking details of the cases registered against him. The police told the court that two cases have been registered against the senior PTI leader in Islamabad. They further said there are six other old cases against him. “We don't know where Shah Mehmood is,” the Islamabad police told the court.

The court ordered the Interior Ministry to inform it which case Shah Mehmood was arrested in. Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq adjourned the hearing for some time. On Tuesday evening, the former foreign minister, as well as party leader Musarrat Jamsheed Cheema, were re-arrested from outside Adiala Jail minutes after their release.

Speaking to private TV news channel after being released from the jail, Qureshi declared he was not quitting the PTI. “I am with the party, I will stay with the party,” the PTI vice chairman told the reporter. The orders of his release were issued after Qureshi's lawyers submitted an affidavit before the IHC. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb linked the release with the submission of the affidavit.

Khadija sent on identification parade

LAHORE (PPI): The anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday ordered Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Khadija Shah to be placed on a seven-day identification parade with the police. The decision was made during a court hearing held in connection with the arson and Jinnah House attack that occurred on May 9.

Khadija Shah, who is the daughter of former advisor finance Salman Shah and the granddaughter of former Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asif Nawaz Janjua, was brought before the court with her face covered. However, she was permitted to meet her husband in the courtroom during the proceedings. Justice Abhar Gul, presiding over the ATC, considered the plea made by the police to send the suspect on an identification parade to jail. The police informed the court that the investigation officer assigned to Khadija Shah's case was occupied with proceedings in the High Court.

Six terrorists killed in South Waziristan

2 soldiers, cop, civilian embrace martyrdom in suicide attack

F.P. Report

WANA / MIRAN SHAH: The security forces conducted an intelligence based operation (IBO) in general area Kot Azam, South Waziristan District, on reported presence of terrorists.

According to ISPR, during the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange occurred between security forces and terrorists, resulting in killing of 6 terrorists on Tuesday. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from the killed terrorists who remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as extortion and targeted killing of innocent citizens. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

Meanwhile, two soldiers of Pakistan Army on Wednesday along with a Police Constable and a civilian embraced martyrdom after a vehicle borne suicide bomber exploded himself in general area Datta Khel of North Waziristan District.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the martyrs were identified as Naik Said Ullah Shah (age 33 years, resident of Charsadda) and Sepoy Jawad Khan (age 31 years, resident of District Hariapur) of Pakistan Army, Police Constable Hakeem Jan (resident of North Waziristan District) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Department and an innocent civilian

who embraced shahadat (martyrdom).

The suicide bomber intended to target a public gathering but swift response by the security forces personnel prevented a major catastrophe as the soldiers immediately intercepted the suicide bomber vehicle on suspicion, sacrificing their lives to save numerous innocent lives.

“Security forces and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers and innocent citizens further strengthen our resolve,” the ISPR said.

Meanwhile, former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliaments, Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman PPP Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari have expressed their profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of security forces and police personnel in the suicide blast in North Waziristan at a check post.

Both the leaders said that the proud sons of the country sacrificed their lives while performing their duties at the check post. The security forces and policemen at the check post crushed the evil intentions of the enemies. They reiterated their resolve to eliminate the terrorists from our homeland. The terrorists, their facilitators and supporters will face a tragic end, they said. President Zardari and Chairman Bilawal expressed their sympathy and condolences to the families of the martyrs. They said that the blood of the martyrs will not

go in vain.

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a security check post in North Waziristan resulting in martyrdom of four and leaving two others injured.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, the interior minister paid tributes to martyred security personnel, acknowledging their ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Rana Sanaullah further stated that the martyrdom of our brave security forces was an irreparable loss for the nation. Their courage and dedication to protecting our homeland will always be remembered, he added.

He also extended heartfelt condolences to the families of those embraced martyrdom in the terrorist attack. Promising swift action against the perpetrators, the minister assured that no stone would be left unturned in bringing the terrorists to justice.

“We will take full account of each martyrdom caused by the terrorists,” he declared, emphasizing the government's commitment to ensuring the safety and security of the citizens. Expressing optimism, Sanaullah said “InshAllah, the terrorists responsible for this heinous act will meet their end very soon. Our security forces are tirelessly working to apprehend them and put an end to their nefarious activities.” The minister extended his prayers for patience and strength to the families of the martyrs and wished a speedy recovery for the injured.

KP Apex Committee bans rallies at Assembly chowk

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting of the Provincial Apex Committee was held here on Wednesday with the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan in the chair.

The forum reviewed in details the prevailing law and order situation with special focus on violent protests on 9th of May, discussed action plan and way forward in order to effectively deal with such situation in the future and made a number of decisions to this effect. Caretaker provincial minister Barrister Feroz Jamal Shah Kaka Khel, Corps Commander Peshawar Lt. General Hassan Azhar Hayat, Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan and other civil and military high ups attended the meeting whereas divisional commissioners also participated via video link.

The forum condemned the violent protests on May 9 and expressed deep sorrow over the loss to precious human lives and properties during the violent protests at different spots of the province. While briefing about the details of damages during the violent protests, the participants were informed that protests were staged at 176 different spots of the province during which 4063 number of roads were

blocked by the protestors.

Similarly, 20 public and 10 private buildings have been damaged. The forum was further informed that so far a total of 101 FIRs have been logged against the elements involved in violent protests whereas identification of the elements involved in damaging and vandalizing private and public properties has been finalized and a number of arrests have also been made so far.

The forum has decided to impose ban on protest demonstrations at assembly chowk of the provincial capital Peshawar and directed the quarters concerned to take necessary steps in order to specify another suitable place for public protests in the future. It was also decided in the meeting that short-term, mid-term and long-term measures would be taken to further strengthen the Anti-Riot Squad of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police with the purpose to capable them to effectively handle the such violent protests in the future.

According to details, in the first step, Rs 303 million would be provided for the procurement of latest equipment for Anti-Riot Squad whereas the Squad would be provided with Rs 601 million and Rs 1.2 billion in the second and third steps respectively. Besides the forum has decided to prepare Rapid Response Contingency Plan with the sole purpose to prevent such unpleasant incidents

in the future and further decided that a special police squad equipped with the latest and modern equipment would be allocated for the security of red zone.

It was also decided to have Joint Control Rooms at provincial and divisional levels in order to identify important public buildings and installations outside the red zone and to control such violent and unpleasant incidents in the future. Addressing the participants, the chief minister said that damaging and vandalizing private and public properties during protest is highly regrettable , adding that protest and freedom of expression is a democratic and constitutional right of everyone, but this right should be exercised in a peaceful manner.

Vandalism under the guise of protest is illegal and unconstitutional” he said and added that police were taking action against those who are involved in damaging properties during these protests and they would be taken to the court of law. He made it clear that the government will maintain its writ at all costs and no one would be allowed to sabotage the law and order in the province. He also lauded the role of KP police, security forces and civil administration during the violent protests in the province adding that they all have performed very well in this regard.

Iran names ambassador to S Arabia

TEHRAN (Agencies): Iran has named an ambassador to Saudi Arabia, state media reported on Wednesday, sealing a thaw in relations more than seven years after the regional rivals severed ties. The new envoy, Alireza Enayati, previously served as Iran's ambassador to Kuwait, assistant to the foreign minister and director general of Gulf affairs at the foreign ministry, the English-language Iran Daily said. There was no immediate confirmation of his appointment from the foreign ministry of the Islamic republic.

The Middle East heavyweights, after years of discord, signed a surprise reconciliation agreement in China on March 10. Saudi Arabia had severed relations with Iran in 2016 after its embassy in Tehran and consulate in the second city of Mashhad were attacked during protests over the kingdom's execution of Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr. The two governments held several rounds of dialogue in Iraq and Oman before signing the reconciliation agreement.

They had backed opposing sides in conflict zones across the Middle East for years before mending fences. In Yemen, Saudi Arabia has led a military coalition in support of the internationally recognised government, while Iran backed the Huthi rebels who control the capital Sanaa and large areas of the north.

PTI leader's attempt to flee abroad foiled

KARACHI (INP): As crackdown on PTI has intensified and more and more party leaders and workers are facing arrests in the aftermath of May 9 vandalism, a former member of the National Assembly (MNA) belonging to the PTI was stopped from going abroad on Wednesday.

Saima Nadeem was offloaded from Toronto-bound plane at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport and was taken to Airport police station where investigators interrogated her. Saima Nadeem was offloaded from PIA flight PK-503 and taken into custody as her name was on the stop list.

Amid the crackdown against PTI leaders and aides, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has reportedly stopped more than 200 suspected leaders and workers from leaving Pakistan.

It is pertinent to mention here that more and more PTI leaders, including former MNAs and MPAs, are leaving the party, saying they are aggrieved over attacks on army and government buildings and monuments of martyrs on May 9.

PHC suspends arrest warrants of ex-minister

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asad-ullah suspended detention orders of former provincial minister Anwar Zeb Khan and other Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO), on Wednesday.

PHC's divisional heard a petition of five PTI workers including Anwar Zeb Khan, challenging their arrest warrants under MPO-3. The court suspended the MPO order issued by Bajaur district administration.

The court restrained the administration from arrest of the accused under the MPO-3. The bench also ordered transfer of the case Mingora bench of the high

court. The court in its order also ordered petitioners to submit two lac rupees surety bonds each. The court ordered petitioners to submit their statements on oath to the district administration that they will not take part in such activities in future.

A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice PHC Justice Musarat Hilali and Justice Waqar Ahmad ordered Attorney General of Pakistan and Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to submit reply in writ regarding stopping caretaker government from holding offices because stipulated timeframe of 90 days has ended after dissolution of provincial assembly.

Chief Justice Musarat Hilali remarked that the country stands first against everything because our pride and honour belonging

to the strengthening of nation and Pakistan. The chief justice observed this during hearing writ petition filed by former Member Provincial Assembly Fazal Elahi seeking to stop caretaker government from offices because they had failed to hold elections for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly within 90 days.

The counsel argued that caretaker is also constituted against the constitution and law because first Governor should schedule polls then to establish caretaker government for holding the general elections and demanded to stop caretaker cabinet from issuance of further orders. The divisional bench ordered Attorney General and Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to submit reply while adjourned further hearing.

Pakistan ‘will absolutely not default’, asserts Dar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday asserted that the country was not on the verge of a financial crisis and “will absolutely not default”.

Addressing the fears during a gathering at the Federal Board of Revenue in Islamabad, the finance minister commended his economic team for its “efforts and hard work”, pointing out that the country had recorded a current account surplus for the months of March and April at \$750 million and \$18m, respectively.

Regarding the ongoing negotiations with the IMF for release of the long-awaited bailout tranche, Dar said his team had completed all the technical work and prior actions required for the completion of the ninth review.

He stressed that there was a “sincere effort” on his and his team's part to complete the IMF's ongoing programme and said they delay was “unfortunate”. The review should have been completed earlier, he added.

Dar said the country had repaid \$5.5 billion of its commercial loans. Of those, he said China had rolled over \$2bn once it “understood” that Pakistan had completed its requirements for the release of

funds by the IMF. Regarding the rest of the \$3.5bn from non-Chinese commercial banks, Dar said: “We are expecting that a substantial part of that [loan] facility will be returned once the [IMF] staff level agreement or board meeting is completed because it is always renewed and they (banks) are always there to do business.”

A staff-level accord to release a \$1.1bn tranche out of a \$6.5bn IMF package has been delayed since November, with over 100 days gone since the last staff-level mission to Pakistan. That is the longest such gap since at least 2008. The international money lender said earlier this month that Pakistan needed significant additional financing for a successful completion of the long-stalled ninth review of the IMF's bailout package.

Obtaining commitments of “significant additional financing” is essential before the IMF approved the release of pending bailout funds that are crucial for the country to resolve an acute balance of payments crisis, it added. So far, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and China have come to Pakistan's assistance in March and April with pledges that would cover some of the funding deficit.

Student dies of heat, load shedding during exam

KHAIRPUR (INP): In a devastating incident, a student tragically lost his life on Wednesday due to load shedding and extreme heat during his 11th class board examination. The unfortunate incident occurred at the Govt Degree College in the Thiri area of Khairpur, Sindh, where hundreds of students gathered to appear for their 11th class board exams.

The student, identified as Mehtab Ali, lost consciousness while giving his exam. The boy was immediately rushed to the hospital. But tragically, could not be revived, and eventually died. Initial reports suggest that the boy died of suffocation. Reportedly, load shedding left the students exposed to the sweltering heat. Amid scorching temperatures and a power outage, the situation at examination center quickly turned into a life-threatening ordeal.

The temperature inside the hall rose significantly, creating an unbearable environment for those present. The Minister for Education Board, Ismail, had previously urged authorities to ensure uninterrupted power supply in examination centers, particularly considering the intense heat prevailing in Sindh.