

Swati's indictment
ISLAMABAD (PPI): A court in Islamabad postponed the indictment proceedings against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Azam Khan Swati in the controversial tweet case. The Special Judge Central, Islamabad, conducted hearing of the controversial tweet case against Azam Swati. The court postponed the indictment proceedings due to absence of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting on budget proposals.

Ali, Shehryar re-arrested after release

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Amid the ongoing crackdown against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in connection with the May 9 attacks on the civil and military installations, the party's leaders Shehryar Afridi and Ali Muhammad Khan were arrested shortly after being released from Rawalpindi's Adiala jail on Tuesday.

Afridi along with his wife was picked up on May 16 from his residence in Islamabad under Section 3 of Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance 1960, which enables the government to arrest persons "acting in any manner prejudicial to public safety". His wife, however, was released later on the orders of the Islamabad High Court (IHC). Soon after his release from the jail, police officials again took him into custody and transported him to an undisclosed location. According to the jail administration, Afridi was released on completion of his "house arrest" period under the MPO.

Similarly, Ali Muhammad was arrested from Islamabad on May 21 by Islamabad police under Section 3 of MPO. He was released from the custody earlier today on order of Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi Bench.

However, the PTI leader was again taken into custody earlier today from outside the Adiala Jail under section 3 of MPO by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police, Islamabad police said in a statement.

PAC summons NAB chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on Tuesday summoned the incumbent National Accountability Bureau (NAB) chairman in its next meeting to get a briefing on the ongoing investigations and inquiries as well as recoveries from plunderers of the national wealth.

Presiding over the PAC meeting, its Chairman Noor Alam Khan directed the authorities concerned to expedite the process of recovery from corrupt elements. The committee members called for the provision of complete record and details of NAB's ongoing probes and inquiries.

"If NAB is reluctant to recover money from the looters then PAC may authorize the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to do the job," Noor Alam Khan stressed. He said many corruption cases were referred to NAB during the last year, but none had reached its logical conclusion so far. The PAC also sought the record of expenses incurred on investigations of corruption cases. The chairman directed the authorities to complete the cases within the stipulated time.

May 9 riots investigation: Imran skips JIT hearing

LAHORE (Agencies): A joint investigation team (JIT) formed by the Punjab caretaker government has refused to accept Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's written reply in connection with the May 9 riots investigation.

The JIT on Monday summoned the PTI chief to appear before it in relation to the probe into arson attacks on Jinnah House (Corps Commander's House) and the Askari Corporate Tower in Lahore following his arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust case earlier this month. The PTI chairman and other party leaders were accused of inciting workers to violence which led to attacks on defence and public installations in many parts of the country during the three-day-long protests.

Earlier on Tuesday, Khan submit his response to the JIT through his representatives — Ali Ijaz Buttar

and Naeem Haider Panjutha — which was rejected by the investigators. In his response, the former prime minister — who was ousted from office in April last year — said the deadline for replying to JIT's notice was very limited and he was scheduled to appear before the anti-terrorism court and the high court for different cases hearings on the same day he was summoned by the probe team.

He said the anti-terrorism court of Lahore had already been granted bail in a case related to May 9 riots and added that he was under "illegal" custody of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) when the almost countrywide protest broke against his arrest. Later, he said he was released on the order of the Supreme Court.

"I am fully cooperating with the investigating agencies despite the large number of false cases," his

response added. He said the cases filed against him are false and "purely politically-motivated". The PTI chief said he was willing to cooperate with JIT in the investigation into the riots despite "violations of fundamental rights".

"I am nominating Ali Ijaz Buttar and Naeem Haider Panjutha to appear before the JIT [on my behalf] and make arrangements for my participation in the investigation," he added. Khan said he has served as the 22nd prime minister of Pakistan and survived an assassination attempt on his life in Wazirabad in November last year. Despite serious security threats, the PTI chairman said his appearance before the court was inevitable. He also said that it would be convenient for him to join the investigation from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore or via video link in view of security concerns.

Strong govt has people's backing, says Imran

LAHORE (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has said that a "strong government" has the people's backing, not the "establishment's support".

The PTI chief in a jibe at the ruling coalition government, while addressing his supporters virtually on Tuesday, said that the country's institutions are being destroyed as they have asked to break his party. "Those institutions that were supposed to stop crimes have been tasked to end PTI," he said and appealed that he be briefed on a "road map" for the future.

"What I have understood is that a new 'kings party' is being made. Those who have left [PTI] are being added to that the kings party," claimed the former prime minister who was

voted out in April last year. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), he insisted, is losing support as people are not willing to attend its public gathering.

He also added that the PML-N is connected with all the "cruelty" that is happening in the country and wondered if this is the way that a coalition is supposed to take the country out of the mess. "A strong government is one that has people behind it, not the establishment. Don't be under the illusion that gathering people and having the establishment's back will help in getting rid of the [country's] problems."

He went on to say that a government which comes through the people's mandate can only take major decisions. The deposed premier repeated that the country will not survive till the

supremacy of law is established in the country. Khan also claimed during the time his party was in power they never picked up women or entered people's homes.

The ousted prime minister also said that his "security head" has gone missing, adding that he will not back off from his stance. "They are spreading fear so that we become slaves. They want to instill fear among the 50% population of the country. This is the time to struggle for Hageeqi Azadi," he said, adding that his wife's warrant was issued so that his wife can be humiliated. "If they stand up and say that Imran Khan is a traitor, will people believe? It is a difficult time, sacrifices have to be made for freedom, I am ready. I will not accept their slavery in any case, the nation should also prepare," Khan added.

Imran will be tried in military courts: Rana Sana

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Tuesday said PTI Chairman Imran Khan will be tried in a military court for the events of May 9 when violence erupted following his arrest and military installations came under attack.

Sanaullah accused Imran of personally carrying out the planning of the attacks on military installations before his arrest on the day, adding that there was evidence to prove the claim as well. When asked if Imran would be tried in the military court, Sanaullah said: "Absolutely, why shouldn't he? The programme that he made to tar-

get the military installations and then had it executed, in my understanding absolutely is a case of a military court."

The interior minister accused the PTI chief of personally orchestrating the May 9 riots. "They (PTI supporters) chanted a slogan that 'Imran Khan is our red line', and the planning and preparation were done on Imran Khan's initiative and instigation. "He carried it all out. He is the architect of all this discord," adding that there was evidence present to back the accusation as well.

"[The evidence] is documented, it is in tweets and his messages," he added. When asked how Imran was able to

communicate with his party leaders even from jail, the interior minister replied: "All this [planning] was decided before he went [to jail] that 'who will do what and where. And when he is arrested, what would be the strategy and duties'. All of this was decided."

Sanaullah's remarks come a day after Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that there was no decision yet on Imran's trial under the Army Act, adding, however, that he could not "rule out" such a possibility. "I don't rule out the possibility that he was the planner and knew everything [about May 9]," Asif had said.

KP's deficit due to PTI policies: NA informed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Tuesday said that the total deficit of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) stood at Rs 987 billion in the last nine years of rule of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the province.

Speaking in the National Assembly, the minister said the total deficit of KPK was a mere Rs 27 billion which now surged to Rs 987 billion due to bad governance and corruption of the PTI government. The public health department has not even repair and maintenance funds, he added. He said around 335 tube wells run by Public Health Department in district Haripur were not operational. The power supply to these tube wells has been disconnected due to non-payment of electricity bills, he added.

He said the PTI government had ruined all departments which would take a long time to bring on the right track. The minister requested the Chair to direct the caretaker government to take appropriate action in this regard and address this grave issue as the people were facing immense problems in the summer season. Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani asked the caretaker provincial government to take notice of it and address it at the earliest in districts of the province.

Four more handed over to military

F A I S A L A B A D (Agencies): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Faisalabad on Tuesday approved handing over four accused involved in attacking defence installations during May 9 riots to the military court.

The commanding officer of the Pakistan Army had sought the custody of the suspects allegedly involved in attacking the office of a security institution in Faisalabad during the violent protests triggered following the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan. ATC Judge Muhammad Hussain conducted the hearing of the case and allowed the transfer of the accused to be tried under Army Act.

Enraged by the arrest, party supporters allegedly pillaged government and military installations on May 9. To contain the violence, the government called in the army and announced that the protesters would be tried under army laws. A large number of PTI workers and leaders have been arrested in a countrywide crackdown.

A day earlier, the ATC in Rawalpindi approved the transfer of eight accused involved in the attack on the General Headquarters (GHQ) during the May 9 riots to military courts. The transfer of the cases was approved by ATC Judge Hamid Hussain after Deputy Prosecutor General Malik Rafqat Ali moved a petition seeking the transfer of the suspects to military courts. Similarly, 16 suspects including ex-PTI MPA involved in the ransacking and vandalising of Jinnah House in Lahore, were handed over to the commanding officer last week.

PM rules out dialogue with 'arsonists'

— Public relief, economic development among priorities in next budget

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said dialogue was a key to evolving democracy, however categorically stated that it could not be held with 'anarchists and arsonists' in the garb of politicians.

The prime minister's statement came after the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan on Friday appealed for immediate talks with state officials. Sharif said dialogue is deeply embedded in the political process, which helps democracy mature and evolve.

He said many political and constitutional breakthroughs occurred when political leaders sat across the table to craft a consensus. "However, there is a major difference here, the anarchists and arsonists who wear the garb of politicians and attack the symbols of the State do not qualify for a dialogue," he said. The prime minister emphasized that such people should rather be held to account for their militant actions. He also termed it a prevalent practice even in developed democracies.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the provision of maximum relief to the masses and economic development would be among the Federal Government's priorities in the upcoming budget for fiscal 2023-24.

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the budget proposals for the industrial sector, said the federal budget would also encompass the measures to enhance industrial growth as well as exports. He said he would personally make sure that the proposals coming for the industrial sector were incorporated into the budget.

The prime minister instructed the authorities concerned to remove all unnecessary impediments in the increase of small, medium and large-scale industrial production. He told the meeting that the previous government deliberately obstructed the investment and industrial

development in the country.

The previous government violated the agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to save its rule, making 220 million of Pakistan bear its brunt, he added. He said being a resilient nation, Pakistanis were gradually coming out of the economic difficulties.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said the government, the whole nation, industrialists and the business community were working hard to improve the country's economic situation. He said throughout the previous year, the miscreants inflicted damage to the country through "long or short" marches and sit-ins. He also told the meeting that the incidents of May 9 not only created violence but also inflicted huge economic loss to the country.

He said the government would help decrease industries' production costs by supplying low-cost energy, besides arranging easy bank loans for the small industries. Prime Minister Shehbaz directed his Advisor Ahad Cheema to finalise the proposals from the industrial sectors and ensure their incorporation into the budget. The meeting was joined through a video link by prominent industrialists and investors from all sectors.

Besides federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Syed Naveed Qamar, Ahsan Iqbal, Makhdoom Murtaza Mahmood and Engineer Khurram Dastgir, Minister of State Dr Musadik Malik, Advisor Ahad Cheema, Special Assistants to PM Tariq Bajwa and Jahanzeb Khan, MNA Qaiser Sheikh, State Bank governor, FBR chairman and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

The ministries of commerce and industrial production put forward the budget proposals received from different sectors. Besides, the industrialists and investors presented their proposals for the budget. The prime minister directed the authorities concerned to carry out detailed work on the proposals and present a report to him.

Audio leaks case

Asif asks CJP to 'recuse himself' from hearing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday has asked Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial to "distance himself from hearing the audio leaks case to ensure that true justice is served to the aggrieved."

He was referring to a five-member bench order of the apex court, headed by the chief justice, which stayed the proceedings on various petitions challenging the constitution of the judicial commission formed by the federal government, tasked to inquire about the veracity of audio leaks allegedly involving the SC judge and a relative of the top judge.

The commission was headed by the most senior judge of the SC after the CJP, Justice Qazi Faez Isa. It also compromised of Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Balochistan High Court Chief Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan. Addressing the floor of the House of National Assembly, the defence minister expressed his opinion on the 'wedge' between the judiciary and the parliament' continuing for more than a year, creating political unrest in the country.

The minister recalled

that former chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry's son was involved in a legal battle with Real Estate Tycoon Malik Riaz. He said the former chief justice recused himself from the case due to the conflict of interest. The minister regretted that such norms and precedents had been "abandoned by few judges of the apex court". "If the former chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry can recuse himself then why can't the incumbent chief justice follow the same precedent to stop influencing the justice [proceedings] in audio leaks case," he viewed.

He reiterated the government had only intended by constituting the judicial commission, which included the members of the judiciary, to ensure transparency in court's proceedings. He regretted that the Apex Court Chief Justice scuttled the senior judge of the Supreme Court and the chief justice of the Balochistan High Court from the Commission. "We had not appointed members of the Parliament or someone outside the judiciary in the commission to probe audio leaks," the minister added.

The CJP had rejected that commission because

his mother-in-law's audio call was also under the probe, he alleged. "We expected that the chief justice would keep himself out of this[matter] to ensure justice." The minister underlined that an impression was being given that the audio calls were recorded via the bugging of telephones or devices.

"One can hack phone devices while sitting in the UK or abroad. There is no listening device required for it. International hackers are doing this. Many superpowers like the US had faced breaches of information by the hacking of international hackers," he maintained, meanwhile, dismissing the impression that the alleged audio leaks were taped indigenously. A committee was formed[by the NA Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf] on the alleged audio leak of the former chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar's son, he said. "Saqib Nisar's son was found dealing with the distribution of PTI tickets for the elections of Punjab Assembly that were not held on May 14," he alleged. The minister apprised the house that MNA Aslam Bhoonani was the chair of that committee.

Pakistan keen to boost ties with Belarus: FM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday said Pakistan was committed to further strengthening of high level engagements and bilateral cooperation with Belarus by building stronger economic, trade and investment ties.

Addressing a joint presser with visiting Belarusian Foreign Minister Sergei Aleinik, the foreign minister said they held a very fruitful and constructive meeting, and discussed entire areas of cooperation between the two countries. "Our long term goals for Pak-Belarus relations

include strengthening of the economic ties, expanding of trade and investment, fostering of scientific collaboration, enhancing of defence cooperation and increasing the cultural and deepening of the people-to-people contacts," he added.

Foreign Minister Bilawal further said that both countries strived to build a mutually beneficial relationship that could contribute to the prosperity and well-being of the people of the two countries. He said they had agreed to taking of the practical steps to transform the goodwill between the people of the two countries into a tangible cooperation.

One key outcome of the visit, he said, was the signing of the agreement between the two countries for abolition of the visas for the holders of the diplomatic and official passports which would boost high level visits. An agreement between Islamabad Strategic Institute and the Belarus Institute would lay strong foundation for educational cooperation, he added.

The foreign minister said they would build further on the discussion held during the 6th ministerial meeting. Bilawal further said that in the year 2024, both the countries would be celebrating the 30th anniversary of the establishment

of their diplomatic relationship. The foreign minister expressed his confidence to further strengthen the core of their bilateral relationship and move forward in further fostering of the mutually beneficial friendship between Pakistan and Belarus.

Foreign Minister of Belarus Sergei Aleinik expressing gratitude to Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for extending an invitation, said they held a meeting in a very constructive and very frank manner in which both sides agreed to further building of ties between the two countries. Despite geographical and global changes, it was the desire of



the two countries to build on the mutually beneficial ties.

He said they were considering further investment in Pakistan by setting up vehicles and tractor manufacturing factory. The Belarusian minister said

Pakistan was a reliable partner in the South Asia and in the Muslim world, and it had been the consistent policy of the Government of Belarus to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation in diverse fields.



Rangers arrest three robbers

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Police in a joint intelligence-based operation in Surjani Town Sector C-51 arrested three alleged street criminals of a gang and recovered illegal arms and ammunition from their possession. Arrested were identified as Imran, Abdul Rahman and Salal, said police sources on Tuesday.

The accused committed more than 17 robberies in different parts of Surjani Town during which they snatched 15 mobile phones and cash Rs. 92,000 from citizens.

During initial interrogation, they also revealed injuring a citizen over robbery resistance. Arrested along with recovered arms and ammunition were handed over to the police for further legal proceedings.

Sufi Festival to start from June 3

LAHORE (APP): A two-day Sufi Festival will be organized by the Punjab Council of Arts on June 3-4 at the Lahore Arts Council (Alhambra).

According to a spokesman for the Punjab Council of Arts, the festival has various components, including a two-day Sufi conference, a two-day Sufi musical programme, and book fair which will be held from 2:00pm to 8:00pm.

The Sufi conference will consist of sessions where distinguished personalities from academia and related fields will be guest speakers. They will discuss Sufism and its relevance to the contemporary world.

Following each session of the Sufi conference, there will be a Sufi musical programme in the evening.

Funeral prayers of martyred cop offered

KARACHI (APP): The funeral prayers of a martyred cop Waris, who was killed by the firing of unidentified accused late Monday evening, were offered at Police Headquarters Garden South on Tuesday.

Among others, the funeral prayers were attended by Additional IGP - Karachi Javed Alam Odho, DIGPs of South, East and Traffic, senior officers of Rangers Sindh, Police, family, relatives and neighbors of martyred policeman.

Additional IGP Karachi Javed Alam Odho and other senior police officers on the occasion expressed their sympathies with the bereaved family of martyred police constable Waris and paid tribute to his services for the department.

Police Constable Waris, who was posted at Zaman Town Traffic Section, embraced martyrdom by the firing of two unknown accused riding a motorcycle in Defence View area within the limits of Baloch Colony police station.

Governor Sindh announces launch of website for registration

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has announced the launch of website for registration in information technology courses, to be conducted at the Governor House.

Governor Sindh while addressing a press conference at Governor House said that desirous persons can register themselves on www.governorsindh.com for courses of Artificial Intelligence, Metaverse and Web 3.

A screening test will be held and 50000 youth would be selected for these state-of-the-art courses, he added IT experts sir Zia Khan, Danyal Nagori and IT consultant Muzammil Azhar were also present on the occasion. Governor Sindh said completion of these courses youth can earn up to Rs1.5 million per month. The amount would depend on acquired skills and expertise, he added.

He said that around 5 lac persons would be invited for screening test from which a batch of 50,000 would be selected for the first phase of this program under Governor's initiative.

He said that soon banners containing details about the courses which also be installed throughout the city. The persons coming for test or taking classes would be provided meal, he said.

Governor Sindh said that someone promised to open the doors of Governor House in the past which remained unfulfilled during the whole tenure. During last Ramadan, the doors were actually opened for masses. They come in large numbers and more than 93 per cent of them entered this historic building for the very first time. Replying to a question regarding the continuation of his initiatives, Governor Sindh said that now it would be the responsibility of the masses and media to keep an eye on these projects as these were aimed at the welfare of the general public.

He said that no funds of the Governor House or Sindh Government are being used for this IT project. It is being conducted with the help of Saylani, JDC, philanthropists and his pocket. He lauded Zia Khan for extending his services and expertise free of cost. Sir Zia Khan lauded the initiative of Governor Sindh.

He said that he was honored to be included in this very important project. He said that test and selection of youth for IT courses would be purely on merit and their progress would also be monitored constantly.

Danyal Nagori and Muzammil Azhar spoke in detail about the project.

SFERP signed 2 separate agreements with NRSP

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh Flood Emergency Rehabilitation Project (SFERP) signed two separate agreements with National Rural Support Program (NRSP) & Sindh Rural Support Organization (SRSP) to engage the mass social mobilization partners for the provision of livelihood support amounting to US\$75 million for the affectedes of flood hit areas in rural Sindh.

The women and elderly people will be preferred to carry out restoration activities which will be given a chance to participate in local rehabilitation.

These two organizations will assist in the disbursement of funds to the communities under this scheme in a transparent manner.

This program is designed to assist the severely flood affected communities to enable them to earn livelihood by

engaging semi skilled and unskilled labour for the rehabilitation of urgent basic services including clean water supply, sanitation, water course improvement, landscaperestorations, road constructionas well as its maintenance.

It will also cover provision of emergency support to smallholder livestock farmerstoretotheir animal stockand avoid losses due to animal diseases and underfeeding.

This program will cover severely affected Talukas and Union Councils, which will be prioritized on the basis of damage assessment made by the Sindh Government for livelihood assistance.

The agreement was signed by Mr. Asghar Qanasro, on behalf of SFERP and Mr. Ghulam Mustafa Jamro, RGM, signed on behalf of NRSP while Mr. Dittal Kalhoro signed on behalf of SRSP.

KU organizes Takreem-e-Shuhada seminar

KARACHI (APP): University of Karachi organized a Takreem-e-Shuhada seminar at the Karachi University Business School here on Tuesday.

KU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi, Registrar Dr Imran Ahmad Siddiqui, deans, chairperson, and teachers of various faculties, students, staff, and employees attended the event. Prof. Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi said that our military forces and intelligence agencies are fighting against the internal and external elements which are involved in trying to destabilize, demoralize and destroy our beloved country.

He further said that due to the sacrifices of our armed forces, we are able to defeat such miscreants and enemies. He shared that nations cannot forget their martyrs as they are sacrificing their present for the future of the nation, and the sacrifices made by the soldiers of Pakistan's armed forces are unprecedented in history.

"We need a mindset to strengthen our young generation against the fourth and fifth generation warfare and educational institutions mainly universities the best platform." The KU VC Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi also said that it is very easy to criticize others but when it comes to changing ourselves we often failed to do so. He mentioned that making and constructing intuitions is not an easy job, but it could be broken down due to poor policies and misman-

agement. We should careful about our approaches towards our institutions because one wrong step would weaken the whole system and help our enemies. He advised that we should not be divided on political or religious grounds and should always support the truth. He said that in this era, instead of war, the enemies are trying to weaken the country by creating a lot of conspiracies but luckily failed in this regard.

"I salute the families of the martyrs and especially the mothers who from childhood prepare their children for martyrdom in the defense of the motherland."

A member of the Islamic Ideological Council and the faculty member of the KU Islamic Learning Dr Mufti Umair Mahmood Siddiqui reiterated his stance that Pakistan was made in the name of Islam and it is here to stay. He shared that the Pakistan army is our state institution which is keeping the country safe from all external and internal factors. Dr Umair Mahmood Siddiqui mentioned that we stand with our armed forces and intelligence agencies that are on their toes to protect the country's fabric from all proxy wars being staged in Pakistan by international players. Meanwhile, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Professor Dr Shaista Tabassum said that we should pay tribute to the martyrs as well as their heirs, and as teachers we should inculcate the love of our young generation for the country and its institutions.



LAHORE: Arts student displaying her stuff during art exhibition at Alhambra Arts Council.

Operation decided for removal of CNG kits from school vans, coasters

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A high-level meeting of the Transport Department was held under the chairmanship of Sharjeel Inam Memon, the Minister of Information, Transport, and Mass Transit. In the meeting, it was decided to launch an operation for the immediate removal of CNG kits from school vans and coasters operating across Sindh.

It was further decided in the meet-

ing to initiate a crackdown on all illegal bus stands throughout Sindh and take strict action against the individuals involved, including registering cases against them.

In the meeting, Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon instructed Transport Secretary Saleem Rajput to draft letters addressing the concerned commissioners and deputy commissioners, urging them to take immediate action against the operators of illegal bus stands.

The Minister emphasized the

importance of prompt action in this matter.

The meeting also reached a decision to initiate the process of registering FIRs against those operating illegal bus stands.

It was also decided in the meeting to prioritize the immediate removal of any illegal occupations at bus stands belonging to the Transport Department throughout Sindh and decided to seek assistance from the relevant authorities in order to effectively address this issue.

Legal aid fund established for constabulary facing cases

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General of Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has established a legal aid fund for legal assistance in cases against on-duty police officers and personnel.

He said that the legal fund would bring special relief to officers and employees who were victims of false cases and legal complications.

In a message, the IGP said that police officers and personnel sometimes fell victim to false cases and legal complications during duty.

Similarly sometimes even when the government leadership, policy and officers changed, the police force had to face false cases.

Dr. Usman Anwar said that such incidents led to displeasure in the force so to counter this impact, legal aid fund had been established for legal assistance of the constabulary during the trial. The IG Punjab said that the dutiful police officers and personnel would not be left alone to face prosecutions, false cases.

He said that senior leadership and constabulary would work together to

fight false prosecutions and petitions filed against the force.

Dr. Usman Anwar said that the committee consisting of compassionate police officers would carefully review all the cases sent from the districts and decide on giving the aid funds. The IGP added that this fund had been established by the income of police welfare projects which had nothing to do with already established welfare and health fund.

Medical screening of Lahore police officials continues: On the orders of Capital City Police Officer Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana, the medical screening of police officials is underway to evaluate their physical well-being. As of now, 19.36 percent of the police force has successfully undergone medical screening. Out of 32,321 police employees, 6,259 have completed the screening process.

This initiative aims to establish an updated medical database for police personnel, said the CCPO in a statement issued here on Tuesday.

The CCPO highlighted that med-

ical screening and vaccination are being conducted for nine diseases, including diabetes, blood pressure, obesity, asthma, tuberculosis, hepatitis B, and C among police personnel.

Medical camps have been set up across the six divisions of Lahore to facilitate the screening of police officers and staff, he added.

Additionally, medical camps have been established at CCPO Office, District Police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh, Abbas Police Lines Bedian, and CTD Headquarters Jallo Mor, the CCPO said. He emphasized that the objective of the medical screening is to ensure the well-being of Lahore police officials, enabling them to perform their duties efficiently. Kamyana stated that the treatment process for police personnel suffering from various diseases has also been initiated after the health screening. This step of medical screening for the Lahore police would not only contribute to the development of a healthy police force but also have positive effects on the overall health of the personnel, he maintained.

Traffic congestion unit to be made more effective

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Division) has decided to ensure extra deployment at main markets, and shopping plazas during rush hours and to make traffic congestion unit more effective.

The decision to this effect was made in a meeting chaired by the Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer which was attended among others by all zonal DSPs and other officers.

The meeting was held as per directions of IGP Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan who asked for an exemplary traffic system in the city. It was decided to make deployment of additional personnel to resolve parking problems outside major markets and shopping plazas of the federal capital and ensure the flow of traffic during rush hour. In order to improve the traffic system and provide all possible travel facilities to the citizens, all Zonal DSPs have been directed to make the traffic police congestion unit more active and effective.

The zonal in-charges will be responsible for their respective beats and strict action to be taken against those involved in the dereliction of duties. A strategy was finalized regarding better traffic management in the federal capital and providing all possible facilities to the citizens coming for shopping. It was decided to deploy additional personnel to resolve parking problems outside the city's main markets and shopping plazas. All Zonal DSPs were directed to make the traffic police congestion unit more effective in order to improve the traffic flow system during rush hours.

Engr Naeem says Erdogan provides relief to masses instead of increasing burden

KARACHI (NNI): The victory of Recyep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey was celebrated in Karachi as a large number of JI activists and Karachiites participated in the ceremony held by the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi at New MA Jinnah Road.

The participants, carrying flags of Turkiye, chanted slogans in the favor of Erdogan and expressed their solidarity with the Turkiye president. The stage and venue was decorated with red lighting in accordance to the country's flag. A large number of people, including women and children also participated in the jubilant ceremony. Pictures of Erdogan and flags of Turkiye were seen everywhere in the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, JI Karachi Ameer Engr Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said that the Pakistani nations owns Erdogan and said that the two sides are associated

with each other on the basis of Islam and the enthusiasm to support the oppressed segments of the society.

The JI leader said that Erdogan had resolved the basic issue of the people, including education in the capacity of Anqara's mayor.

He has also raised his voice for the people of Syria, Palestine, Burma and other countries of the world.

Erdogan is not only the leader of Turkiye but also an ideological leader of the Muslim World, he said, adding that despite ultra-secular environment of excessive usage of force in the country, Erdogan served the cause of Islamic identity. He congratulated Erdogan and dubbed the victory in the presidential runoff as victory of the entire Umma. He termed the victory as a continuation of that of the victories of Najamuddin Urbakan.

Seven plaintiffs get relief through Ombudsman Punjab

LAHORE (APP): On intervention of the office of Ombudsman Punjab, seven individuals of different departments got legal relief worth Rs 14,226,380.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the spokesman announced that in compliance with the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab's direction, Government Said Mitha Teaching Hospital Lahore has duly settled the outstanding employment dues of Ms Ruqiya Batool. She has been provided with a payment of Rs 3,707,890 in addition to the creation of an OSD post with a monthly salary of Rs 45,752.

Furthermore, the ombudsman's office had

taken action to provide a travel allowance of three million rupees to the teachers from 1100 schools in Sheikhupura district who were engaged in dengue focal person duties, the spokesman said.

On complaints of non-payment of pension-related amounts, the irrigation department has disbursed Rs 11,74,254 to Saher Begum, a widow from Attock. Additionally, the office of the Accountant General Punjab has not only reinstated the pension of Zubaida Begum from Gujrat but has also issued her Rs 12,14,867 as arrears of her pension, added the spokesman.

Similarly, Rawalpindi

Municipal Corporation has granted financial assistance of 1.6 million rupees to Azra Tahir, the widow of a sanitary worker. Moreover, the accounts office in Gujranwala has not only transferred the pension of plaintiff

Muhammad Abdullah's deceased father to his widowed mother but has also disbursed a payment of Rs 21,05,700 to her after the involvement of the ombudsman's office.

Furthermore, the Board of Intermediate & Secondary Education Lahore has settled the dues of one Usman Khan, amounting to Rs 14,23,669, following the mediation of the ombudsman's office, concluded the spokesman.



LAHORE: A young vendor selling children's toys and bouquets near MAO College Grounds.



Governor for nonstop power supply to 100% recovery areas

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali Tuesday directed PESCO to provide uninterrupted power supply to areas with 100 per cent recovery.

Chairing a high-level meeting on electricity load shedding and other issues here at Governor House, he asked Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) to chalk out a mechanism to provide power supply to consumers who pay their 100pc bills in areas of power pilferage.

The meeting discussed problems and sufferings being faced by the people due to an unan-

nounced power outage in Peshawar city.

Issues related to the timely repair of damaged transformers, replacement of damaged wires, and prevention of electricity theft were also discussed.

He said that WAPDA should create a proper mechanism for electricity supply among bill payers and non-bill payers.

The governor deplored that people collect donations at the street and neighbourhood level to get the damaged transformer fixed.

He said that PESCO and WAPDA should know which and when a trans-

former needs to be replaced.

He directed PESCO SDOs to maintain close contact with the public so that there is no public protest for load shedding and timely relief could be provided to people.

The meeting was attended by Mayor Peshawar Zubair Ali, PESCO Chief Arif Mahmood Sadozai, Arbab Farooq XEN Rural, Shahid Afridi XEN Cantt, Abdul Rauf XEN City, Gohar Rahman Superintendent Engineer Khyber, Principal Secretary Governor Mazhar Irshad and other officials of WAPDA.



PESHAWAR: All Pakistan Class-IV employees chanting slogans in favour of their demands. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

2528 involved in violent protests arrested in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): A report prepared by the caretaker government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tuesday revealed that so far 2528 protestors involved in violent riots of 9th, 10th and 11th May have been arrested across the province.

The report prepared with regard to damages to the government installations and arrests of the involved people said that 2723 accused of vandalism were identified through the 575 CCTV footages. It said that 295 accused were identified through the NADRA database.

The two main accused of attack on Radio Pakistan building in Peshawar and desecration of statue of Karnal Sher Khan have also been arrested.

The report further informed that 90 police personnel sustained injuries during the violent protests while 84 FIRs have been

registered of which 18 were registered under the terrorism acts.

The report said in Peshawar 8690 protestors attended the violent protests at 10 different places of Peshawar on 9TH May while on 10th May 3400 protestors resorted to violent protests at 9 places. On 11th May 2910 protestors gathered at 6 places of the provincial metropolis.

Two of the employees sustained injuries when protestors set the building of Radio Pakistan on fire. The protestors also ran-

sacked the office of the Provincial Election Commission.

It was told in the report that 250 police personnel stopped the protestors from entering the red zone in Peshawar saying that Governor's House, Corps Commander House, Assembly building, High Court and IB Headquarters were the targets of the protestors.

The sources said that more arrests in KP would be made once a complete review of the report was completed.

‘Pulses value chain’ workshop organized

Kashif Ullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: A workshop was held at University of Agriculture on “Pulses Value Chain” which joint project with Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Office Faisalabad at Agri's varsity which was sponsored by Australian Center for International Agricultural Research policy, on Tuesday.

Register of the University, Dr. Rizwan Ahmed was Chief Guest of the event. The policy workshop various government institutions, universities, Department, NEFA officials and Zamindars of Kirk District attended. Dr. Arshad Baskir whiles the objectives of the policy workshop various expert suggestions regarding policy formulation.

Associate Professor Dr. Khurram Nawaz Saduzai talked about overcoming difficulties about faced the landowners of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province,

especially farmer. Register Dr. Rizwan Ahmed welcomed the participants addressing. He said the organizer workshop; Dr. Khurram Nawaz Saduzai appreciated the landowners and Peshawar University of Agricultural playing its full role the development Agricultural livestock.

He furthers that Agricultural University offering their services at every forum to solve problems Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht. Faisal University of Agricultural on this occasion Dr. Burhan Ahmed Abad, Dr. Peterson Lees of University of Queensland also expressed their views regarding project. Member Social sciences, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Islamabad, Dr. Ghulam Sadiq, in his concluding speech, praised efforts federal government in providing reasonable price for the crops to the landowners.



PESHAWAR: PPP Peshawar Division Women Wing President Shehnaz Shamshir with women after joining PPP. — F.P. photo

PHC orders provision of heirdom to sisters

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Justice SM Attique Shah of Peshawar High Court (PHC) declared transferred of land from five sisters on unfair means/ fraudulent ways by accepting writ petition regarding deprivation of female from ancestral heirdom, on Tuesday.

The counsel Malik Shahbaz Advocate informed that the petitioners possessing 300 Kanals land in heirdom ancestrally at Mardan but their brothers named Ghani Rehman along with others had transferred the property on fake “Will” (Tamliq) as well as fraudulent transfer (Intiqal) of the land into their own-ership.

The counsel argued that Civil Court has granted decision in favour of petitioners but Session Judge has favored with brothers’ plea in this regard while declared transfer of land is illegal and valid.

The counsel argued that petitioners pleaded for their heirdom as ensured by Shariah law while their brothers had transferred the property on fake ‘Will’ (Tamliq) and fraudulent (Intiqalat).

PHC has declared that respondent (petitioner’s brother) failed to established that his sister had transfer the property (300 Kanals land) to him neither proved “will” (Tamliq) as guanine and ordered provision of heirdom to petitioners.

The counsel argued that Civil Court has granted decision in favour of petitioners but Session Judge has favored with brothers’ plea in this regard while declared transfer of land is illegal and valid.

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‘No corrupt employee to be allowed in Department’

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor to the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Population Welfare Sayyed Jarar Hussain Bukhari on Tuesday said no corrupt element would be tolerated in the Population Welfare Department.

Chairing a meeting of the departmental affairs here, the Advisor also issued directives for initiating disciplinary action against those employees of the Population Welfare who remain absent from their duties.

The meeting beside others was attended by DG Population Welfare Ayesha and officers of the department. The DG Population Welfare gave a detailed briefing to the advisor on administrative affairs.

Bukhari directed the authorities of Population Welfare to pay constant visits to the welfare centers across the province and besides ensuring presence of the staff also review official affairs there. He said no corrupt official or officer should be allowed to work in the department.

He also directed for not allowing additional charge to the officers of the Population Welfare Department and ordered abolishment of all such additional appointments of the officers.

CMG holds interviews

PESHAWAR (APP): Capital Metropolitan Government (CMG) here Tuesday conducted interviews to fill various vacant vacancies under deceased quota.

The interviews on deceased quota were held after 23 years and conducted on the directives of Mayor Peshawar, Haji Zubair Ali to appoint children of retired employees and those who died while performing duties.

Mayor Peshawar has already constituted a committee under headship of Director General Capital Metropolitan for making appointments on 22 posts including junior clerks and class IV. He said that deceased quota is right of former employees and desired to fill all the vacant vacancies of deceased quota in his tenure.

PTI leader gets bail in May 9 vandalism case

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Member Provincial Assembly, Arbab Jahandad Tuesday was granted bail by anti terrorism court in the ransacking and vandalism properties during May 9-10. ATC judge Dr Amir Nazir after hearing arguments and facts granted bail to Arbab Jahandad. The police prosecutor while objecting into the bail plea maintained that the PTI leader was arrested by police in the limit of Khan Razik police station and was involved in ransacking and vandalism of May 9-10.



PESHAWAR: President Provincial Olympic Association Syed Aqil Shah meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan.

CS reviews progress of deworming campaign

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary on Tuesday chaired a meeting to discuss the progress of the deworming initiative for school-age children in the province.

During the meeting, an in-depth review of the ongoing program was conducted, highlighting the significant achievements and impact of the initiative.

The deworming program, which aims to combat worm infections in children, has proven to be highly successful.

Reports indicated that in 2022 alone, the program reached an impressive coverage of 5 million children across 22,797 schools in 22 districts of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa.

This remarkable achievement was built upon the earlier successes of the program, which provided deworming treatment to 3.8 million children in 2021, and 2.7 million children in 2019, spanning various districts and schools.

Chaudhary stressed the severity of worm infections in children, highlighting their detrimental consequences on their health, education, and overall productivity. He emphasized the urgent need to effectively address and combat worm infections among school-age children.

The deworming initiative in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has played a pivotal role in improving the health and well-being of millions

of children.

Chief Secretary chairs meeting to review mineral resources sector

Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary, presided over a comprehensive review meeting f on the mineral resources sector in the province.

The meeting discussed the progress made in this vital sector, identify opportunities and potential, address challenges, and discuss regulatory matters.

The Secretary of the Minerals Development Department presented a detailed briefing during the meeting, shedding light on various aspects of the mineral resources sector.

The meeting discussed the sector’s overall progre-

ess, including advancements, achievements, and ongoing initiatives. It also highlighted the significant role the sector plays in generating government revenues, facilitating foreign exchange earnings, creating employment opportunities, and contributing to the development of social and physical infrastructure in the province.

Chief Secretary commended the efforts of the Minerals Development Department and other relevant authorities for their contributions.

He emphasized the need for continuous collaboration between the government, industry stakeholders, and local communities to address these challenges effectively.

PRCS role lauded for serving humanity on World Crescent Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Minister of Information for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Feroz Jamal Kakar, addressed the students during the speech and painting competition organized by the Pakistan Red Crescent Society Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the Celebration of World Red Cross Red Crescent Day 2023.

He stated that the spirit of serving humanity exists in every Pakistani, and when the time comes, people come forward to serve others. The stories of our martyrs are on the lips of every person in the world. He further stated that the Pakistan Red Crescent Society is an organization that is always at the forefront of serving humanity during all kinds of disasters in the province. No society can become

healthy and strong without social theories.

On this occasion, Chairman Habib Malik and the central leadership of the Pakistan Red Crescent Society Khyber Pakhtunkhwa mentioned that the RCRC Movement has completed 160 years, with more than 96 million people associated with it worldwide. Among them, a large number of volunteers are our well-wishers and registered across the globe. Volunteers are considered the backbone of our organization. The Pakistan Red Crescent Society is a unique institution that has assisted more than 900,000 affected individuals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He further stated that we request every individual in the province to register as a volunteer in our district offices and play their role

in serving humanity.

During the ceremony, Zartasha Qaisar Khan, Deputy Head of the International Committee of the Red Cross Peshawar office said that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was founded in 1863 and together with Red Cross and Red Crescent partners we have completed 160 years of humanitarian action around the world. For the ICRC, most importantly, it is a landmark occasion to remember our relationship with Pakistan which began in 1948.

At present, the ICRC is providing technical, material, and educational support to health-care services, Physical Rehabilitation, cooperating with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, community risk education, humanitarian forensics, restoring family

links, and support to Police while also promoting International Humanitarian Law in Pakistan. Let me assure you that the memories of this long remarkable presence of the ICRC in Pakistan, and the yearly increase in our partnerships with key actors in the country, continue to build our motivation and strength.

In the end, I congratulate all the winners and participants of this competition and wish them good luck ahead. It is exciting to see our future generations having such great belief in volunteerism and social work. I am confident that the youth of this country have all the potential to become resilient and show empathy while helping communities in need. In the end, prizes were distributed among the winners of the speech and painting competitions.

Grand reunion of ex-students held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A grand reunion of former students was held in Government Jogiwara School Peshawar. Ex-students and retired teachers and incumbent teachers were present in the event under the leadership of former principal of the school Khwaja Naik Alam, who devoted all of his life for the training and education of students in the institute.

The participants shared memories of their childhood and school time. The hall echoed with laughter and emotion when participants recalled their past events. School graduates included doctors, engineers, bureaucrats, bankers, journalist, army officers and police servicemen who were serving the beloved nation in different folks.

Former teachers Noor Rehman, Aftab Ahmad, Ziauddin, Amir Muhammad, Mushtaq Hussain, Amir Muhammad, Himatullah, Fayaz Ahmad, Ibadullah and many more were present on day.



Teachers were given flowers as token for appreciation their services. Condolence was offered for the departed souls of late teachers and students.

Seminar organized at UET

PESHAWAR (APP): A one-day seminar on “Subsurface Geophysical Imaging of Solid Waste Management Dump Site: Implications for Soil and Ground Water”, was held at University of Engineering Technology (UET) here on Tuesday.

The seminar was jointly organized by the Pakistan Scientific and Technological Information Center (PASTIC), Agricultural Engineering Department (AED) UET Peshawar and National Center of Excellence in Geology (NCEG), University of Peshawar at UET Peshawar.

The resource persons of

the seminar were Dr. Khurram Sheraz, Assistant Professor, AED and Dr. Muhammad Younas Khan, Assistant Professor, NCEG, University of Peshawar while the chief organizer of this seminar was Dr. Muhammad Ajmal, Associate Professor, AED, UET Peshawar.

The seminar was aimed to update the audience especially students about how to use the new techniques in identifying soil and groundwater contamination and sustainably prevent soil and groundwater degradation to live a healthy life.

The seminar was attended by the faculty and students from different universities including the Department of Agricultural Engineering University of Engineering Technology Peshawar, the NCEG Peshawar University, and the Department of Geology, the Islamia College University Peshawar.

Ghazala Ali Khan, Additional Director PASTIC, Dr. Liaqat Ali (Guest of honor), Director NCEG, University of Peshawar, and Dr. Abdur Raziq from Islamia College University, Peshawar were also present on the occasion.



In brief

Four die as bridge falls

MUZAFFARABAD (PPI): Four people including technical experts and labourers died after the under-construction Bailey Bridge slipped and fell while being placed on the pillars with the help of heavy machinery in Dhani area of Naseerabad tehsil in Muzaffarabad district, rescue officials said Tuesday. According to police, the Bailey Bridge was being constructed to connect Dhani and Ghandi areas in the lower Neelam valley when it slipped and fell while being placed on the pillars. As a result, four technical experts and labourers died while three workers sustained injuries. All the deceased and the injured were locals. The injured were shifted to the Combined Military Hospital, Muzaffarabad. The locals blamed the contractor for the accident, stating that the accident took place due to the negligence of the contractor and incomplete safety arrangements. They also protested by blocking the main Neelam Highway at Dhani and demanded that the incident be investigated and the responsible be punished. They also demanded that the families of the deceased and the injured be compensated.

Two killed for honour

MANSEHRA (INP): Two including a girl were killed for honour in jurisdiction of Parhena police station on Tuesday. Police arrested the accused. According to details, accused Sohaib Ali s/o Ali Mardan after seeing the motorcycle of Noman s/o Qamar Zaman parked near house of his paternal uncle got furious. The culprit shot dead Noman hailing from Rohria Parhena, later went to house of him uncle and killed his cousin Kanwal Bibi d/o Gul Shehzad with same weapon. It should be mentioned that the deceased Kanwal Bibi was living alone with mother while her father Gul Shehzad was out of city to earn livelihood for family. Bodies of the deceased were shifted to hospital for post-mortem. The police arrested the accused Shoaib with murder weapon and after registering a case against him started an investigation.

Couple dies as roof collapses

KOHAT (INP): Two including husband and wife died while a child was injured when roof of a house collapsed due to gas leakage explosion here on Tuesday, rescue sources said. According to details, roof of a house located in College Town of Kohat caved in after a big bang that took place due to gas leakage. A couple died in the roof cave in while their child sustained critical injuries. The bodies and injured were shifted to hospital.

Three killed, another injured

QUETTA (INP): At least three people were killed and another in separate incidents of violence in different localities of Quetta, police said on Tuesday. According to details, a man was killed after unknown gunmen sprayed bullets on shop near telephone exchange on Sariab road of Quetta. A teacher of government boys middle school identified as Inham Rabbani was shot dead by unidentified motorcyclists in Ferozabad locality. Two groups traded fire in Zarghoun area of Urak in which one person was killed while another sustained wounds. The bodies and injured of all incidents were different hospitals of respective areas and police after registering separate cases at concerned police stations started investigations.



HYDERABAD: Students solving their papers during HSSC examination.

Admn rules out presence of militants — asks tourists to enjoy fearlessly

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Commissioner Malakand division Shahidullah Khan has said that local and outsider tourists can fearlessly visit the scenic locations in the region as lasting peace prevails in the area. He was talking to local journalists during his visit to the district headquarters hospital Timergara here the other day. The Lower Dir deputy commissioner Iftikhar Ahmad, district police officer Tariq Iqbal, district health officer Dr Irshad Rughani, MS Timergara hospital Dr Ali Asghar and other health professionals were also present.

The commissioner inaugurated the installation of a mammography machine at the breast cancer diagnosis center and a new ambulance service at the hospital. He also visited the hospital casualty unit and inquired about the patients' health. He said that some vest interested elements were propagating baseless information regarding the presence of militants in the region but there was no truth in that news. He said the tourists along with their families could fearlessly come and enjoy natural beauty.

"There is no Taliban

presence in any part of the region," he said, adding the tourists could enjoy natural beauty at Kumrat, Kalam, Chitral and Shahi top. He said that millions of local and foreign tourists were expected to visit Swat, Dir and Chitral this summer for which the administration had taken appropriate measures. He said that tourism played a vital role in the country's economic development. The visiting officer asked women patients to take full advantage of the newly installed mammography machine for their timely diagnosis. Earlier the commissioner was briefed about the ongoing development projects in the district at the DC office conference hall.

The additional deputy commissioner finance Jan Muhammad, ADC general Abdul Wali Khan, DPO Tariq Iqbal, AC Timergara Shehzad Khan and project director Koto Hydro power project were present. The commissioner Malakand also visited the FC Fort at Chakdara and FC Public School and College, Balambat and issued directives to rehabilitate the school as soon as possible so that the studies of students may not be affected.

The FC Fort and FC

School were vandalised by protesters on May 9, soon after the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan. While chairing an introductory meeting with the officials of line departments at the office of the deputy commissioner Lower Dir, Commissioner of Malakand division Shahidullah Khan urged the officials to improve public service delivery and facilitate the citizens, besides ensuring timely attendance of the staff. He asked the officials to ensure timely competition of all the ongoing projects.

DC Iftikhar Ahmad Marwat briefed the commissioner regarding the ongoing development projects, including Sanam Dam Adenzai, establishment of Dir University, Talash bypass road, Dir motorway, green belt and family park Balambat, Balambat irrigation channel, Timergara Khwar road construction under the city beautification project and land settlement operation in the district. The commissioner also visited the Koto Hydro-power project. The project director Sultani Rome gave a detailed briefing and said that 90 percent construction work on the 40.8mw power project had been completed.

Fire breaks out in a house in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A house fire broke out in the house of one Sadiq Shah at Shuntala village of Jandol due to an electric short circuit here on Tuesday. The fire flames destroyed household items worth millions of rupees. The local volunteers and the TMA fire fighters reached the site and put off the fire after hectic efforts. The residents demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and the district administration to compensate the owner as he belonged to a poor family.

Adenzai land owners: Representatives of 20 villages of Adenzai tehsil have threatened to block the main GT and Chakdara bypass roads if the Adenzai assistant commissioner and tehsildar Chakdara were not replaced within the next ten days. Speaking at a news conference at the Chakdara press club here the other day, the representatives of 20 villages including Muqarab Khan, Zar Kamin Khan, Abdul Wahab, advocate Gul Muhammad and others alleged the local administration had sent them illegal notices regarding their ancestral lands. They said the administration wanted to ban land sale and purchase in the limits of Bagh Kandai, Ramyal, Gaddar, Barorai, Teso, Osakai and Shabad villages.

They said that they were the owners of those lands and would not allow the administration to interfere in it. The elders said that they had all the documentary evidence regarding the courts' decisions in which they had been declared the land owners. The elders said the federal land reform commission and the Supreme Court of Pakistan had decided the land dispute in Adenzai in their favour. They alleged the local administration was taking side with their rivals from the Behramkhel and Sharga Khel clans and wanted to disturb the peaceful environment in the area.

ANP announces election commission for intra-party polls

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Awami National Party has announced the District Election Commission for the intra-party elections in Mardan district, on Tuesday.

According to the details issued by the provincial organizers of Awami National Party, Aziz Khan has been nominated as the chairman of the District Election Commission Mardan. Shahnawaz Khan, Haroon Khan, Farooq Akram Khan, Fakhra Alam, Zubair Khan and Ayaz Khan are also included in this Election Commission.

These names have been approved by Provincial Election Commission Chairman Shakeel Bashir Khan Omarzai after consultation with other members of the party. According to the notification, all the nominated members of the District Election Commission will perform their constitutional duties in connection with the intra-party elections in Mardan so that the elections would be completed in transparent manners and have to fulfill all the requirements of democracy and politics.

The nominated members of the District Election Commission have thanked the administrators of the Provincial Election

Commission and have decided that they will play their full role in conducting the intra-party elections in a full and transparent manner.

Its note-worthy that the nominated District Election Commission Chairman Aziz Khan is a social activist and has been served as a Chairman of the Safety Committee also in previous periods. He has responsibility to lead the association of Private Hospitals and Surgical Hospitals as a chairman.

Responsibility of police a greater national obligation: The responsibility of protecting the life and property of the people is greater obligation on the shoulders of the police. The cooperation of the public and journalists is very important for the elimination of crimes. Criminals will not be tolerated in the area.

This was claimed by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) City Inam Jan Khan while talking to journalists that measures are being taken on an emergency basis to improve the law and order situation in the area. RPO Muhammad Ali Khan Gandapur and DPO Najibur Rahman Khan A strict action plan has been prepared for the elimination of crimes including effective patrolling system on special

instructions for the elimination of crime.

Identify the persons, indiscriminately take immediate action against the criminals and bring them to their logical end. DSP City Inam Jan Khan said that my entire team is ready and fighting all the time to eliminate crimes, criminals should either stop crimes or leave my area because any criminals and their crimes in my area will not be tolerated in any case, no concession will be given in this regard. The doors of my office are open 24 hours a day for those who are in need and oppressors, legitimate complaints will be redressed immediately.

Tout mafia and elements harassing noble citizens have been blocked from entering the police station and strict action will be taken against such elements. God willing, very soon the crime rate in the area will be negligible. Strict instructions have been issued to the subordinate staff that they should treat the citizens with good manners and any kind of negligence, negligence and corruption will not be tolerated. In case of complaint, strict departmental action will be taken. He said that the police has a heavy responsibility to protect the life and property of the people.

Teacher commits suicide

AWARAN (INP): A female teacher, driven to despair by relentless harassment, tragically ended her own life in the Gishkaur area of Awaran, Balochistan. The teacher, identified as Najma Baloch, was reportedly subjected to persistent harassment, leading her to a point of despair where she felt suicide was the only escape.

Najma Baloch was providing free education to underprivileged children in a camp school. Despite the limited resources available in the region, she managed to run a school in a hut, where she generously offered her services free of charge. Najma, revered for

her efforts to educate poor children, took her own life after reportedly enduring harassment.

The local police have registered a case against three individuals, including a Levies official, in response to the allegations made by the victim's family. The deceased's family has alleged that their daughter had been subjected to harassment by the Levies officials and their two colleagues. Najma's family added that she, feeling frustrated and overwhelmed by the situation, believed she had no other option but to end her own life.

Her mother, grief-strick-

en, recounted the threats and intimidation their daughter had endured, stating that Najma had bravely declared that she would rather be in her grave than be subservient to her harassers. Following the incident, the Assistant Commissioner of Awaran has initiated an investigation into the circumstances surrounding Najma Baloch's suicide. The relevant Levies official has been suspended, and an inquiry committee has been formed to delve deeper into the matter. The police have already apprehended one of the accused individuals, while efforts are underway to locate the remaining two.



QUETTA: A resident of Kuchlak Gulzar Khan and others addressing a press conference.

Three PTI activists booked under sedition charges

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: A case of terrorism and sedition has been registered against three Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists including president and former Member National Assembly MNA Saleem-ur-Rehman, on Tuesday.

According to sources, the case was registered

against three local PTI leaders inciting violence during a protest against Pakistan Army held on the 9th May in Mingora Swat.

According to the police, a case was registered against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) district president and former MNA Saleem Rehman, former DEDC Committee Chairman Fazal Hakeem Khan and Swat

City Mayor Shahid Ali Khan under the Terrorism Act on the complaint of SHO Saidi Police Station Rafiullah Khan.

The case includes sections 500/505, 120B, 124A and 7ATA while making provocative speeches after Imran Khan's arrest and threatening the children of officers with dire consequences.

Navigating challenges and shaping tomorrow

Muhammad Saleem

THE youth of any nation are its greatest asset, representing the future leaders, innovators, and drivers of change. In Pakistan, the potential of its young population has long been recognized, in 2023, the efforts to empower and support the Pakistani youth have reached new heights. Navigating through a range of challenges, the country is focused on shaping a brighter tomorrow by investing in its young generation.

Religious attachment holds significant importance in the lives of Pakistani youth. It provides a moral compass and a sense of purpose. Encouraging young individuals to deepen their understanding of their respective religious teachings, promoting religious tolerance, and emphasizing the values of compassion, empathy, and social justice are key to nurturing their spiritual growth.

To deepen their understanding of their respective religious teachings, young people can engage in religious education programs. These programs should not only focus on memorization but also emphasize critical thinking, contextual understanding, and the application of religious principles in contemporary life. By promoting a holistic and comprehensive approach to religious education,

young individuals can develop a deeper connection with their faith.

Promoting religious tolerance is essential in a diverse society like Pakistan. Young people should be encouraged to respect and appreciate different religious traditions and beliefs. Interfaith dialogues, community service projects involving individuals from diverse backgrounds, and cultural exchanges can foster understanding, empathy, and mutual respect among young people of different religious affiliations.

Emphasizing the values of compassion, empathy, and social justice is integral to the development of young individuals' religious attachment. Encouraging youth to actively participate in charitable activities, community service projects, and initiatives that address social issues can instill a sense of responsibility and promote the principles of their religious teachings.

Furthermore, religious leaders, educational institutions, and community organizations play a vital role in guiding and mentoring young individuals in their religious journey. Creating safe spaces for dialogue, mentorship programs, and opportunities for spiritual growth can support the religious development of Pakistani youth.

It is important to note that while religious attachment is significant, it should not be used

as a tool for division or extremism. Promoting a balanced and inclusive understanding of religion can contribute to the development of a peaceful and harmonious society where young individuals can thrive.

Pakistan boasts a rich cultural heritage, and it is vital to instill a sense of cultural appreciation and pride in the youth. Encouraging participation in cultural activities, promoting traditional arts, and literature, and fostering awareness and respect for the diversity of cultural expressions can enrich the lives of young Pakistanis and strengthen their national identity.

Encouraging youth participation in cultural activities is an effective way to foster cultural enrichment. Schools, colleges, and community centers should provide platforms for young individuals to showcase their talents in areas such as painting, sports, literary festivals and visual arts. Organizing cultural festivals, exhibitions, and competitions can promote cultural diversity and provide opportunities for young artists to express themselves.

Promoting traditional arts, painting, and literature are other essential aspects of cultural enrichment. Cultural institutions, such as museums, art galleries, and libraries, should actively engage with youth through exhibitions, workshops,

and storytelling sessions. Preserving and promoting indigenous languages is also crucial for cultural preservation. Efforts should be made to incorporate local languages into educational curricula and encourage their use in literature and media.

Fostering awareness and respect for the diversity of cultural expressions is integral to cultural enrichment. Educational institutions should include cultural studies in their curricula to educate young individuals about the different cultures, traditions, and histories within Pakistan. Promoting cultural exchange programs, both domestically and internationally, can also broaden the horizons of young people and expose them to different cultural perspectives. By encouraging youth participation in cultural activities, promoting traditional arts and literature, and fostering awareness and respect for cultural diversity, Pakistan can nurture a generation that values and cherishes its rich cultural heritage.

While political awareness is essential, it is advisable for young individuals to focus on personal growth and skill development rather than getting excessively involved in politics at an early stage. Encouraging youth to engage in constructive dialogue, understand the political landscape, and advocate for issues they care about can create responsible citizens who posi-

tively impact society in the long run. Encouraging youth to engage in constructive dialogue and discussions about political issues can help them develop a broader understanding of the political landscape. Schools, colleges, and community organizations can organize debates, seminars, and workshops where young people can voice their opinions and engage in meaningful conversations about social and political issues.

Understanding the political system, including the rights and responsibilities of citizens, is crucial for young individuals. Educational institutions can incorporate civic education into their curricula to provide students with knowledge about the political system, democratic values, and the importance of active citizenship. Advocacy for issues that young individuals care about can be channeled through non-political platforms such as youth-led organizations, social initiatives, and community projects. These avenues allow young people to make a positive impact on society without directly engaging in partisan politics.

Building networks and connections with individuals working in the political sphere can provide valuable insights and opportunities for young individuals to learn about the political process. Internships or volunteering with political organiza-

tions or government agencies can offer firsthand experience and a deeper understanding of the workings of politics. It is important to note that while young people should be encouraged to be politically aware and engaged, it is equally important to prioritize personal growth, education, and skill development. By focusing on developing their talents, acquiring knowledge, and honing their skills, young individuals can build a strong foundation for their future endeavors and make meaningful contributions to society in various fields.

Encouraging young individuals to engage in community service, volunteer work, and social initiatives can provide them with a sense of purpose and a platform to address social issues. These activities allow them to make a positive impact on their communities and develop leadership skills, empathy, and a strong sense of social responsibility. By striking a balance in religious attachment, cultural enrichment, and political awareness, a young individual can become well-rounded individual. The balancing contributes to personal development and societal equipment for the betterment of society in a holistic manner. The navigation of youth's challenges can help in shaping their tomorrow.

saleemsaif5@gmail.com



China launches new crew for space station



BEIJING (AP): China launched a new three-person crew for its orbiting space station on Tuesday, with an eye to putting astronauts on the moon before the end of the decade. The Shenzhou 16 spacecraft lifted off from the Jiuquan launch center on the edge of the Gobi Desert in northwestern China atop a Long March 2-F rocket just after 9:30 a.m. (0130 GMT) Tuesday.

The crew, including China's first civilian astronaut, will overlap briefly with three now aboard the Tiangong station, who will then return to Earth after completing their six-month mission. A third module was added to the station in November, and space program officials said they have plans to expand it, along with launching a crewed mission to the moon before 2030. China built its own space station after it was excluded from the International Space

Station, largely due to US concerns over the Chinese space programs' intimate ties with the People's Liberation Army, the military branch of the ruling Communist Party.

China's first manned space mission in 2003 made it the third country after the former Soviet Union and the US to put a person into space under its own resources. On the this latest mission, payload expert Gui Haichao, a professor at Beijing's top aerospace research institute, will join mission commander Maj. Gen. Jing Haipeng, who is making his fourth flight to space, and spacecraft engineer Zhu Yangzhu. The crew will stay aboard the station for around five months, during which they will conduct scientific experiments and regular maintenance.

The mission comes against the background of a rivalry with the US for reaching new milestones in

space. That has been largely friendly, but also reflects their sharpening competition for leadership and influence in the technology, military and diplomatic fields. American spending, supply chains and capabilities are believed to give it a significant edge over China, at least for now. China has broken out in some areas, however, bringing samples back from the lunar surface for the first time in decades and landing a rover on the less explored far side of the moon.

The US, meanwhile, aims to put astronauts back on the lunar surface by the end of 2025 as part of a renewed commitment to crewed missions, aided by private sector players such as SpaceX and Blue Origin. In addition to their lunar programs, the two countries have also separately landed rovers on Mars, and China plans to follow the US in landing a spacecraft on an asteroid.

Rohingya refugees: UN agencies face funding challenges

DHAKA (AP): Bangladesh should not bear the burden of more than 1 million Rohingya refugees alone while UN agencies are facing challenges to feed them, a United Nations official said. Olivier De Schutter, a UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, made the statement at the end of a 12-day trip to Bangladesh, where he visited camps sheltering the refugees from Myanmar. He said the international response to meet the funds needed to support the refugees is "grossly insufficient."

About \$876 million is needed to support the community for a year, but only 17% of that has been pledged to date, he said, calling it "scandalous" at a news conference in Bangladesh's capital, Dhaka. "Bangladesh should not be left to shoulder the burden of the presence of the refugees on its own. These (UN) agencies should be much better supported in their work," De Schutter said. He said the World Food Program was forced in May to reduce the value of the monthly food vouchers it gives to each refugee from \$12 to \$10. It will be reduced further to \$8 on June 1, he said. "In a context in which food inflation this year was about 8%, that means that in the camps, children are undernourished," De Schutter said. "The rates of malnutrition will increase. The rates of stunting will increase. The development of the child in that context will be endangered."

Bangladesh has sheltered more than 1 million refugees as the Muslim Rohingya face widespread discrimination in the Buddhist-majority Myanmar, where most are denied citizenship and other rights. More than 700,000 fled to Bangladesh starting in late August 2017, when the Myanmar military launched a "clearance operation" against them following attacks by a rebel group. The safety situation in Myanmar has worsened following the military takeover two years ago. Bangladesh is currently working with China to start repatriation of the Rohingya to Myanmar as a pilot case. The UN said earlier that they were aware of such a move but were not part of it. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said she would not force any refugees to move to Myanmar.

‘There can be nuclear weapons for everyone’

BELARUS (Reuters): Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said that if any other country wanted to join a Russia-Belarus union there could be "nuclear weapons for everyone." Russia moved ahead last week with a plan to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, in the Kremlin's first deployment of such warheads outside Russia since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, spurring concerns in the West.

In an interview published on Russia's state television, Lukashenko, President Vladimir Putin's staunchest ally among Russia's neighbours, said that it must be "strategically understood" that Minsk and Moscow have a unique chance to unite. "No one is against Kazakhstan and other countries having the same close relations that we have with the Russian Federation," Lukashenko said. "If someone is worried ... (then) it is very simple: join in the Union State of Belarus and Russia. That's all: there will be nuclear weapons for everyone."

He added that it was his own view - not the view of Russia. Russia and Belarus are formally part of a Union State, a borderless union and alliance between the two former Soviet republics. Russia used the territory of Belarus as a launchpad for its invasion of their common neighbour Ukraine in February last year, and since then their military cooperation has intensified, with joint training exercises on Belarusian soil. The Belarusian Defence Ministry said that another unit of the S-400 mobile, surface-to-air missile systems arrived from Moscow, with the systems to be ready for combat duty soon.

North Korea says it will launch its first military spy satellite in June

SEOUL (AP): North Korea said Tuesday it would launch its first military spy satellite in June and described space-based reconnaissance as crucial for monitoring the United States' "reckless" military exercises with South Korea. The statement came a day after North Korea notified Japan's coast guard that the launch, sometime between May 31 and June 11, might affect waters in the Yellow Sea, East China Sea and east of the Philippines' Luzon Island. Japan's defense minister warned its forces to shoot down the satellite or debris, if any entered Japanese territory.

While North Korea's rivals have condemned the country's planned launch as a banned test of ballistic missile technology, it's less clear whether the satellite itself is advanced enough to support the North's stated goals of tracking and monitoring US and South Korean military activities in real time. The pace of both North Korea's weapons testing and the US-South Korean joint military exercises increased in past months in a cycle of tit-for-tat.

In comments published by North Korean state media, senior military official Ri Pyong Chol criticized the combined US-South Korean military exercises, which Pyongyang has long described as invasion rehearsals. He said North Korea considers space-based reconnaissance "indispensable" to monitor the military exercises. Last week, the South Korean and US militaries conducted large-scale live-fire drills near the border with North Korea - the first of five rounds of

exercises marking 70 years since the establishment of their alliance. Washington and Seoul describe their regular military exercises as defensive and have expanded their training since 2022 to cope with the North's evolving threats. Ri said the expanding US-South Korean drills and other military activities underline their "sinister intention" to prepare for pre-emptive military action against North Korea. He said the "dangerous military acts by the US" and its forces created a concerning security environment that makes it necessary for Pyongyang to gather real-time, reliable information on military movements in the region.

South Korea has warned that North Korea will face consequences if it goes ahead with the satellite launch in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, which ban the North from conducting any launch using ballistic technology. Space-launch vehicles for satellites share core technologies with long-range missiles that are built to deliver warheads aimed at destroying intercontinental targets. Japan's coast guard issued a safety warning for ships that would be in the affected seas during the expected launch, citing a risk of falling debris. Last week, South Korea launched its first commercial-grade satellite, which experts say could provide Seoul with key technology and expertise to place its first military spy satellite into orbit later this year and build more powerful missiles.

Han Sung Geun, spokesperson of South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff,

said during a briefing that the South Korean and US militaries were closely watching North Korea over the possible satellite launch and other provocative military moves. He did not provide specific assessments about the potential capabilities of the North Korean satellite and refused to say whether the South Korean military was preparing for the possibility that debris could fall in nearby waters. Spy satellites are among an array of high-tech weapons systems North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has publicly vowed to develop. Other weapons systems on his wish list include solid-propellant intercontinental ballistic missiles, nuclear-powered submarines, hypersonic missiles and multi-warhead missiles. North Korea placed Earth-observation satellites in orbit in 2012 and 2016, though their capabilities have been questioned.

Foreign experts say the earlier satellites never transmitted imagery back to North Korea, and analysts say the new device displayed in state media in recent weeks appeared too small and crudely designed to process and transfer high-resolution imagery.

Since the start of 2022, North Korea has test-fired about 100 missiles, including ICBMs designed to reach the US mainland and a slew of launches it described as simulated nuclear attacks on targets in South Korea. North Korea has said its intensified testing activity is meant to counter its rivals' joint military exercises as it continues to use those drills as a pretext to advance its arsenal of nuclear-capable weapons.

UN talks on a treaty to end plastic pollution open

PARIS (AP): A United Nations committee is meeting in Paris to work on what is intended to be a landmark treaty to bring an end to global plastic pollution, but there is little agreement yet on what the outcome should be. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for Plastics is charged with developing the first international, legally binding treaty on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. This is the second of five meetings due to take place to complete the negotiations by the end of 2024.

At the first meeting, held six months ago in Uruguay, some countries pressed for global mandates, some for national solutions and others for both. Humanity produces more than 430 million tons of plastic annually, two-thirds of which are short-lived products that soon become waste, filling the ocean and, often, working their way into the human food chain, the United Nations Environment Program said in April. Plastic waste produced globally is set to almost triple by 2060, with about half ending up in landfill and under a fifth recycled, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Because it's a short timeline for treaty

negotiations, experts say it's critical decisions are made about the objectives at this meeting.

The treaty could focus on human health and the environment, as desired by the self-named "high ambition coalition" of countries, led by Norway and Rwanda, with limits on plastic production and restrictions on some of the chemicals used in plastics, for example. The coalition is committed to an international, legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution by 2040. It says that this is necessary to protect human health and the environment while helping to restore biodiversity and curb climate change. Alternatively, the treaty could have a more limited scope to address plastic waste and scale up recycling, as some of the plastic-producing and oil and gas exporters want. Most plastic is made from fossil fuels. Countries supporting this plan include the United States, Saudi Arabia and China. The US delegation in Uruguay said national plans would allow governments to prioritize the most important sources and types of plastic pollution. Many plastics and chemical companies want this approach, too, with a plastic waste treaty that prioritizes recycling. The International Council of Chemical

Associations, the World Plastics Council, the American Chemistry Council and other companies that make, use and recycle plastics say they want an agreement that eliminates plastic pollution while "retaining the societal benefits of plastics." They're calling themselves the "global partners for plastics circularity." They say that modern plastic materials are used around the world to create essential and often life-saving products, many of which are critical to a lower-carbon, more sustainable future.

Björn Beeler is at the meeting as the international coordinator for the International Pollutants Elimination Network, or IPEN. He said countries need to make a plan by the end of this week to write up an initial draft of the treaty text so it can be negotiated at the third meeting. "If there's no text to negotiate, you're just continuing to share ideas," he said. "Then because of the timeline, we could be looking at an early failure." Beeler said the talks are "the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a global conversation to change the trajectory of plastic production growth." IPEN wants a treaty that restricts chemicals used to make plastic that are harmful to human health and the environment, he added.

25 NATO-led peacekeepers injured

ZVECAN, Kosovo (AP): The NATO-led peacekeeping force said that 25 of its troops were injured in clashes with ethnic Serbs in northern Kosovo after they tried to take over the offices of one of the municipalities, where ethnic Albanian mayors took up their posts last week.

The Serbs clashed with NATO troops and Kosovo police in the municipality of Zvecan, 45 kilometers (28 miles) north of the capital. The soldiers fired tear gas and stun grenades to protect the Kosovar officers and disperse protesters, according to witnesses. The assembled Serbs responded by throwing rocks and other hard objects at them. "Several soldiers of the Italian and Hungarian KFOR contingent were the subject of unprovoked attacks and sustained trauma wounds with fractures and burns due to the explosion of incendiary devices," said the NATO peacekeepers in a statement.

Some Kosovo police vehicles and one belonging to journalists were damaged and sprayed with Serbian nationalist symbols. Addressing the nation, Serbian President

Aleksandar Vucic said he would spend the night with his troops on the border with Kosovo who were placed on the highest state of alert on his orders last week. He said 52 Serbs were injured in the clashes, three seriously, and four were detained. "The consequences (of the clashes) are big and grave and the sole culprit is (Kosovo Prime Minister) Albin Kurti," said Vucic. He referred to the Albanian forces in the north Kosovo as "occupiers."

"I repeat for the last time and I beg the international community to make sure Albin Kurti sees reason," Vucic said. "If they don't, I am afraid it will be too late for all of us." The violence was the latest incident as tensions soared over the past weekend, with Serbia putting the country's military on high alert and sending more troops to the border with Kosovo, which declared independence from Belgrade in 2008. Kosovo and Serbia have been foes for decades, with Belgrade refusing to recognize Kosovo's sovereignty.

The United States and the European Union have stepped up efforts to help

solve the Kosovo-Serbia dispute, fearing further instability in Europe as Russia's war rages in Ukraine. The EU has made it clear to both Serbia and Kosovo they must normalize relations if they're to make any progress toward joining the bloc.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov described the situation in Kosovo as "worrisome," blaming the US and NATO for claiming dominance in that part of the world. "A big 'explosion' is brewing in the center of Europe, in the very place where, in 1999, NATO carried out aggression against Yugoslavia," he said from Nairobi, Kenya, referring to the NATO-led intervention in 1999 that stopped a bloody Serb crackdown against ethnic Albanian separatists.

Kosovar police and the NATO-led Kosovo Force, or KFOR, were seen protecting the municipal buildings in Zvecan, Leposavic, Zubin Potok and Mitrovica, four municipalities in the north that held early elections last month. The votes were largely boycotted by ethnic Serbs, who form the majority in those areas.

DeSantis kicks off presidential campaign

WASHINGTON (AP): Ron DeSantis plans to kick off his presidential campaign in Iowa on Tuesday, the start of a busy week that will take him to 12 cities in three states as he tests his pitch as the most formidable Republican challenger to former President Donald Trump. The Florida governor's two-day trip to the lead-off caucus state - starting at a suburban Des Moines megachurch and ending at a Cedar Rapids racetrack - comes after a stumbling online announcement last week that formalized his long-anticipated entry into the growing Republican field. It will be followed by stops in early primary states New Hampshire and South Carolina.

DeSantis' scheduled Tuesday evening stop at Eternity Church in Clive is a conspicuous nod to the evangelical Christians who wield outside influence in Iowa's Republican presidential caucuses. His visit will give voters an opportunity to meet the new candidate just as he has been stepping up his criticism of Trump. "He's got a big hill to climb - and I think everybody would agree with that - to be able to convince people that he can overcome Trump, that he can do a job as good as, if not better than, Trump," said Bernie Hayes, the Republican chair in Linn County where DeSantis plans to wrap up his Iowa jaunt Wednesday. DeSantis, assailed by Trump for months, pivoted from oblique swipes to direct questioning of the former president's conservative credentials during a round of interviews with friendly media last week, notably his handling of the coronavirus pandemic and record on criminal justice.

DeSantis called a bipartisan bill Trump signed in 2018 that reduced mandatory minimum federal prison sentences and allows a pathway for non-violent offenders to reduce prison time "a jailbreak bill." As a member of Congress, DeSantis voted for an early version of the measure but had left Congress after he was elected governor and before the final, less strict bill passed. DeSantis also said Trump wrongly "turned the country over to Fauci," referring to Anthony Fauci, the former director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases who helped lead the country's COVID-19 pandemic response.

DeSantis announced his campaign Wednesday night during an online conversation with Twitter CEO Elon Musk. The audio stream crashed repeatedly, making it difficult for most users to hear the announcement in real time, a stumble campaign officials and others quickly dismissed as a minor setback.

TOKYO (Agencies): Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has said that he will remove his son from the position of his executive secretary amid mounting public outrage over a private party held at his official residence last year. Kishida told reporters that his son, Shotaro, would step down as his executive secretary for political affairs due to "inappropriate behaviour".

The move came after the weekly Shukan Bunshun magazine published photos showing Kishida's son and his relatives at the prime minister's official residence attending a year-end party on December 30. The photos showed the guests posing on red-carpeted stairs in an imitation of the group photos taken of newly appointed Cabinets, with the younger Kishida at the centre the position reserved for the prime minister. Other photos showed guests standing at a podium as if holding a news conference. "His behaviour at a public space was inappropriate as someone who is in an official position as a political

aide. I've decided to replace him for accountability," Kishida told reporters.

He said his son will be replaced by another secretary, Takayoshi Yamamoto, on Thursday. Kishida acknowledged that he had briefly greeted the guests, but said he did not stay at the dinner party. He said he severely reprimanded his son for the event, but that failed to quell ongoing criticism from opposition legislators and public outrage, which have pushed down his support ratings.

Seiji Osaka, a senior legislator with Japan's largest opposition party, the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan, said the dismissal should have come earlier. Kyodo news agency reported. "This is too late. I suspect [Kishida] appointed someone who is not capable [of being the] prime minister's aide to the post," Osaka was quoted as saying. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno earlier called the son's party at the official residence "inappropriate" and promised to ensure proper management of the facility to prevent future

misuse.

The nearly 100-year-old building was previously the prime minister's office and became the living quarters in 2005 when a new office was built. Kishida appointed his son as policy secretary, one of eight secretary posts for the prime minister, in October. The appointment, seen as a step in grooming him as his heir, was criticised as nepotism, which is common in Japanese politics, long dominated by hereditary lawmakers.

Shotaro Kishida was previously his father's private secretary. It was not the first time Kishida's son has come under fire for making use of his official position for private activities. He was reprimanded for using embassy cars for private sightseeing in Britain and Paris and for buying souvenirs for cabinet members at a luxury department store in London when he accompanied his father on trips. Kishida has also lost four ministers in three months over allegations of financial irregularities or links to the controversial Unification Church.

153 people arrested under special powers

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP): At least 153 people jailed since El Salvador instituted emergency powers in March 2022 to confront the country's powerful street gangs have died in state custody, according to a report released by the human rights group Cristosal. None of those who died had been convicted of a crime they were accused of at the time of their arrest. There were four women among the victims and the rest were men.

The deaths were the result of torture, and systematic and serious injuries, the report said. Nearly half of the victims suffered violent deaths. Some of the deaths showed signs they resulted from deliberate denial of medical assistance, medicine and food, including some deaths resulting from malnutrition. The deaths revealed punitive policies carried out by guards and prison officials. The report stated that such actions would have required authorization and backing by the highest level security officials. The government has not provided an official count of deaths among the incarcerated.

The special powers approved by El Salvador's Legislative Assembly in March 2022 following a surge in gang violence suspended some fundamental rights, such as informing someone of their rights at

the time of arrest and the reason for their, as well as having access to a lawyer. Cristosal said it compiled the information through field work, including at common graves, and collecting documents from medical examiners. Investigators also interviewed victims' families and neighbors, as well as others who were jailed and later released. The organization called on the administration of President Nayib Bukele to answer about the conditions people are held under, respect due process, free the innocent, answer for those who have died, provide all available information to victims' families and end the

measures implemented under the special powers.

Officially, the government has arrested more than 68,000 people under the special powers since March 2022. More than 5,000 people have been freed because they could not convince a judge they were tied to criminal structures, according to authorities. Other human rights groups and foreign governments have condemned the government's actions and called for a lifting of what were supposed to be temporary measures. Bukele, however, maintains high levels of approval within El Salvador for his actions against the gangs.

Saudi Arabian citizen kidnapped in Beirut

BEIRUT (AP): Assailants kidnapped a Saudi Arabian citizen in Beirut but the motive behind the abduction was not immediately clear, Lebanon's interior minister and security officials said. State-run Saudi TV station Al-Ekhabariya reported that the kidnapped man works for Saudi national airlines Saudia and that the kidnappers demanded a \$400,000 ransom.

The officials in Beirut said the man was kidnapped on the road leading to Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport and search operations were underway to find him. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations, gave no further details. Lebanon's caretaker Interior Minister Bassam Mawlawi tweeted that members of the intelligence department of Lebanon's police have been searching for the Saudi citizen. Mawlawi did not release the name of the Saudi citizen adding that authorities are following the case with the Saudi ambassador to Beirut. "We are working with an iron fist" to liberate the kidnapped person, Mawlawi tweeted. He said that those behind the kidnapping will be punished.

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JALIL AFRIDI
Managing Editor

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Peshawar.
Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001
Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573
E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com
Lahore Office: 0335-4026284
Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com
Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253
Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com
Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907
Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com
“USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Indigence of Tribesmen and leaders’ duplicity

THE KP Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan has noted that the people of erstwhile FATA (Federal Administered Tribal Area) have been facing multiple challenges for the last four decades, and now they deserve special attention to bring them at par with other districts and address their long-lasting deprivations. While addressing a graduation ceremony of skills development training for the youth of North Waziristan Tribal District, the Chief Minister told the audience that the caretaker government has been trying to resolve the issues of the merged districts and utilizing all available resources for the development of the disadvantaged region. According to him, the Provincial government was continuously in communication with the Federal government to get legitimate rights of the newly merged districts.

The Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA) is the most resource-rich but highly backward and the least developed region in today's Pakistan, mainly because of its constitutional status and the political system through which the area had been governed over the past seven and a half decades after the independence. There had been no regular local government bodies and the region had been governed by Political Agents under the British colonial law, the Frontier Crime Regulations (FCR) that empowered Political agents and local Maliks to steer the local political, administrative, and legal affairs through their self-wisdom or hand over the case to Girga comprising tribal elders at the local level. Over the years, the Tribal Area became a hub of illegal arms and ammunition, poppy cultivation, and drug production, and turned into a safe haven for criminals, assassins, and transnational terrorists after the government declared the region a base camp for Afghan jihad against the former Soviet Union during the eighties. Later, the global terrorists and their local allies took hostage of the tribal people and waged war against the state of Pakistan, after the country joined the global War on Terror (WoT) in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the United States. During this time, the FATA was known as the epicenter of terrorism and the most dangerous region in the world and the sane voices called for the mainstreaming of this highly volatile and terror-hit region while a few scholars blatantly labeled FATA as ungovernable and reformable zone.

Historically, the people of Erstwhile FATA suffered the utmost miseries and pain at the hands of local influential, including the Political agents, Maliks, and jirgas under the black law of the FCR throughout the past. Later, those innocent people faced the high-handedness of local and transnational terrorists and experienced displacement and the worst destruction of their businesses and properties during the Security Forces' operations against the terrorist outfits in the past decade. Ironically, no past government ever endeavored to assimilate that most unfortunate region into the mainstream to curb terrorism and lawlessness and reduce the sufferings of the people in the region. After long intellectual debates and parliamentary discussions, the government of Pakistan moved for mainstreaming of FATA through the adoption of the 25th and 31st amendments to the constitution and brought the entire region under the writ of the country.

In fact, the law and order situation had not been restored in previously terror-governed tribal districts despite recurrent counter-terrorist operations by the LEAs over the past years, and our valiant military officers and jawans are still embattled with terrorists in border belt areas stretched along with Afghan border from Bajaur to South Waziristan. The mainstreaming of the backward and terror-hit region is a huge task that demands a comprehensive development strategy, extensive resources, and continuous attention from the political leadership so the journey of peace and development go hand in hand. The federal government has approved an annual 3% share under the Federal Divisible Pool of the NFC award to implement a 10 years development plan to bring the backward region at par with the rest of the country. However, there had been persistent complaints from the provincial authorities that the required funds are not being disbursed by the Central government regularly which causes hindrances in social uplift and ongoing development work in the newly merged districts of Erstwhile FATA. Although there are significant financial constraints at the national level, however, the Federal government must prioritize the uplift work in newly merged districts to assimilate those ignored areas into the national mainstream at the earliest. At the same time, the government must encourage the private sector to invest in local industry and mining sectors along with engaging local and global NGOs to work for educational and social development in the region. So, the people of this highly impoverished region could get their basic rights and benefit from the resourcefulness and development of their nation.

Developing world’s farmers need help in face of climate change threat

AS it is responsible for 22 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, the agriculture, forestry and other land use sector is one of the largest contributors to the global warming that has gripped the entire planet over the past few years. Not only is it a large contributor to climate change, but agriculture and the agrifood industry is also highly vulnerable to the vagaries of weather that have become regular occurrences around the world.

And since agriculture is the primary, if not the only, source of income for more than 2.6 billion people, of whom nearly 90 percent live in poor or low-income nations, the devastation caused by changing weather on harvests has widespread ramifications not only for consumers around the world, but even more so for the billions that depend on them for their livelihood.

Though farming has been around almost since the advent of humankind, the rapid rise in greenhouse gas emissions caused by the sector has come only since the 20th century, just like it has for industry, energy, transport and practically any other segment. And, like all these sectors, the main culprits have been those in the rich countries, where farms have been taken over by large corporate interests, whose sole interest is in maximizing the output from farming or animal husbandry without looking at the cost to the environment.

In the developing world, barring a minuscule minority, almost all the farmers are subsistence farmers who not only have a marginal land holding, but are lessly pounded by Russian missiles. Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, has explained how F-16s or similar planes might have supported air defence systems, reduced casualties and protected ground troops. But they were not forthcoming.

Biden and Sullivan also rejected proposals by experienced former US generals for Nato-patrolled "humanitarian no-fly zones", initially in western Ukraine, to protect civilians from aerial assault. Although admittedly risky, safe havens akin to past operations in Iraq, Bosnia and Libya might have saved many lives and stemmed the refugee exodus. They still could. Biden's argument, then as now, is that such interventions, coming on top of large-scale US arms shipments, intelligence-sharing and aid, might be viewed by Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, as escalatory. This seems sensible at first glance. Yet it's way too cautious. Putin and his lickspittle poltroons, Dmitry Medvedev and Sergei Lavrov, are adept at playing on western fears. Whenever new forms of assistance for Kyiv are mooted, they spew dire

threats, sometimes involving nuclear weapons. Biden should listen to Antony Blinken. His secretary of state has spotted a pattern over the past year: Kremlin warnings of retaliation and direct confrontation rarely amount to much in practice. The Russians huff and puff - but mostly bluff. Putin is not entirely stupid. He knows he'd never win a fight with Nato, let alone survive nuclear warfare. Another pattern is apparent: Biden's chronic indecision. Protracted humming and hawing last year delayed supplies of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, Patriot batteries, longer-range high-altitude missiles, and M1 Abrams battle tanks - all of which were eventually delivered. European allies such as Germany used White House waffling to excuse their own foot-dragging. These prevarications may have needlessly prolonged the war.

And, like all these sectors, the main culprits have been those in the rich countries, where farms have been taken over by large corporate interests, whose sole interest is in maximizing the output from farming or animal husbandry without looking at the cost to the environment. In the developing world, barring a minuscule minority, almost all the farmers are subsistence farmers who not only have a marginal land holding, but are also entirely dependent upon each harvest for survival. They are far from looking to make a heavy profit from their farms. As these farmers cannot even afford chemical inputs like fertilizers or pesticides, which are liberally used by larger farmers and which have their own extensive carbon footprints, agriculture in most low-income countries is low in greenhouse gas emissions. Also, unlike the large cattle-rearing factories that abound in most developed countries, small farmers in developing countries are lucky to have a head of cattle or two and, hence, the methane emissions they cause, at least on a per capita basis, are only a fraction of those produced in a single cattle ranch or meat factory in the rich

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Ranvir S. Nayyar

Also, the large farms and agrifood industries in rich nations have insurance companies to help them recoup their losses, in addition to the generous payouts their governments resort to in the event of natural disasters such as floods and droughts. In contrast, farmers in developing

Food and Agricultural Organization, there are adequate mitigation and adaptation measures that exist and, if implemented properly, they could go a long way toward limiting the damage or risk that farmers in poor countries face. It adds that building sustainable and resilient agrifood systems is fundamental to tackling the climate crisis,

caused by the climate-related disasters that farmers face.

But it also raises the question of the various hurdles that exist, including local rules and policies. One of the biggest challenges for the developing world, which impacts the governments as much as the farmers, is a paucity of funds. Another challenge is the lack of access to the technological solutions that already exist and which can go a long way toward mitigating or even preventing damage caused to farms by climate change. While farmers and their dependents are obviously seriously impacted by a failed harvest, its effects are not limited to them. Poor harvests have severe implications for billions of others who live precariously, as the slightest price rise or food shortage can push them into extreme poverty, malnutrition or even starvation. Incidents of starvation and malnutrition have registered significant rises across the world, even in rich countries, where recent record food price inflation has led to a rise in food insecurity.

Just as the threat posed by global warming and climate change is a challenge the world has to face together, helping the 2.6 billion people who depend on agriculture for their livelihood and the billions of others who are or may soon be severely impacted by food insecurity must be a united effort. This can take place through the transfer of know-how and technology, as well as some funding, allowing the farmers in poor countries to take the necessary mitigatory and adaptive measures to protect themselves and the rest of the world to the extent that it can be done.

The moment has arrived: Biden must give Ukraine all it needs to win

Simon Tisdall

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Biden should listen to Antony Blinken. His secretary of state has spotted a pattern over the past year: Kremlin warnings of retaliation and direct confrontation rarely amount to much in practice. The Russians huff and puff - but mostly bluff. Putin is not entirely stupid. He knows he'd never win a fight with Nato, let alone survive nuclear warfare. Another pattern is apparent: Biden's chronic indecision. Protracted humming and hawing last year delayed supplies of Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, Patriot batteries, longer-range high-altitude missiles, and M1 Abrams battle tanks - all of which were eventually delivered. European allies such as Germany used White House waffling to excuse their own foot-dragging. These prevarications may have needlessly prolonged the war.

The F-16 U-turn, confirmed at last weekend's G7 summit in Hiroshima, paves the way for training Ukrainian pilots and the provision of "fourth-generation" jets by Nato allies. Yet it's a typical Biden

fudge. The US itself has not committed to supply planes. If it does, it's unclear whether they will be the latest F-16 models equipped with the latest weapons. Unconvincing explanations are offered for US dithering. Officials say they followed a deliberate plan to ensure Ukraine first received all the heavy weaponry and armoured vehicles required for its long-anticipated counter-offensive. "We could certainly have started earlier, but there were much higher priorities, and it's seen by some as an escalatory act," said US air force secretary Frank Kendall, referring to F-16 training.

In fact, it was pressure from US allies that proved irresistible when the 50-nation Ukraine Contact Group met at Ramstein air base in Germany last month. US defence secretary Lloyd Austin was urged to think again by old friends such as Britain and the Netherlands, as well as by the eastern Europeans. On his return to Washington, Austin advised Biden to drop his veto. The American shift on fighter planes is a personal triumph for

Zelenskiy. His tireless lobbying bore fruit, once again overcoming Biden's hesitancy and assuaging, if not dispelling, his misgivings. And it shone a light on yet another emerging pattern: how Ukraine's president, not America's risk-averse commander-in-chief or the Nato alliance, is driving the west's wartime agenda.

Zelenskiy's leading role was highlighted when he stole the show in Hiroshima, making a dramatic entrance after flying in late from an Arab League summit in Jeddah. Ukraine does not belong to the G7, or to the EU or Nato for that matter. But Zelenskiy has earned a place at the top table. His irrepressible diplomacy, aided by Putin's blundering, has brought membership of both latter organisations within reach. As a leader capable of inspiring his people and influencing international opinion, Zelenskiy puts Biden, Emmanuel Macron, Olaf Scholz and Rishi Sunak to shame. He is also changing the strategic conversation in fundamental ways. US policy towards China, especially Taiwan, has hardened tangibly due to Russia's aggression - but also thanks to Zelenskiy's

success in re-emphasising the inviolability of territorial borders and national sovereignty as globally recognised imperatives.

Ukraine is increasingly setting the pace on the ground, too, independently of its main backers. Incursions into southern Russia by anti-regime militia using US military vehicles, an audacious drone attack on the Kremlin, sabotage, assassinations and mystery explosions in occupied Crimea are a likely prelude to Kyiv's pivotal counter-offensive. Success is vital if it is to head off Chinese and possible Franco-German pressure this winter to trade land for peace. All this activity, licit and illicit, is compounding White House jitters as American public support for Ukraine appears to soften. Since neither of his main 2024 Republican challengers, Donald Trump and Ron DeSantis, is committed to assisting Kyiv, Biden must be braver and do more, faster - for his time, and Ukraine's, may be running out. Biden describes the war as a seminal struggle between liberty and tyranny. It is. So give Zelenskiy all he needs to win.

US-China relations under scrutiny

Nike Ching

TAIWAN'S President Tsai Ing-wen returns to the United States this week where she will meet with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and other lawmakers in an event that Beijing has said it firmly opposes. Tsai will talk with McCarthy and a group of other lawmakers at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California, on Wednesday in what McCarthy's office calls a "bipartisan" meeting.

Last week, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said China firmly opposes the meeting and will "closely follow the development of the situation and resolutely defend national sovereignty and territorial integrity." It's still unclear whether Tsai and McCarthy will make public remarks together. Officials have described the meeting as "private." The location is seen particularly meaningful because a key part of the US-China policy known as the Six Assurances was issued under the Reagan administration and became a fundamental part of Washington's

own One China policy. Under the Six Assurances, the US has not agreed to set a date for ending arms sales to Taiwan, nor has the US altered its position regarding sovereignty over Taiwan. The US also promised to never pressure Taiwan to negotiate with Beijing.

For weeks, the White House has cautioned China against overreacting to Tsai's stopovers in the United States, citing past precedents and saying longstanding US policy remains consistent on the issue. Tsai passed through New York last week, marking her seventh transit through the US during her time as Taiwan's leader, and the 29th US transit by a sitting president of Taiwan since the first in 1994. Under the policy, Taiwanese leaders heading to other countries stop in the US while en route to their destinations.

Although Taiwan officials do not travel to Washington for talks, as the US and Taiwan do not have formal diplomatic recognition, officials routinely meet in other locations, such as when former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visit-

ed Taipei last August. But those repeat stopovers have done little to assuage China, which argues that these transit meetings by sitting Taiwan presidents are violations of its One China principle. In Washington, the US State Department said there is not any language in the Taiwan Relations Act, the Six Assurances and the Three Communiques - the foundations of Washington's One China policy - that explicitly prohibit a Taiwan president from stopping over in a US city.

"Not only am I not aware of anything that would explicitly forbid such transits, for decades the United States has facilitated such transits of the United States by senior Taiwanese authorities," Daniel Kritenbrink, assistant secretary of state for east Asian and Pacific affairs, told VOA during a recent briefing. Washington-based China analyst Bonnie Glaser, managing director of the Indo-Pacific program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States,

said this week's talks are unlikely to change the momentum in US-China relations. "Beijing has really put the US in the freezer and not really interested in talking," she said.

"I sense until those transits are finished, Beijing is not going to be willing to engage with the United States in discussions" about rescheduling Secretary of State Antony Blinken's visit to China or scheduling another phone call between US-China leaders, Glaser told VOA. A sitting Taiwan president can transit through any US city but one: Washington, D.C. Under the self-imposed restrictions by the State Department and the tacit admission by Taiwan, a stopover in Washington by a Taiwan leader would be seen as highly provocative in the eyes of the People's Republic of China. No sitting Taiwan president, vice president, premier, minister of foreign affairs or minister of national defense have ever come to the US capital city for formal meetings while in office. Taiwan is "under no delusion" that

such restrictions would be lifted by the US administration any time soon, according to a diplomatic source.

On March 22, the US House of Representatives passed a bipartisan proposal to amend the Taiwan Assurance Act of 2020 that would ask the US to remove the self-imposed barriers to engagement with Taiwan and require the State Department to provide robust reporting, if enacted. "I am worried, frankly, that State's current approach is overly concerned with avoiding even the slightest chance of offending Beijing," Representative Ann Wagner, vice chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, told Blinken during a hearing on March 23.

On Monday, China's military continued to send aircraft and vessels around Taiwan, Taipei's Ministry of National Defense wrote in a tweet. Lu Li-shih, a former lieutenant commander in Taiwan's navy in Taipei, told VOA that there's a broad perception in Taiwan that any Chinese offensive and military intimidation during this

period is for internal publicity and does not do much to sway opinion on the self-governed island. "It is not the first time it has done this, and the effect will only get worse every time it is done. China said that it wants to create a comprehensive deterrence or have a certain impact on the morale of the [Taiwan's] army, but the effect is actually minimal," Lu said. Mike Gallagher, chairman of the House Select Committee on China, will join McCarthy for talks with Tsai. Three Taiwan legislators will also attend the meeting. Representative Michael McCaul, chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, will lead a US delegation to Taipei on Thursday.

The PRC has never administered Taiwan but claims sovereignty over the self-ruled democracy. The US "acknowledged" but never endorsed China's sovereignty claim over Taiwan. The US does not take a position on Taiwan's sovereignty, nor does it support Taiwan independence.

VOA

International students are the ‘ideal migrant’

Nesrine Malik

GIVEN how much the subject of immigration dominates British political life, it is remarkable how little people know about what it actually takes to come to this country. Immigrants are spoken of as if they simply purchase a ticket and stroll in, against the wishes and efforts of the government. Perhaps there should be some mandatory course that everyone has to pass - a sort of Life in the UK test in reverse - in which citizens learn what it's really like. For now, let me reassure you: the UK is very much in control of its borders.

As a veteran of visa applications, I can tell you that the average UK visa process is as probing, extensive and invasive as it gets. But this doesn't stop the Home Office from regularly introducing a new requirement and presenting it to the public as the supposed closing of a loophole, bringing us closer to whatever it is that counts as an acceptable level of net migration. Last week, it was time for international students to feel the heat. From next year, with a few exceptions, students coming from overseas will be barred from bringing their dependants with them when they come to study in the UK. Last year, almost 500,000 visas were issued to international students - a category that now includes both EU and non-EU, though the vast majority are the latter - to study in the UK. Along with them came just over 135,000 immediate family members - a figure that the govern-

ment sees as a nice, meaty number to hack at. What they don't see are women with small children, families without child-supporting networks back home, and students who - reasonably - would not like to be separated from their partners for a long time. It is a mark of the government's inability to be honest about the country's need for immigrants that it is scrambling around for some numbers to cut, and in so doing, targeting a cohort of people that brings in huge amounts of revenue, pay into the NHS, and prove in advance that they will not be a "burden" on the state.

But we don't hear about that, do we? Or about how high the hurdles for entry and settlement already are. Before even being allowed into the UK, international students must demonstrate that they have a place at an accredited British academic institution and have enough funds to cover their course, plus an additional sum to cover living expenses. Dependants have to be able to prove that they have the funds to sustain themselves - £845 a month for up to nine months for courses in London or £680 a month for courses outside London. All applicants, students and their dependants pay an NHS surcharge; a master's student with one partner and one child needs to pay £1,410 in advance of setting foot in the UK. They will also continue paying this surcharge every year if they find work, and so will effectively be taxed twice to use the

health service. Dependants are defined as partners and any children under 18. Not, as one talking head from Conservative Home said on the BBC last week, "their grandmas".

That sort of poorly informed discourse has helped turn what is a very good news story for the country - that the UK is becoming a thriving global hub of revenue-generating international students - into a bad one about unacceptably high migration numbers. The reality is that international students, particularly non-EU ones, are playing a massive role in financing the country's higher education system while being a net contributor to the economy. Research from 2021 shows that just 10 non-EU students studying in the UK will generate £1m of economic impact during their studies in terms of fees, consumer spending and job creation - and that's after their use of public services has been accounted for. Non-EU student fees made up 17% of UK universities' income in 2020-21 - in effect, cross-subsidising the education of domestic students. The fees they pay are astonishingly high, averaging some £22,000 a year. So high, in fact, and scandalously divorced from the actual cost of delivery are these fees, that the director of Soas University of London recently said that such students are being exploited in a "morally problematic" higher education system that has become reliant on overseas stu-

dents. That system, he said, would "collapse" if just China and India were to "close the taps".

Well, Suella Braverman is here to help: introducing a policy that will punish and turn away what is, by government standards, the ideal migrant - someone who only puts into the system, meets strict standards of entry and residence, and has the good sense to clear off afterwards. It's tempting to ascribe this poor judgment to Braverman herself, but let's not forget that the home secretary is simply doing what British politicians have done for years, particularly since David Cameron called for net migration to be reduced to "tens of thousands" and the introduction of the hostile environment: making the lives of foreigners as miserable, expensive and lonely as possible. All to "get the numbers down". Labour, for their part, have said they won't oppose the measure. The tragedy is that so much of what we were told Brexit was about - pivoting away from Europe towards the Commonwealth and the rest of the world; investing in our "world-beating" homegrown industries - is personified in the international student. They have a cultural affinity with the UK, recognise the prestige of degrees from British universities and the value of being here to their careers and global relevance. But all the government can see in them is a useful number to cull - economic units to be stripped of relationships, choice and humanity.

The Guardian



Russia's stealthy push to find more soldiers

It seems the Kremlin has largely given up on gathering troops for its war in Ukraine through mobilization. Likely because Russia's leadership remains fearful of a domestic political backlash. Instead, they have been upping efforts in recent months to encourage men to sign up voluntarily and serve as contract soldiers. That said, Putin is keeping the mobilization option open just in case - his first mobilization decree remains legally in force.

Farida Rustamova & Maxim Tovkaylo

aged 18-27, with few legal exceptions, are obliged to serve in the military for 12 months. It's well known that many of these young men are subsequently cajoled into signing up full-time. And it's clear the authorities are trying to accelerate this conversion rate.

On April 6, Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, voted to return to a second reading of a bill on amending military conscription procedures, which have not been changed for decades. This bill has a very interesting history. A year ago, right at the start of the war, the State Duma quietly intro-

tion campaign (to call up men for their mandatory military service), a representative of Russia's General Staff announced that, thanks to the digitalization of military recruitment offices, conscripts for military service would now be notified of their call-up digitally. On the same day, Russia's online public services portal, Gosuslugi, disabled the option to delete accounts. And the Deputy Chairman of the State Duma's Defense Committee, Yuri Shvytkin, let slip that receiving a call-up notification online would be the equivalent of receiving it in person - and that anyone attempting to delete their Gosuslugi account would be judged a draft dodger. Even Defense

There is, however, one group that is acutely vulnerable to being arm-twisted into signing up - the young men currently completing their military service. As noted above, all Russian men aged 18-27, with few legal exceptions, are obliged to serve in the military for 12 months. It's well known that many of these young men are subsequently cajoled into signing up full-time. And it's clear the authorities are trying to accelerate this conversion rate. On April 6, Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, voted to return to a second reading of a bill on amending military conscription procedures, which have not been changed for decades. This bill has a very interesting history. A year ago, right at the start of the war, the State Duma quietly introduced the bill, which obliged all men eligible for military service to report to recruitment offices even without receiving an official summons. Unbeknown to many, deputies approved the bill in its second reading two days before the start of the war - and a third reading was planned for March 2022. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, however, the bill caused a huge outcry. It was put on pause, and conscription rules remained unchanged.

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After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, however, the bill caused a huge outcry. It was put on pause, and conscription rules remained unchanged. But back then, it was unclear how the war in Ukraine would unfold, how long it would last and what resources the state would require. There was no urgent need for more soldiers. Now, the situation has changed - and that's putting it mildly. So why is the bill going back for a second reading? The Chairman of the Duma's Defense Committee said that the bill just needs a new date for when it will enter force. But the fact of it being returned means that there could also be changes to the substance of the future law.

The day before the start of Russia's spring conscrip-

Minister Shoigu has been talking about the "digital draft" as a new reality. However, current Russian legislation has no provision for an electronic summons and draft documents are only deemed officially served when they have been signed by the recipient. In other words, a "digital draft" is, for the moment, illegal.

Thus, it looks very much like the State Duma will seek to revise the conscription bill to incorporate the possibility of digital summonses issued via Gosuslugi. If military recruitment offices have already digitized their databases, then why should troops still be handed a paper summons? If the old system allows some potential conscripts to slip through the net, the logic goes, then the net needs tightening. The war in Ukraine is here to stay, and the state's goal is to give military training to as many people as possible. All the better if they sign a contract after their military service and become regular soldiers who can be dispatched to the frontlines.

The Moscow Times

Tackling poverty can start with embracing the GDP of the poor

Maxwell Gomera

OVER the past three years, a cost-of-living crisis has spread across the world, affecting both rich and poor countries. Many are blaming it on the economic shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In Africa, these events have had an impact, but the growing impoverishment was already apparent even before they occurred.

Across the continent, the cost-of-living crisis has hit hard communities that were already struggling to access enough food, fuel, decent work and social support to survive. The already poor have been getting poorer; those living just above the poverty line have been sinking below it. Since the pandemic, 55 million more Africans have fallen into extreme poverty. Much of this impoverishment is driven by the long-term decline in the natural resources that sustain poor households. The degradation of soils, freshwater, forests and biodiversity is directly affecting the livelihoods of millions of poor people living in rural areas. This is because these resources provide food, fuel, building materials and employment to these communities.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, some 90 percent of people who live in extreme poverty depend on forests for at least part of their livelihoods. And in recent years, deforestation - as well as other types of environmental degradation - has only accelerated.

This trend did not change even during the pandemic. Yet, the primary response from governments in Africa has been a continued emphasis on conventional economic growth. The problem with this approach is that it fixates on gross domestic product (GDP) as the sole barometer of economic progress, which does not take into account the wealth contained in nature and ecosystems.

This myopic focus encourages policies and investments that disproportionately favour the wealthy while leaving behind the poor and allowing the abuse and depletion of natural resources they depend on. Instead, what African policymakers should focus on the natural environment which sustains the poor and without which they cannot survive the rising cost of living - or any future crises for that matter. Governments need to take action to curb environmental degradation which is rendering natural resources scarcer and less resilient. And to do that, they need to change the way they measure progress and growth. They need to embrace the GDP of the poor: nature.

They need to put it at the centre of their policymaking when it comes to big business, including agriculture, industry and finance. The revenue these businesses generate for public budgets cannot outweigh the negative effects they have on the environment and the economic losses they cause. What

is more, taking action to preserve the environment often costs less than supporting large polluting businesses to ensure they are profitable.

Take agriculture as an example. The way subsidies are currently disbursed favours industrialised, chemical-dependent farming, benefiting primarily large landowners and multinational corporations at the expense of smallholder farmers and the environment. A staggering \$611bn is spent annually on farming subsidies, 86 percent (\$528bn) of which potentially harms the climate, biodiversity, and human health. This sum eclipses the estimated \$300-350bn required each year to transition to sustainable, diverse, and climate-resilient food systems.

It is high time governments, multilateral organisations, and corporations transform the rhetoric of "leave no one behind" into reality by recognising and protecting the GDP of the poor. It is time we realigned sustainable development with human development. To do that, there are three key steps that need to be taken urgently. First, governments should transform their wealth accounting systems by measuring the GDP of the poor. Rwanda already started doing so in 2014, enabling more effective land use planning and preventing the fragmentation of ecosystems. Governments can also use as a model the Ecosystem Accounting framework, which

was adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2021. Second, governments and development partners must help African farmers transition from extractive, high-carbon farming to regenerative practices that boost the GDP of the poor. An example they can follow is Germany's plan to end subsidies for harmful agricultural practices and promote research and development of alternative methods.

Third, development finance institutions and corporations must redirect their investment strategies to protect and sustain natural assets. They should prioritise projects and initiatives that empower local communities to manage and benefit from their environments. To be sure, recognising the GDP of the poor is not merely an act of accounting; it is a necessary shift in our political economy. By acknowledging these assets, we can begin to loosen the grip of entrenched interests benefitting from the status quo, simultaneously improving the welfare of the majority and safeguarding Earth's natural resources. The cost-of-living crisis is a wake-up call to take a hard look at our priorities, our systems, and our values. A call to realise that in our pursuit of wealth, we have overlooked the wealth of nature that sustains billions of poor people. What is at stake is more than just numbers on a balance sheet. What is at stake is our survival as a human race.

Aljazeera

Brexit ruined Britain's appetite for revolution. That makes Starmer's job harder

Rafael Behr

BEFORE administering any painful procedure, doctors talk to their patients with a careful balance of candour and tact. Too graphic a warning might trigger refusal to cooperate, but pretending something won't hurt is a betrayal of trust. Politicians face the same dilemma with painful reforms. Speak too frankly and you spook the electorate. Deny the scale of a task and you have no mandate. This is especially tricky for opposition leaders who want voters to feel upbeat about the future under a changed regime. Itemising pain kills the buzz.

"The NHS is not sustainable unless we make serious, deep, long-term changes," Keir Starmer said on Monday, trying to sound candid. It will be "hard", "difficult" and "challenging", but worth it to reach the goal of a health service "fit for the future". On cost, he was tactful. Decisions will be made "on a full appreciation of reality - on the state of the NHS and our public finances". In other words, Dr Starmer says try to relax but be prepared for some fiscal discomfort. Labour's pledges are worthy and expensive - reduced waiting times; integration of health and social care; a digital upgrade of the whole service. Named revenue sources - VAT on private school fees; closing non-dom tax loopholes - cover only a fraction of the likely bill. Those are sticking plasters, which is what the opposition leader accuses Rishi Sunak of applying in avoidance of longer-term solutions. It is sensible for a party to avoid too much detail about its manifesto this far out from an election. Why give the enemy time to raid your best

ideas and trash the rest? When it comes to awkward truths in a campaign, the virtue of telling it straight rarely outweighs the risk of making a nervous electorate flinch from your touch.

The cautionary tale is Theresa May's decision to confront the cost of social care in her 2017 election manifesto. She thought she had a sufficient poll lead to seek permission to do something hard. It looked brave for all of a few minutes, until the policy was called a "dementia tax" and fired back as a torpedo into her campaign. Democracy has always involved some tension between honesty and salesmanship, but it feels severe right now. Part of the problem is sheer exhaustion after years of successive crises, some visited on Britain from overseas (Covid; war in Ukraine), others homegrown (Brexit; Liz Truss). They have cascaded across one another, merging into a morale-sapping permacrisis.

Solving difficult problems is an exercise in deferred gratification. There is an input of energy and resources that doesn't yield immediate reward. When politicians speak of reform to upgrade public services, for example, they are pleading for patience. That asks a lot of people who have been locked down for a pandemic, had their operations delayed and their trains cancelled, then seen their stagnant wages gobbled by inflation.

The past few years have put British voters in the mood for payback, not more sacrifice. This is also why Starmer's dilemma is most acute on the question of Europe. Opinion polls show a majority thinking Brexit was a

mistake (and even Nigel Farage says it isn't working), but that doesn't necessarily translate into an appetite for re-enacting the battles fought since 2016 in reverse.

Any campaign to go back into the EU must recognise that the old membership terms are no longer available. Our continental neighbours would want to see sustained cross-party pro-European consensus before taking any British application seriously. Rejoin is not rewind. It is the work of a generation. The politics of shuffling closer to Europe from the outside are not much easier. Proper access to the single market is the economic game-changer. That re-opens arguments about free movement (or open-door immigration policy, as the Tories would cast it) and taking regulatory dictation from Brussels - the issues that polarised debate in the first place.

Talk of softening the blow from Brexit tends logically to acceptance that the best Brexit is none at all. One test of whether Starmer is right to swerve away from that road is to ponder how glad many incumbent Conservative MPs would be if he took it. It suits Labour to keep Brexit in the background, as one more thing the Tories messed up. It is a significant factor in general economic malaise and a brake on recovery, but not the only one. The effect on politics is harder to quantify, and more pernicious. The harm flows from contradictions in a project that was genuinely revolutionary and cynically fraudulent at the same time. Brexit mined justified anger with a status quo that wasn't working,

then used that resource to fuel a project for impoverishing the people who most urgently needed change.

That deception set a threshold of calculated dishonesty or downright stupidity for ministerial office. Anyone willing or able to engage with the complexities of Britain's predicament in the third decade of the 21st century was disqualified from joining Boris Johnson's cabinet. Those perverse recruitment criteria still stand. Sunak passed the test of ideological stupefaction. Making a national mission of a folly burned up irreplaceable reserves of political energy. People who operate the machinery of government are demoralised by requests to steer into ditches. Voters who were given reason to expect great things on liberation from Brussels, and got nothing, will be warier of investing hope in a different, Labour-branded project for radical upheaval. Depleted willingness to confront hard choices is a Brexit legacy that impedes Starmer even more than the economic cost. He can talk about NHS reform, green investment, ambitious housebuilding targets, all without getting lured into the weeds of European renegotiation.

He can say, correctly, that he is focusing on people's actual priorities. He can diagnose grave problems and prescribe solutions in many areas, steering tactfully away from the hardest issue. But when it comes to delivering on those promises, he will find the body politic scarred and weakened by the years of Brexit malpractice. A symptom of how deep the syndrome goes is the opposition leader's reluctance to call it by its name.

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PCJCCI inked MoU with Dongying Sino-German

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) signed MoU with Dongying Sino-German (European Exchange and Cooperation Association) for the promotion of trade and investment here at PCJCCI Secretariat on Tuesday.

The PCJCCI also organized business-to-business (B2B) meeting with 10 high profile members and multi-sector Chinese trade delegation with Pakistani investors, and entrepreneurs.

The delegation was headed by Mr Wang Zihai, Honorary Investment Counselor in China, Board of Investment and Chen Guangfeng, President Dongying Sino-German (European Exchange and Cooperation Association).

The meeting was also attended by top notch Pakistani businessmen, including Syed Ameer Abbas, Fast Cables Limited, Atif Hameed, TUV Austria BIC Pvt. Limited, Hassan Ahmed, Hassan Brother Company, Zaki Aijaz, Roshan Packages and others.

PCJCCI Vice President Hamza Khalid said the delegation came with a purpose to hold interactive B2B meeting with potential partners in Pakistan.

The area of interest was mainly manufacturer of steel, aluminum, plastic doors and windows production, oil drilling accessories, maintenance of environmental protection equipment, PVC insulated control cable and power cable, cross-linked polyethylene insulated electric cable, Power cable, photovoltaic cable, petrochemicals, rubber, petroleum equipment etc.

He added that the Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry was highly grateful to the Chinese officials for being

supportive and concerned about the business development of both countries.

The head of the delegation, Wang Zihai, invited the PCJCCI members to Shandong province and extended his precious regards and offer to fully cooperate with the Pakistani officials.

He also added that just as Pakistan is happy to see China's growing stature on the world stage, China, in turn sees a strong, stable and prosperous Pakistan as a source of strength." He assured that Chinese industry would keep on extending strong support to spur economic and industrial growth of Pakistan.

The delegation was warmly welcomed by Hamza Khalid, Vice President PCJCCI, and he expressed an utmost aspiration to make these business engagements purposive and productive for the businessmen of both countries. He

also said that China has been an incredible support of Pakistan at all times and its constant assistance will do wonders for the emerging economic status of Pakistan and these B2B meetings will certainly have a positive impact on the business community.

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI thanked the Chinese delegation and said that it was quite encouraging that apart from public sector, private sectors of both the countries were also entering into joint ventures. The Chinese entrepreneurs highly appreciated the arrangements being done by the PCJCCI and they were also satisfied with the positive response of the companies during the meeting. It was observed that counseling with Chinese business community is mandatory to increase the quantum of trade and investment opportunities in Pakistan.



BAHAWALPUR: Customers buying wheat from a roadside vendor at Grain Market.

Rupee gains 06 paisas against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee gained 06 paisas against the US Dollar (USD) in the inter-bank trading on Tuesday and closed at Rs285.35 against the previous day's closing of Rs285.41.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs313 and Rs316, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 97 paisas to close at Rs305.02 against the last day's closing of Rs305.99, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs2.03, whereas an increase of 38 paisas was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs352.58 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs352.20.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal came down by 03 paisas and 02 paisas to close at Rs77.69 and Rs76.08, respectively.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activities were recorded on Monday, where eight ships namely, MSC Denisse, Lana, Northern Jamboree, Geneva Queen, Ton Hil-II, Hafnia Providence and Serinity Gas carrying Containers, Canola, Coal, Gas oil and LPG berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Grain & Fertilizer Terminal, Bulk Terminal, Oil Terminal and Sui Southern Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile threemore ships, Maersk Atlanta, EM Astoria and Cielo Rosso with Containers and Mogas are also arrived at outer anchorage of the port on Tuesday morning.

A total of 08 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Lana Northern Jamboree and MSC Denisse left the Port on Tuesday morning on another LNG carrier 'Al-Jassasiya' is expected to sail on same day (today).

A cargo volume of 91,357 tones, comprising 54,705 tones imports Cargo and 36,652 tones export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,933 Containers (777 TEUs Imports and 2,156 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 06 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a containers ship, Maersk Atlanta & two more ships, Maria Elena and Theresa Orion carrying Containers and Palm oil are expected to take berths at Container Terminal and Liquid Terminal respectively on Tuesday, 30th May, & another containers ship, Wide Juliet is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.

Ahsan: ICCI to promote tourism in region

ISLAMABAD (INP): The President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the Chamber is committed to promoted tourism in the region.

Headed by Ahsan Zafar, a high level delegation of ICCI visited district Skardu of Gilgit-Baltistan to review the arrangements for the first ICC Tourism Summit 2023 scheduled for the promotion of tourism in the northern regions organized by the Islamabad Chamber in July.

The delegation during the visit, met with the high officials of Gilgit Baltistan government, security agencies and administration officers. The delegation reviewed the arrangements for Tourism Summit 2023. It also made to visits to various tourist points and briefed about the business activities in the area.

Speaking in a meeting with the ICCI President, Provincial Tourism Minister Raja Nasir Ali Khan welcomed the activation of Islamabad Chamber for promotion of tourism in

the. The Gilgit Baltistan government will provide full cooperation regarding the organization of the conference. He said that Islamabad Chamber should cooperate for the improvement of dry fruit industry in Gilgit-Baltistan. Due to lack of proper storage and supply system, dried fruits worth millions of rupees were lost every year. Investment is also needed in the hotel industry in Gilgit, he added.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said, "I am grateful to the provincial government for its cooperation in organizing the summit. Islamabad Chamber is trying to promote tourism. The northern regions of Pakistan can become the central points for tourism in the region. We need to improve the infrastructure. Hoteling industry, roads and other facilities are necessary for the promotion of tourism, launching of international flights is indispensable in the promotion of tourism."

The ICCI President said, "Government should devel-

op Skardu airport as per international standards. He said that tourism is the most profitable industry in the world, unfortunately Pakistan is still far behind in this sector compared to its potential. We need branding of tourist destinations to attract foreign tourists. I hope the Summit will improve the soft image of Pakistan."

During the visit, Commandant Officer ASF Syed Yasin Shah, Station Commander Skardu, DIG Gilgit-Baltistan Flight Lieutenant (R) Farrukh Rashid and Assistant Commissioner Skardu also met the President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce.

The officers of the security agencies assured Ahsan Zafar that all the agencies will play their role as hosts for the summit. Fool-proof security will be provided to the guests coming to attend the summit. During the visit, the delegation was also visited other tourist places including Kachura Lake, Cold Desert, Shangri-La Fort, Deosai. The tour was organized by the Tourism Committee of ICCI.

Pakistani exports in 10 months: US, China, UK remained top three destinations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the ten months of the current fiscal year (2022-23), followed by China and the United Kingdom (UK).

Total exports to the US during July-April (2022-23) were recorded at US\$ 4990.562 million as opposed the exports of US\$ 5618.857 million during July- April (2021-22), showing a decline of 11.18 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

This was followed by China, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth US\$ 1700.955 million compared to the exports of US\$ 2342.887 million last year, showing a decrease of 27.39 percent.

UK was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported goods worth US\$ 1643.864 mil-

lion during the months under review against the exports of US\$ 1851.812 million during last year, showing a decline of 11.22 percent, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to Germany stood at US\$ 1366.068 million against US\$ 1432.029 million last year, showing a decrease of 4.60 percent while the exports to UAE were recorded at US\$ 1206.639 million opposed US\$ 1550.022 million last year.

During July- April (2022-23), the exports to Holland were recorded at US\$ 1211.647 million against US\$ 1217.163 million whereas the exports to Afghanistan stood at US\$ 435.682 million against US\$436.423 million.

Pakistan's exports to Italy were recorded at US\$ 951.447 million against the exports of US\$ 857.219 million while the exports to

Spain were recorded at US\$ 1154.633 million against US\$ 940.808 million last year.

Whereas, the exports to Bangladesh stood at US\$ 644.104 million against US\$ 720.509 million.

Similarly, the exports to France during the months under review were recorded at US\$ 487.194 million against US\$ 430.134 million while the exports to Saudi Arabia stood at US\$ 404.767 million against US\$ 345.720 million.

Pakistan's exports to Turkiye were recorded at US\$ 269.833 million during the current year compared to US\$ 266.452 million last year whereas the exports to Canada stood at US\$ 369.702 million against US\$ 328.420 million, and Australia stood at US\$ 254.942 million during the current year against US\$ 239.333 million during last year.

Tokyo's key Nikkei index edges up at close

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei index closed higher on Tuesday, recovering from earlier profit-taking losses as investors sought fresh trading cues.

The Nikkei 225 index rose 0.30 percent, or 94.62 points, to end at 31,328.16, while the broader Topix index slipped 0.07 percent, or 1.43 points, to 2,159.22.

Investors locked in profits in early trade after the Nikkei scored its highest finish in 33 years, while global markets hailed a broad deal in Washington over raising the debt ceiling.

Analysts say foreign market players have been a major driver of recent gains in Tokyo, and they are now taking a break with the US market closed on Monday for Memorial Day.

Tokyo trading saw "few market-moving factors after the US market close", Daiwa Securities strategist Ryota Tokutake said.

Investors "remain cautious ahead of key US indicators" such as ADP jobs report and ISM manufacturing report due later this week, he added.

The dollar stood at

140.41 yen, compared with 140.27 yen in Europe.

Chip-testing equipment maker Advantest rallied 2.37 percent to 18,090 yen, while chip maker Renesas Electronics slipped 0.13 percent to 2,237.5 yen.

Automakers were among the winners, with Honda advancing 1.14 percent to 4,071 yen, Toyota ending up 0.60 percent to 1,940 yen, and Nissan up 1.60 percent to 533.30 yen.

Heavily weighted Fast Retailing, which operates the Uniqlo fashion chain, added 0.79 percent to 33,310 yen.

Chinese yuan strengthens to 7.0575 against USD

BEIJING (APP): The central parity rate of the Chinese currency renminbi, or the yuan, strengthened 185 pips to 7.0575 against the US dollar Monday, according to the China Foreign Exchange

Trade System.

In China's spot foreign exchange market, the yuan is allowed to rise or fall by 2 percent from the central parity rate each trading day.

The central parity rate of

the yuan against the US dollar is based on a weighted average of prices offered by market makers before the opening of the interbank market each business day.

KP govt to establish Inclusive Business Development Park

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is going to establish an Inclusive Business Development Park (IBDP) to enable men, women, persons' with disabilities and transgender to establish their business setups.

In this connection, a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) and Khyber Pass Economic Corridor (KPEC), Project Management Unit (PMU), Planning & Development (P&D) Department for the establishment of interim setup for the initiative here on Tuesday.

The signing ceremony was held at KP-EZDMC Head Office Peshawar with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Mohammad Adnan Jalil as chief guest on the occasion.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) KP-EZDMC, Javed Iqbal Khatkhat and Project Director (PD) KPEC, Imran Zahoor signed the memorandum on behalf of their respective



organizations. Besides, Secretary Industries, Commerce & Technical Education/Chairman Board of Directors (BoD) KP-EZDMC, Mati Ullah Khan, other officials of the company were also present on the occasion.

Under the agreement, the Industries Department is going to establish an interim-setup for Inclusive Business Development Park at Economic Zone Hayatabad Peshawar. The proposed Inclusive Business Development Park will operate under the operational control of the KP-EZDMC.

The initiative is gender inclusive that will enable

male, female, persons with disabilities, and transgender to establish their business setups. There are around 4638 registered micro, small & medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Peshawar.

The Management Committee established for IBDP will be responsible for oversight and other affairs of BIZ Park. The primary objective of IBDP is to provide an enabling working environment and opportunities for economic development of MSMEs in KP.

Speaking on the occasion, KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Mohammad Adnan Jalil

said that the provincial government is making all-out efforts for industrial development to attract domestic and foreign investors to put the province on the track of progress and development.

He said that IBDP is aimed to gear up and support home based businesses and to establish and expand businesses for a sustainable and inclusive economy.

The initiative, he said, will work to enhance and establish networks amongst businesses, increase awareness and explore opportunities, facilitate knowledge creation and its dissemination and provide platforms for Business to Business (B2B) ventures.

Stock markets wobble as traders await US debt ceiling vote

Correction of Name

I Hassan Ahmed Khan S/O Abdul Rehman Resident of Islamabad do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under, that I was registered with FBISE at HSSC level under Registration No.1110530158 and passed the HSSC Annual Examination 2011 under Roll No. 573923. That I have decided to change/partially change my name from Hassan Ahmad Khan to Hassan Ahmad Khan which is written as Hassan Ahmad Khan in Board's documents/ record. Hence: the same may be changed/corrected. The statement given above is true and correct to the best of my knowledge, belief and nothing has been concealed or withheld.

Court Notice

In the Court of Abdul Halem, Civil Judge-V/Allaqa Qazi, Buner at Daggar, application No. 12/12(2), Institution 2/12/2022, date of hearing 13/6/2023 Abdullah Vs Fazal Nabi, application cancellation degree Notice to No. 9 Rehman Ali, 10 Ahmed Ali, 17 Shah Husain, 18 Said Karim, 19 Gul Husain sons of Shamroz, 20 Mst. Rafia d/o Shamroz, 22 Abdul Wahab s/o Ashiq Ali, 23 Mohamad Afzal s/o Sufi Abdullah Khan r/o Maskipur, Tehsil Mandanr, District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:00 am dated 13/6/2023. The proceeding will be taken ex-parte given under my hand and seal of this Court.

LONDON (AFP/APP): Stock markets wavered on Tuesday as a deal to hike the US debt ceiling and avoid a painful default heads to a vote in Congress this week. On its return from the three-day Memorial Day weekend, the Dow fell after opening in the green.

But the S&P 500 rose and the tech-rich Nasdaq jumped more than one percent, with chip company Nvidia, a key supplier to the artificial intelligence boom, seeing its market value top \$1 trillion as its shares surged four percent.

Oil prices fell more than three percent as traders await the Congress vote and digest conflicting mes-

sages from OPEC+ members about new output cuts, analysts said.

President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy hammered out an agreement at the weekend that saw both sides give ground, a week before a June 5 deadline when the government is expected to run out of cash to pay its bills.

While the deal provided some relief to markets, the two leaders must convince waverers on both sides to back the deal, with the House expected to vote Wednesday followed by the Senate.

"Presently, it feels like investors are confident that

the US debt ceiling will be raised," said Ipek Ozkardeskaya, senior analyst at Swissquote Bank.

"The kneejerk reaction to a debt ceiling deal will be positive but gains could remain short-lived as most of the deal is already priced in," she said.

Ultra-conservative Republicans feel McCarthy should have secured far deeper spending cuts in exchange for raising the debt ceiling and allowing the government to keep borrowing.

The left wing of the Democratic Party is equally unhappy that Biden agreed to any spending limits at all.

"A deal may have been struck on the debt ceiling, but it's not fully calmed nervousness on financial markets," noted Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown.

"Clamour from dissenting voices on both sides of the political divide are rising, ahead of a crucial Congressional vote. Nevertheless, the US does appear to be inching towards agreement," added Streeter.

Still, the US president and House speaker were optimistic.

Gold prices decline

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs1,700 and was sold at Rs232, 800 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs234,500 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,458 to Rs 199,588 from Rs 201,046 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs182, 956 from Rs184,291, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained constant at Rs2,850 and Rs2,443.41 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by US\$11 to \$1956 against its sale at \$1944, the association reported.



In brief

Need to bring tennis in rural areas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Secretary Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Chaudhry Mumtaz Yusuf believed that the young budding talent was not coming to the fore due to the lack of tennis courts in rural areas. "We need to take a lot of measures for the development of sports with help from the government and private sector," Mumtaz Yosaf told APP. Yusuf, who was the Senior Vice President of Balochistan Tennis Association said there was immense sports talent in the country at the grass root level and steps were needed to develop the budding players. To a question, Yusuf said tennis courts should be established at in rural areas, as to bring the talented budding youth to the fore. Tennis courts should be built in educational institutions so that the students can also focus on sports besides education and players can emerge, he said. He was of the view that Pakistani players have won plenty of medals at the international tennis level. "The encouragement of these players at the official level is necessary. In the recently concluded Tennis event of the National Games here, men's tennis event was won by Aqeel Khan who defeated Huzaiifa Abdul Rehman in the final while Sara Mehboob downed Ushna Suhail to win the women's title.

Mas-Wrestling C'ship from June 3

ISLAMABAD (APP): The two-day 6th National Mas-Wrestling Championship 2023 would be held at the Sports Gymnasium Gujranwala in collaboration with Sports Department Gujranwala and Wapda Town Society from June 3. President Pakistan Mas-Wrestling Federation, Nawab Furqan Khan told APP that as many as 22 teams including Wapda, Pakistan Army, Police and others from across the country were expected to participate in the Championship to conclude on June 4. Furqan said the Kyrgyzstan Ambassador to Pakistan would be the chief guest of the ceremony along with other guests. Rs10,000 would be awarded to the winner while Rs7,500 to the runner up and Rs5,000 for third position. He said the federation was taking all-out steps to promote healthy sports activities among youth of the country.

Gatorade Ranking Tennis Championship

KARACHI (PPI): The 3rd Gatorade Ranking Tennis Championship organized will begin from June 3, 2023 at Union Club in Karachi, organizers said Tuesday. The championship, which is being organized by Karachi Tennis Association, includes men's singles and doubles, ladies' singles, junior under-17 singles, under-15, under-13, under-11, under-9, under-7, girls under-15 and wheelchair men's singles events. The last date of entry has been fixed as 1st June. The interested players have been advised to contact Tournament Director Muhammad Khalid Rahmani, Referee Qudsia Raja, Assistant Referee Sarwar Hussain, Farah Riaz, Raisa Ashfaq, Ishrat Zahra, Parveen Akhtar, Ubaid Sarwar and Shagufta Samdani for joining the event.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to PM Attaullah Tarar along with players of winning team.

India playing politics to spoil Asian Cup spirit, says Mazari

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari has said that India must not play politics in cricket especially when other sports contingents are visiting Pakistan.

Talking to APP here on Tuesday the minister said that 'Pakistan verses India' is the most watched cricket match in the world and if India plays Asia Cricket cup in Pakistan, then there is no doubt in that Pakistan would visit India as well to play the cricket World Cup.

He said, "We need to

keep sports and politics separate", adding that sports is beyond boundaries.

The minister stated that Indian Baseball team recently played a tournament in Islamabad in which more than thirty members contingent played along with other nations.

He said that an Indian contingent also participated in Bridge Federation of Asia and Middle East (BFAME) Championship organized in Lahore. He said the reluctance and promotion of Cricket remains a question mark.

Mazari said that govern-

ment is working on a comprehensive 'National Sports Policy' to uplift the sports in the country.

He said all stakeholders including Pakistan Olympic Association has been taken on the board and the policy would be implemented in true spirit after the approval of the cabinet.

He lauded the efforts of Balochistan government on successfully organizing the 34th National Games, after 19 years. He also extended greetings to the winning teams including Army, Wapda and others.

WSF Squash World Cup squads named

ISLAMABAD (APP): The squads for the 2023 WSF Squash World Cup to take place at the Chennai's Express Avenue Mall from June 13 to 17 have been announced.

The Squash World Cup was an international tournament in which national team squads represented by two men and two women play ties of four matches against each other.

Action from the Squash World Cup would be streamed for free on worldsquash.tv and the Olympic Channel, while people wishing to attend in person can apply for free tickets by sending an email to office@indiasquash.com, said a press release.

Representing the hosts would be a squad comprised of Commonwealth Games medallists Saurav Ghosal and Joshna Chinappa, alongside Chennai native Abhay Singh and 2019 South Asian Games champion Tanvi Khanna.

Joining them would be some of the world's best up-and-coming players, including Japan's rising star and winner of the MVP award at the 2022 Women's World Team Championship Satomi Watanabe and highly rated young Egyptian talent Aly Abou Eleinen.

Squads, 2023 SDAT Squash World Cup-Australia: Nicholas Calvert, Alexandra Haydon, Jessica Turnbull, Joseph White.

Colombia: Laura Tovar, Catalina Peláez, Felipe Tovar, Alfonso Marroquín.

Egypt: Fayrouz Abouelkheir, Kenzy Ayman, Karim El Hammamy, Aly Abou Eleinen.

Hong Kong, China: Heylie Fung, Toby Tse, Andes Ling, Chung Yat Long.

India: Joshna Chinappa, Tanvi Khanna, Saurav Ghosal, Abhay Singh.

Japan: Satomi Watanabe, Akari Midorikawa, Tomotaka Endo, Ryunosuke Tsukue.

Malaysia: Aira Azman, Yee Xin Ying, Darren Pragasm, Sai Hung Ong.

South Africa: Lizelle Muller, Hayley Ward, Dewald van Niekerk, Tristen Worth.

Syed Aqil Shah meeting with Chief Minister Azam Khan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Soon a function will be held at Chief Minister House Peshawar for the medal winners of the National Games and their coaches Peshawar (Sports Reporter) President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Olympic Association Syed Aqil Shah met Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan yesterday in which he presented a report on the performance of athletes in the National Games, which was appreciated by Chief Minister Azam Khan after

the meeting.

Talking to the media, President of KP Olympic Association Syed Aqil Shah said that his meeting with Chief Minister Azam Khan was very good, in which he praised the performance of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa athletes in the National Games and announced that soon the Chief Minister's House will be held.

A ceremony will be held in Peshawar for the medal winners of the National Games and their coaches, in which they will be given cash prizes.

Not only in the national

level games, but also in the international level competitions, the country and the nation will shine in the world with their best performances.

They want to hold the inter-provincial games in Peshawar, on which Chief Minister Azam Khan asked them to discuss this with the POA and organize better inter-provincial games in Peshawar.

He paid tribute to all the officers, including Secretary Sports, Special Secretary DG Sports, who are taking steps for the development and development of sports and the welfare of the players.

HEC squash team bagged a bronze medal by finishing third in the 34th National Games



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) squash team has bagged a bronze medal by finishing third in the 34th National Games.

In the 34th National Games that concluded in Quetta, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Squash team participated under the captaincy of international squash player from University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar student Khushhal Riaz Khan.

The HEC squad consisted of Government College University Lahore's Uzair Rashid, Mutahir Ali, and Jawad Khan, while Zulfiqar Ali coached the team and Shahram Changezi was the team manager.

The squash team of HEC was unbeaten in the first,

second and third rounds, in which HEC defeated the strong squash teams of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab respectively, as well as Azad Kashmir by 3-0 each to reach the semi-finals.

In the semi-finals, HEC faced defending champion and 34th National Games winners WAPDA, which featured world-renowned, experienced, and professional players like former Asian champions Danish Atlas, Farhan Mahboob and Nasir Iqbal.

Both Khushhal Riaz and Mutahir Ali played well against Nasir Iqbal and Farhan Mehboob respectively but unfortunately, they lost in a close finish.

HEC won the bronze medal by securing the third position on the victory stand.

While talking to the media during distribution

the prize ceremony on Monday, distribution ceremony, the HEC captain Khushhal Riaz Khan said that despite not getting enough time to prepare for major the major sports event of National Games, the HEC squash team far outperformed the squash teams of all four provinces, Azad Kashmir and many institutions.

Credit for this success goes to the team players, Higher Education Commission, team coach Zulfiqar Ali and manager Shahram.

Khushal thanked the administration of UET Peshawar, its Director Sports Muhammad Ali, and his coach Amjad Khan for providing him all support and training to give an excellent performance in this mega championship.

Laiba urges young girls to pursue career in sports

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani women cricketer Laiba Nasir has urged young girls for pursuing a career in sports, saying dreams can be achieved with hard work and support of parents.

17 years old, Laiba stellar performances on the international stage, representing Pakistan in the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup 2023 in South Africa, have caught the attention of cricket enthusiasts and pundits alike. Currently featuring for the Dynamites in the Pakistan Cup Women's Cricket Tournament in Karachi, Laiba is emerging as a promising talent, showcasing immense potential and determination to succeed.

On her journey to cricket, Laiba said, "I was 12 years old when I started playing cricket on the street next to my home with boys. The neighbours used to question my family about why I am playing on the street, expressing concern that it could lead to road blockages. On one occasion, they even visited my home to persuade my family to prevent me from playing this game. At that time, my father told me that if I want to pursue this game professionally, then I should go to the ground and then he accompanied me there."

Mentioning the positive impact her father had on her early playing days, Laiba said, "My father used to take me to ground early in the morning and helped me

in my practice, but then my father, who worked at an old clothes shop, got me dressed in a club," she told PCB Digital.

Laiba has four siblings and three of them play sports like football and athletics. During her younger years, Laiba faced suggestions from others to consider athletics due to her short height and not being of the ideal fitness. Nevertheless, she remained convinced regarding her passion for cricket.

Talking about her idol, right-handed Laiba said, "When I started playing cricket, people used to tell me that be like Sana Mir, then I started following her. Later, I tried copying Nida Dar's bowling action, which I am yet to fully replicate."

Recalling the moment when her name was announced for the first time in Women's U19 T20 Tournament that was played at the Lahore Country Club in Muridke from 13 to 22 August 2022, Laiba said, "I still remember people would question my decision to play this game, advising me against it. Once my name was announced, those very individuals reached out to congratulate me."

Narrating that moment, when she was picked into the ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup squad, Laiba said, "I was batting in the nets when the head coach congratulated me that you have been inducted into the squad."

PFF name 28 players for national camp

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has announced 28 players for the national camp in preparations for the 4-Nations Cup and SAFF Championship 2023.

The camp would get underway from Wednesday in Lahore, which would allow the players to train and prepare for the tournaments, said a press release.

The main objective of the camp was to prepare the side for the upcoming 4-Nations Cup in Mauritius and SAFF Championship 2023 scheduled to be held in Bengaluru, India.

The list of 28 players includes goalkeepers: Saqib Hanif, Salman ul Haq, Abdul Basit and Yousaf Ijaz Butt.

Defenders: Muhammad Umar Hayat, Ali Khan Niazi, Muhammad Sufyan, Muhammad Umer Saeed, Mamoon Moosa Khan, Syed Abdullah Shah, Haseeb Ahmed Khan, Sardar Wali, Sohail, Easah Suliman and Abdullah Iqbal.

Midfielders: Alamgir Ali Khan Ghazi, Ali Uzair Mahmood, Moin Ahmed, Shayak Dost, Muhammad Waleed Khan, Rahis Nabi, Harun Arrashid Faheem Hamid, Umair Ali and Muhammad Adnan Yaqoob.

Forwards: Abdul Samad Shahzad, Otis Jan Mohammad Khan, Hassan Naveed Bashir and Muhammad Waheed.



PARIS: Alexander ZVEREV of Germany during the Day 3 of Roland Garros at Roland Garros.



In brief

Gang busted; 2 dacoits arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): In an operation against criminal elements, Rawalpindi Police have busted a gang and arrested two dacoits including a ringleader besides recovering cash Rs 65,000, four snatched motorcycles, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Airport Police arrested two accused namely Usman Khan, ring-leader and Usman Ali, who were allegedly involved in various dacoity cases. He informed that the police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Airport Police Station on the directives of SP Potohar Muhammad Waqas Khan conducted a raid and managed to net the criminal record holder gang members including the ring-leader. The accused have been sent to jail for an identification parade, he added.

IRSA releases 168,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 168,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 176,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1427.66 feet and was 29.66 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 57,900 cusecs and 64,700 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1124.30 feet, which was 74.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 52,300 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 69,600, 81,900, 47,300 and 14,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 34,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 14,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

AIOU to offer course

ISLAMABAD (APP): Considering the wide scope and excellent teaching methods of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Akhtar Hameed Khan Memorial Trust (AHKMT) wishes to introduce a course titled 'Waste Management' in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Sciences in the campus. These words were expressed by CEO, AHKMT Sumaira Gul in her address at the inaugural session of the three-day training workshop held in Islamabad. She said that Akhtar Hameed Khan Trust has been working on solid waste management for a long time. This training workshop is an orientation session, after this, the students will be able to get training for six months. Chairman, AHKMT, Fayyaz Baqir in his online address, spoke about the importance of solid waste management. He said that the government cannot do anything without the participation of its citizens, keeping the country clean is a common responsibility of all of us. Social life training is lacking. He said we must join the government machinery and play our part in keeping the country clean. This workshop has been organized by the Department of Environmental Sciences and the Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) in collaboration with the AHKMT. The inaugural session was chaired by, Chairperson, Department of Environmental Sciences, Dr. Sofia Khalid.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Lawyers from Islamabad Bar council called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazir Tarar.

Islam teachings real solution for societal issues: Rana Tanveer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday said that following the true teachings of Islam was the only way to solve the societal issues.

He was addressing the concluding ceremony of the 38th Human Resource Development Program for the Officers of Armed Forces of Pakistan organized by Da'wah Academy of International Islamic University (IIU).

Rana Tanveer Hussain, appreciated the International Islamic University Islamabad's Da'wah Academy for conducting such courses for understanding the true spirit of our religion specially designed for professionals in various institutions.

Such programs must be conducted in the entire country so that we can

spread the message of Islam in the true spirit, he added. The minister highlighted that such training and programs were in dire need of time to disseminate peace in society as few elements are trying to disseminate hate and violence in the society.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that Muslim Ummah was working on Islamophobia with unity and in Pakistan it was our prime responsibility to remain united. Addressing the concluding ceremony Dr. Hathal Hamoud Alotaibi, President, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIU) said that the role of educational institutions and universities is character building of youth while seeking solutions to problems was significant during training.

Dr. Hathal emphasized the importance of knowledge in personal development and lauded Da'wah Academy's

role in consistently organizing essential courses for human resource development and Islamic orientation. On this occasion, President IIU said that the Forces of Pakistan are one of the best across the globe and their roles were exemplary. Dr. Hathal stressed launching of online training programs for spreading the message of Islam through such training courses. He encouraged the participants to utilize this opportunity to expand their knowledge, considering it as a key to unlocking new doors of enlightenment.

Director General of Da'wah Academy, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ilyas briefed about the historic background of Da'wah Academy and its training programs. Dr. Ilyas vowed that Da'wah Academy in collaboration with other institutions would conduct such training programs throughout the country.

RDA seals site offices of 'Capital Valley'

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on directives of Director General (DG) Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa on Tuesday sealed site offices of illegal housing scheme namely Capital Valley.

According to RDA spokesman, the Enforcement Squad while carrying out an operation against illegal housing scheme namely Capital Valley situated at mouza

Katari and Thallian, sealed site offices and issued notice to Sohail Nawaz Cheema, the owner of the housing scheme.

He said the Enforcement Squad was taking strict action against illegal housing schemes. The Enforcement Squad including Incharge/Assistant Director Building Control, Superintendent Scheme and others took part in the operation as the owner of this property was running illegal housing

schemes' site offices in violation of the rules. The spokesman said the DG advised the general public not to invest in illegal housing schemes and check their status before investment at RDA's official website www.rda.gop.pk. He said the DG directed the MP&TE Directorate to take strict action against illegal and unauthorized housing schemes and their site offices should be sealed.

CDA auctions 15 plots at Rs 18.5 bn

ISLAMABAD (APP): The three-day auction of commercial plots held under the aegis of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) received an overwhelming response on the second day as 10 commercial plots were auctioned at Rs 13.75 on Tuesday.

The auction – held under the supervision of CDA's Member Finance here – has so far earned Rs 18.5 billion while accepting the bids of successful bidders, said a press release.

On the first day, the

highest bid worth Rs 1.7 billion was received for a commercial plot of 700 square meters located at F-7 Markaz, followed by another plot 666.66 square meter plot at I-8 Markaz sold for Rs 1.3 billion.

Meanwhile, a plot of 177.77 square meters at G-10 Markaz and another of 711.11 square meters plot in the D-12 sector were sold at Rs 273 million and 890 million, respectively.

A commercial land of 1227.76 square meters at G-9/2 Markaz for a petrol

pump sold for 845 million.

According to the press release, the auction committee has made effective arrangements to ensure transparency and competitiveness. As a result, investors are actively participating in the bidding process and acquiring plots according to their preferences. It added that after undergoing meticulous scrutiny, the received bids would be presented before the CDA Board, which serves as the competent authority to accept or reject the bids.

11 shops sealed, 10 arrested for profiteering

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration sealed 11 shops, arrested 10, and imposed fine amount 10,500 on shopkeepers involved in profiteering.

According to the ICT spokesperson, the operation was carried out on the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon with the assistant commissioners (ACs) conducting raids in their respective areas to combat price increases, encroachment, hygiene issues, and professional beggars.

During the operation, the ACs carried out inspections at 158 places and imposed a fine of Rs 10,500 for price gouging, and sealed 11 shops. Some 10 shopkeepers were also arrested and subsequently taken to the local police station while FIR against one shopkeeper was also registered. Furthermore, 15 professional beg-

gars were apprehended and handed over to the police for further legal action.

In addition to addressing price increases, the ICT administration also acted against illegal clinics and sheesha cafes, aiming to maintain order and safety within the city. The use of polythene bags was also inspected during the operation, resulting in the confiscation of polythene bags.

The administration also took notice of unauthorized fuel agencies as well, leading to the closure of three illegal petrol filling agencies and an illegal Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) filling station while four persons were shifted to police station over violation.

It is worth mentioning here that the ICT administration remains dedicated to conducting regular operations against encroachments, price gouging, and professional beggars.

Ashrafi issues 'code of conduct' as a guiding framework for pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Tazim-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, in collaboration with Darul Ifta Pakistan and Pakistan Ulema Council has successfully organized training sessions aimed at presenting a comprehensive code of conduct that serves as a guiding framework for pilgrims and religious tourists, specifically tailored to the current situation.

In a significant development, Secretary General of the International Tazim-e-Haramain Sharifain Council, and Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi issued the code of conduct on Tuesday emphasizing the importance of maintaining the sanctity and respect of the holy land. He highlighted that adhering to the prescribed guidelines was crucial to avoid any untoward incidents during the spiritual journey.

The code of conduct emphasizes the divine commands outlined in the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him). It unequivocally states that pilgrims must abstain from engaging in quarrels, mischief, debauchery, and obscenity during the Hajj pilgrimage. To ensure a focused spiritual experience, the code of conduct explicitly prohibits the use of videos and images while performing Hajj or Umrah. Prior to embarking on the pilgrimage, the code advises pilgrims to seek comprehensive information about the sacred rites. In this regard, individuals can obtain

guidance by reaching out to the provided WhatsApp number: 0300-7888871. It emphasizes the importance of arranging the Hajj or Umrah journey in accordance with the rules and regulations set forth by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, as well as the leaders of Hajj or Umrah groups. It underlines the significance of complying with these guidelines, even if they may go against personal preferences.

Highlighting the core purpose of Hajj and Umrah, it emphasizes the need to relinquish one's ego and arrogance, presenting oneself humbly before Allah Almighty. By donning two white sheets and proclaiming the words of Labaika, pilgrims symbolize their apostasy and servitude. Addressing concerns related to travel logistics, the code of conduct assures pilgrims and religious tourists arriving at any airport in Saudi Arabia that delays in departure are normal. Saudi officials are required to complete immigration and customs procedures, which may contribute to temporary delays.

During their stay in Makkah and Madinah, the code of conduct emphasizes the obligation to adhere to the rules stipulated by the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, as well as the Ministry of Interior. Women, the blind, and the sick are advised by religious scholars and Mufti-e-Azam to offer their prayers within the confines of their rooms during peak times at the Haramain Sharifain.

Delegation of Islamabad Bar Council calls on law minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Islamabad Bar Council on Tuesday called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar.

The delegation included Raja Aleem Khan Abbasi Vice Chairman Islamabad Bar Council, Syed Qamar Hussain Shah Sabzwari Chairman Disciplinary Committee, Zulfiqar Ali Abbasi Chairman

Executive Committee, Naseer Ahmad Kayani Chairman Benevolent Fund Committee and Adil Aziz Qazi Chairman Inter Provincial Bar Council Relation Committee.

They discussed matters related to the Bar vocational training programme. The minister appreciated the efforts of Islamabad Bar Council for providing training to

young lawyers. This will surely ensure quality and professionalism, he added. Chairman bar council told the minister that so far six batches have been provided training by the Islamabad Bar Council. The minister suggested proper institutionalization of the training programmes and transfer of the ownership to the Islamabad Bar Council.

NHMP recovers stolen car, hands over 2 run away children to Child Protection Bureau

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) have recovered a stolen car and handed over two runaway children of a seminary to Child Protection Bureau Rawalpindi.

According to a press release issued Tuesday, the Motorway Police recovered a vehicle stolen from Jhelum near Daudkhel on Hakla- D I Khan Motorway.

The owner of the vehicle was contacted and the information was provided about the recovery of the vehicle.

Later the vehicle was handed over to Daudkhel police station for further legal action. The search for the car lifters was going on. Meanwhile, the Motorway

Police found two children near Chakri Interchange.

The children aged about 8 and 9 years respectively, could not satisfactory answers when questioned.

The children were transferred to Chakri camp. During investigation, it was found that they were studying in a seminary in Islamabad and belonged to Karachi.

But the children could not provide the address or contact number of their family and the seminary.

In this situation, the children who had run away from the seminary were safely handed over to the Child Protection Bureau Rawalpindi.

DC extends Section-144 till June 4; Imposes ban on pillion riding

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi, Dr Hassan Waqar Cheema, in view of the law and order situation has extended Section-144 in the district till June 4 besides imposing a ban on pillion riding.

Earlier, Section-144 was imposed in Rawalpindi district from May 15 to May 28. Under an order issued by the DC Office, all kinds of assemblies, gatherings, sits-in, rallies, processions, demonstrations, 'jalsas, dharnas', protests and other

activities have been banned. The order further stated that carrying weapons, spikes, laden batons, ball bearings, petrol bombs, improvised explosives or any other instrument that could potentially be used for violence is also not allowed.

Attempting to remove any restriction imposed by a police officer to regulate the assembly of persons or movement of traffic will not be tolerated, the order stated, adding the use of loudspeakers

without permission of lawful authority (except for azaan) will also not be permitted.

There is also a ban on pillion riding within the jurisdiction of Rawalpindi district and this order shall not apply to armed forces and police personnel in uniform and on duty, it stated. The exemption is allowed for females and children under the age of 12 years and press personnel in possession of valid photo identity besides CNIC, it added.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers sitting on the roadside waiting for clients to be hired for daily wage at Jinnah Super Market.

Weapons depot recovered

WARDAK (Agencies): A weapon depot was recovered by security forces in Dimerdad District of Maidan-Wardak. The depot was recovered, based on a military intelligence report from the house of a man named Zahir. The police spokesperson, Qari Yousof Asrar, said that three Kalashnikovs and hundreds of bullets were recovered from the depot. Meanwhile, the Police of Maidan-Wardak handed over hundreds of weapons to the weapon collection commission in recent days.

The Frontier Post

Zil-Qadah 10, 1444 — Wednesday, May 31, 2023

Gas poisoning claim 6 lives

KABUL (Agencies): Iranian media reported saying that gas poisoning claimed six lives of Afghan citizens in the Qarchak area of Tehran. Qarchak region is located 30km away from Tehran city, where it is said that six Afghan citizens suffocate in a gas leak in this region and two people were taken to the hospital. The victims of the incident are four men and two women who died in a green tea shop in this incident, reports added.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

Nasir appointed Finance Minister

KABUL (TOLOnews): Based on the decree of the Islamic Emirate's leader, Mohammad Nasir Akhund has been appointed acting minister of Finance.

Ahmad Wali Haqmal, a spokesman for the Finance Ministry, said that Mohammad Nasir Akhund has good experience in finance and there will be a positive change in the country's financial system. "He has good experience in the financial sector, and with his appointment, positive steps will be taken in the financial affairs of Afghanistan," said Ahmad Wali Haqmal.

"Mohammad Nasir Akhund was the deputy of the revenue and customs in



the finance ministry before and now he is appointed as acting minister in this ministry, and the changes roles of an individual in a system and government is a normal thing," said Bilal Karimi.

Before this, Hedayatullah Badri was the head of the Ministry of Finance for almost two years and after that he was appointed the head of Da Afghanistan Bank.

Hundreds of families damaged in Badakhshan

BADAKHSHAN (Agencies): Recent Natural disaster closed the Fayzabad-Kashm roads and damaged hundreds of families in Badakhshan province.

The provincial head of natural disaster management in Badakhshan, Mawlawi Mohammad Akram Akbari, said that recent natural disasters affected 10,17 families in this province and roads to Fayzabad-Keshm have been closed.

Akbari raised the issue on Tuesday in a meeting of the Badakhshan Provincial Commission for Combating Natural Disasters.

According to him, these families suffered in the Teshkan, Argo, and Eftal Payan districts of Fayzabad City and other parts of this province due to the recent lightning, earthquake, and floods.

Meanwhile, Moezuddin Ahmadi, the head of information and culture of Badakhshan, said that 20 points out of four kilometers of the public road of Fayzabad-Keshm and Yafatl Payan have been closed to traffic since the third of this month, as a result of flood residues, he added saying that if this road is not cleared, there will be a possibility of increasing the price of raw materials and other commercial goods in this province.

"Some technical tools and facilities are used in cooperation with security organs and natural disasters to clean this road, but they need more fuel," said Mawlawi Abdul Ghafoor, the head of public work of Badakhshan.

Meanwhile, Mawlawi Nisar Ahmad Ahmadi, the deputy, and supervisor of Badakhshan province, asked the people's councils and aid organizations to cooperate with government departments in assisting the affected people and surveying the needy people.

Customs foils human hair smuggling

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Finance said that Ghulam Khan Border customs officials successfully thwarted an effort to smuggle more than one ton of "human hair".

The hair was hidden behind coal in a Hino-brand vehicle, the ministry said in a tweet.

The Ministry of Finance also emphasized that, under the direction of the interim government leadership, any trade, transportation, and distribution of human hair within the country has wholly prohibited.

Human hair trafficking is a global issue, and a promising indicator of development is the recent seizure of an illegal shipment of human hair by Ghulam Khan border customs officials. Still, more work must be done to stop the illicit trade and safeguard vulnerable people.

High-quality human hair is in demand for wig production, hair extensions, and other beauty-related sectors.

In 2022, the market for human hair extensions was estimated to be worth \$3.71 billion. CDI reported that the market is anticipated to expand from USD 4.06 billion in 2022 to USD 7.63 billion in 2030, with a forecasted CAGR of 9.44%.

2,000 drug addicts being treated

BALKH (Agencies): Balkh Public Health Department has treated about 2,000 drug addicts, including women, children, and men in the province.

The acting governor of Balkh, Mohammad Yusuf, said that these people were treated by the Ministry of Public Health and the department in four hospitals.

Meanwhile, Dr. Najibullah Tawana, the head of public health in Balkh province, said they were able to inform 20,000 people about preventing drug use.

Expo of domestic products draws good response

HERAT (Agencies): Herat Chamber of Industries and Mines says a five-day expo of domestically manufactured goods has drawn over 20,000 visitors and that business owners have signed dozens of contracts with investors and traders from other provinces.

"The booths were very good, the facilities were very good, people had all visited, participated from Herat and other provinces, and many of the contracts were signed at this expo," said TORYALI GHOSI, deputy of Herat Chamber of Industries and Mines.

Officials also said that the factory owners have displayed their products in 120 booths.

Dairy and other consumable products along with plastic goods, medicines and home appliances were



among the items showcased at this expo. Business owners have welcomed initiatives to hold expos and say more are needed so as to encourage people to buy domestic products.

"If these expos are always held and people come to see the domestic products, Inshallah, we will be able to stop the goods coming from abroad and move towards self-sufficiency," said one

business owner.

"Most of the people are not aware of domestic products and when expos are held, they become aware of domestic products," said another participant.

Mine explosion kills 3 children, injures one in Wardak province

WARDAK (Agencies): At least three children were killed and another injured in mine explosions, left over from past wars in Wardak province of Afghanistan, a provincial official said.

The children were killed and injured in two incidents in the same province. The first happened when three children found a toy-like explosive device in Sayed Abad district afternoon; the device exploded, killing two on the spot and injuring

the other one, the provincial official said.

According to the official, a similar incident occurred in the same province, Dehmirdad district, killing one child.

Earlier, one child was killed another was injured in a mine blast that exploded in the Deyak district of Ghazni province.

Meanwhile, two children, ages 9 and 12, discovered the explosive contraption that looked like a toy and attempted to take it

home. A provincial official, however, claimed that the explosive device quickly detonated, killing one of the kids instantly and wounding the other.

Unexploded bombs from previous conflicts have been found throughout the country in recent years, killing and hurting men, women, and including children.

Since last November, contributions have been made to support demining in the country by interna-

tional organizations such as Australia, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Sweden, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

Due to the four decades of war, the country is contaminated with the unexploded devices and mines in the world, which kill dozens of people every month, including children.

Kandahar hospital gets hi-tech MRI and X-ray equipment

KANDAHAR (Agencies): Kandahar's Aino Mina hospital has taken delivery of and installed state-of-the-art MRI and X-ray equipment at a cost of 45 million afghanis.

The new equipment was unveiled at the 350-bed hospital during a ceremony attended by ministry of public health officials, and provincial officials.

Deputy public health minister, Mawlawi Mohammad Ishaq Sahibzada, said at the ceremony: "An MRI machine, at the cost of 40 million afghanis, and an x-ray machine at the cost of 5 million afghanis, have been purchased and activated by this ministry. The cost of which was paid from the internal budget of the Ministry of Public Health."

He asked the officials and doctors of this hospital to provide good health services to the people and serve with honesty.

Mawlawi Hayatullah



Mubarak, deputy governor of Kandahar, also attended the ceremony and said the installation of MRI and X-ray machines is a good achievement. He said: "Afghans have been severely affected by decades of war. Therefore, along with other sectors, the health sector is also

important."

Mubarak praised the doctors and health workers for their hard work and said: "Security is provided, there is a good environment to work, and people need our services. Therefore, one should make the best use of the opportunities and it is nec-

essary for doctors to continue to treat patients well and fulfill their duties honestly."

Meanwhile, according to Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan data, Afghans spend on average \$500 million a year on medical treatment outside the country.

Process of exporting fresh fruit to world markets kicks off: MoIC

KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MoIC) says the process of exporting fresh fruit to world markets has started. The ministry's spokesman Abdul Salam Jawad said that they are trying to market the country's fresh fruits in order to export them at a reasonable price.

"Fortunately, we were able to export 20 tons of cherries to Kazakhstan, and our other fresh fruit is black cherry, which are ripe and

almost ready to package, and we will export them to the United Arab Emirates and Kazakhstan," he said.

The Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock also said that when problems with the issuing of visas by countries to Afghan businessmen are resolved, they can export more products.

"We have invested in the packaging and in the cold storage areas, and we have the ability to adjust and export this packaging to

Europe and America based on global standards," said Omid Haidari, head of foreign relations of the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock.

"Unfortunately, due to the lack of air corridors and subsidies from the Ministry of Agriculture, we indirectly export fruits to India and Pakistan, and later Indian and Pakistani businessmen buy from us and export to Europe," he added.

However, a number of investors say that if the

country's fresh fruit is not marketed, farmers and businessmen will face losses.

"Seven kilos of our watermelons are sold for fifty afghanis, seven kilos of our watermelons from Farah to here [Kabul] cost forty afghanis as fare; the farmer is really very poor," said a trader.

According to experts, if fresh fruit and other products of Afghanistan are regularly exported, the country's national income will increase.

85 road construction projects planned by Kabul Municipality

KABUL (TOLOnews): At least 85 construction projects are scheduled to be implemented in the current solar year 1402, the Kabul municipality said.

According to the municipality, there are a total of 150 infrastructural projects worth 5.24 billion Afs.

"In 1402, the Kabul municipality was planning

to announce 150 projects worth 5.24 billion Afs. They will be implemented. Of 150 projects, 85 are road construction projects," said Nematullah Barakzai, an official of the municipality.

The Kabul municipality has recently completed some road construction projects in the capital city. Meanwhile, residents

urged the Islamic Emirate to implement projects equally in all areas of Kabul.

"It has been many years that the residents of this area have faced many problems. Many of them are about to leave their houses," said Ajmal Padshah, a resident.

"It has been 16 years

since I became leader of the community. All the elders and youth are making efforts to construct this street but there has been no good attention paid to it," said Malik Shamros Totakhail, a resident.

Based on statistics of the Kabul municipality, 180 development projects were implemented last year.

Death toll climbs as rain continues across country



KABUL (Agencies): The Ministry of Natural Disaster Management said on Tuesday that at least 24 people have died and 13 others have been injured in recent rains in 13 provinces of the country in the past 10 days.

Shafiullah Rahimi, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Natural Disasters, says that in the past 24 hours, three people died and one person was injured in heavy rain in Paktia, Paktika, Maidan Wardak

and Khost provinces respectively.

In addition, 31 houses were either damaged or completely destroyed in the rain.

On Monday the Meteorological Department issued a warning of heavy rain and possible flash floods in 20 provinces over two days - including Tuesday.

"At least 24 people have died, 13 people have been injured and 120 houses have been completely

destroyed in 13 provinces of the country in nearly ten days, and more than 3,000 acres of agricultural land and gardens have been destroyed," said Rahimi.

He also said the Ministry of Natural Disaster Management in cooperation with United Nations organizations and NGOs has been able to distribute food and non-food items and cash aid to nearly 15,000 families in the past ten days. He also said the process is still underway.

Uplift in transit cargo transportation discussed

KABUL (Khaama Press): Turkmenistan and Afghanistan discussed ways to deepen their collaboration on transit cargo transportation through Afghan territory.

The development of cooperation in transit cargo transportation through Afghanistan, which is carried out for the export of oil and gas production from Turkmenistan, was discussed by the authorities of the two sides, according to Azer News.

Cooperation in cargo transportation between the two countries is an important and strategic bilateral relationship.

The geographical locations of both countries support the growth of transport infrastructure and the movement of products.

Several steps have been taken to strengthen the cooperation between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan in cargo transportation.

This includes constructing and modernizing trans-

portation infrastructure, such as roads and railroads, and enhancing border controls and customs procedures.

Sarda Berdimuhamedov, the president of Turkmenistan, said earlier in May that opening the Lapis Lazuli international transport corridor would raise the status of the country's regional transport network. Afghanistan is part of the Lapis Lazuli international transport corridor.

Ombudsman positions exam held in Kabul



KABUL (Agencies): The examination was held under the national examination administration monitoring, on Ombudsman Positions of Vice and Virtue Ministry in the Faculty of Law of Kabul University on Tuesday.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the exam, the Deputy Minister of Vice and Virtue, Sheikh Mohammad Faqir Mohammadi, wished good lucks to the participants of

the exam and shared some information about the responsibilities of the Ombudsman.

"Ombudsmen should treat people in a good manner and with good judgment according to Sharia and not make people hate religion," he said.

On this occasion, Sheikh Mawlawi Abdul Baqi Haqqani, head of the National Examinations administration, assured the participants of the trans-

parency of the examination and said that the process of the examination results is evaluated digitally.

Speaking on this occasion, the spokesman for the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, Mohammad Sadiq Akif, said that 256 scholars from the center and provinces of the country participated in this exam, adding that 200 of them will be accepted for the positions after passing the exam successfully.



QUETTA: President Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the closing ceremony of the 34th National Games.

Dar: Govt taking steps for business friendly budget

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday said that the government was taking steps to present a business and investment-friendly budget.

The finance minister, addressing the representatives of Lahore and Faisalabad Chambers of Commerce and Industries, said the incumbent government had disappointed the internal and external critics who were talking about the bankruptcy of the country.

The minister, interacting with the businessmen in the context of proposals and recommendations regarding the federal budget for fiscal year 2023-24, said that the business community was more aware of the country's situation. He said with the help and support of businessmen and industri-

alists, Pakistan came out of economic difficulties in 2013 when the country became the 24th largest economy in the world.

At that time, he said that banks and other international institutions were praising Pakistan, the policy rate was five per cent, foreign exchange reserves were high, the market capitalization had increased to more than 100 billion dollars and Pakistan had become the second most favoured country in the world for investment. At that time, Pakistan was also being predicted to join the G20, he added. "Unfortunately, within the last four years, the world's 24th largest economy has been reduced to the 47th largest economy," he regretted.

Ishaq Dar said that "we have to take the country forward, and the government will try to make a

budget according to the situation without putting more burden on the business community". He said the difficulties that the country was facing at the moment were the result of the policies of the PTI government in the last 4 years. The previous government had made this agreement, but since it was Pakistan's commitment, we took the difficult decisions.

He said that with reference to the IMF program, the government had taken all the preliminary steps. He said the propaganda was spread with reference to Pakistan that the country was defaulting, also adding that by the grace of Allah the country would not go bankrupt. He further said that Pakistan would come out of the current economic difficulties as the government's intentions were clear.

ATC declares Zaman Park search warrant 'ineffective'

LAHORE (PPI): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore Tuesday declared Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence search warrant "ineffective". ATC Judge Abhar Gul Khan announced the reserved verdict on the PTI chief's plea, noting that one-time search warrants are not for forever.

As the proceedings commenced, Commissioner Lahore, DC Lahore and other officials appeared before ATC judge Abhar Gul's court. The former prime minister had moved Lahore's anti-terrorism court, requesting the cancellation of search warrants for his Zaman Park residence.

Imran Khan had named the state, Lahore commissioner, DIG operations Lahore, SSP operations Lahore, and others as respondents in the petition. In his plea, Imran Khan maintained that the law enforcement officials acquired the search warrants with malicious intent. "It is most respectfully prayed that the search warrant relating to petitioner's house situated at Zaman Park, Lahore may kindly be set-aside which lacks the requisite legal parameters for a valid warrant in the interest of justice and fair play," he said in his plea. It is pertinent to mention here that the police obtained the search warrant for Imran Khan's Zaman Park residence from the ATC on May 18.

Reference against Abbasi returned to NAB

RAWALPINDI (INP): The accountability court returned reference against Shahid Khaqan Abbasi to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in which four accused including ex-PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and former MD PSO were named.

The NAB filed the reference in 2020. In the previous hearing, the court had reserved its decision on the request to send the reference back to NAB on application filed on behalf of Sheikh Imran-ul-Haq—co-accused of the reference. The court said after the amendment in NAB Ordinance it has no longer has the authority to hear the accused's lawyers.

After the hearing, the former prime minister talked to media person and said that the court has accepted the petitions and the case will be referred elsewhere as it was his request from the day first. "Neither NAB comes nor witnesses come," he said. Abbasi said his case has now become a question for the new chairman of NAB that how will he solve the fake case.

Ex-KP MPA Ahmed Shah quits PTI

MANSEHRA (INP): Former advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister and ex MPA Syed Ahmed Hussain Shah has announced to quit PTI over May 9 mayhem. Addressing an emergency press conference at Mansehra press club on Tuesday, he could not continue to remain in PTI after vandalism of May 9.

Syed Ahmed Hussain Shah said that he considers any conspiracy against Pakistan army as conspiracy as plan against the national stability. Cannot comprise on reverence of martyrs of the country, the former MPA said while announcing to quit PTI over May 9 vandalism.

judge asked the lawyer. "The objection of the registrar's office is that Nawaz Sharif was disqualified by the Supreme Court. The plea seeking his restoration as the party president can be filed in the Supreme Court," he read the objection of the registrar's office before the court.

"The Supreme Court has given judgments in two similar cases," the LHC judge remarked. "A case of the same kind is being heard by Justice Shahid Bilal Hassan-led five-member bench.

base and strengthen his position. In addition to the 14 coordinators, the Chief Minister's cabinet already comprised of 12 ministers, two advisers, and five special assistants.

According to the notification, the Chief Minister had appointed 14 new coordinators. The newly appointed coordinators included Ashraf Hussain and Hussain from Bara District in Ghanche, Syed Mehdi Shah from Skardu District, Abdul Khaliq from Ghanche, Muhamad Adeel Ram from Shigar District, Ghulam Haider from Skardu District, Sajida Sadaqat from Astore District, Raja Shehbaz Khan from Hunza District, Manzoor Hussain from Gilgit District, Sarwar Shah from Diamer District, Kalbe Ali from

No-trust motion against GB Assembly speaker today

GILGIT (INP): A like-minded group of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) chapter has announced tabling a no-confidence motion against the speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly on Tuesday. "The no-confidence motion against Speaker Syed Amjad Zaidi will be tabled today," said the like-minded group comprising the deputy speaker too.

According to reports three days ago, in anticipation of a possible vote of no-confidence or disqualification, Gilgit Baltistan Chief Minister Muhammad Khalid Khurshid, who is facing allegations of fake degree, had appointed 14 new coordinators. The move was seen as an attempt to galvanize CM's support

base and strengthen his position. In addition to the 14 coordinators, the Chief Minister's cabinet already comprised of 12 ministers, two advisers, and five special assistants.

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Nagar District, Muhammad Yousuf from Skardu District, Atique Peerzada from Gilgit District, Muzamil Hassan from Skardu District and Sana Ullah Khuram from Astore District. These coordinators will serve at the pleasure of the Chief Minister and will receive a fixed monthly salary of Rs150,000. The addition of these 14 coordinators brings the total number of public officeholders in the Chief Minister's team to over 45. It is worth noting that there were already 10 coordinators, including two media coordinators, representing the Chief Minister in Islamabad. The GB government had previously amended the rules of business to allow for the creation of these 10 coordinator positions.

LHC upholds objection to plea seeking Nawaz's restoration as PML-N president

LAHORE (PPI): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday heard the plea, seeking restoration of Nawaz Sharif as the president of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), as an objection case and upheld the objection of the registrar's office to the admissibility of the petition.

Justice Ali Baqar Najafi of the LHC heard the plea filed by Afaq Ahmed Advocate who appeared before the court to present arguments. "Imran Khan is disqualified from Mianwali constituency, but he has not

been removed as the party chairman. A petition against his disqualification is currently pending with the five-member bench," he said. "Read your plea," Justice Ali Baqar Najafi asked the lawyer.

"Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif should be restored as the president of PML-N. An action should be taken against Imran Khan, Sheikh Rashid and Sirajul Haq under Article 63," the lawyer read the plea before the court. "Now read the objection of the registrar's office," the LHC

Rehabilitation of Taliban in KP PHC adjourns hearing for fortnight

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has adjourned hearing on maintainability of writ petition seeking establishment of judicial commission and placement of responsibility on competent authorities for rehabilitation of Taliban in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa following negotiation concluded during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) led government for fortnight on applicant's plea for preparation of arguments, on Tuesday.

The counsel Babar Khan Yousafzai advocate argued that resurgence of militancy has increased manifold following rehabilitation of Taliban in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as per agreements concluded during PTI led federal and provincial governments while requested constitution of Judicial Commission to probe agreements in this regard and to identify responsible persons for bringing before law.

During hearing PHC has raised several objections on maintainability of writ while Justice Abdul Shakoor inquired precedents set by superior court and observed that can court intervene in such matter and can earlier court has ordered establishment of Judicial Commission?

Justice Abdul Shakoor remarked that constitution of Judicial Commission laying in the jurisdiction of Federal's government and observed that the petitioner should approached the government in this regard, however, Babar Khan Yousafzai informed that petitioner didn't the part of federal government.

In the meantime, Justice Abdul Shakoor remarked that who are Aimal Wali and what is he doing? While the counsel argued that Aimal Wali Khan is provincial president of Awami National Party (ANP). The counsel requested for provision of fortnights timeframe to produce precedents in this regard, however, Justice Abdul Shakoor said it's all right for producing precedents of High Courts.

The divisional bench of PHC comprised of Justice Abdul Shakoor and Justice Waqar Ahmad adjourned further hearing on maintainability of writ petition and submission of precedents for fortnight. The writ petition filed by ANP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Aimal Wali Khan in which President of Pakistan, PTI's chairman Imran Khan, former Director General Inter Service Intelligence Faiz Hameed, Barrister Saif and Former Chief Minister Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan made as respondents.

ANP president claimed that he has approached PHC as representative of Pakhtun nation against terrorist and the facilitators in their rehabilitation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but unfortu-

Arrests under MPO: Court to announce verdict today

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) will announce judgement on arrest under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) today (on Wednesday) at 9:00 AM in vandalism happened on 9th& 10th May after arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan, on Tuesday.

During hearing Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Javeed along with PTI lawyers named Nauman Kakakhel, Qazi Anwar, Shah Faisal Ottmankhel and Muzzam Butt advocates appeared before PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Syed Arshad Ali against arrest of political workers under section-3 of MPO.

Advocate General argued that Article 245th has imposed in the areas where law and order situation was disturbed despite its imposition across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He argued that cases registered after violent protests in which ambulances were burnt, infrastructure and buildings were set on fire. In the meantime, Justice Arshad Ali inquired regarding release of political activists on court's order? Advocate general informed that maximum people are released, however Justice Arshad Ali observed that since 20 days of violent protest you are still busy with inquiry and asked regarding the evidences in this regard?

Advocate General Amir Javeed argued that inquiry is continued because as many as 2 thousand cases had registered against vandalism on 9th& 10th May, although, Justice Arshad Ali argued that the incidents were happened on 9th while today it is 30th May and you are busy with inquiries and didn't collected evidences. Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim observed that party's activists are suffering in the prisons while inquired regarding number of ministers, leaders and workers arrested for the incidents, however, Advocate General informed that some arrests have been made while cases had registered against former ministers and attempts have continued for arrest of them.

PTI's counsel Qazi Anwar advocate informed that former minister Atif Khan has told him that cases shall be withdrawn from party's workers after quitting PTI as per viral notification issued by Federal's minister. He argued that the cases had been registered for political victimization to suppress one party. However, PHC observed that incident happened on 9th May can neither be justified while Shah Faisal advocate argued that PTI's filing plea for constitution of Joint Investigation Team (JIT) to probe vandalism occurred on 9th& 10th May. PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Syed Arshad Ali reserved decision after conclusion of arguments while declared that the judgement should be announce at 9:00 AM today (Wednesday).

nately court's attitude showed that the plea should be put under carpet. He added that ANP raising voice against terrorism and terrorist at every forum.

This he claimed while talking to media personnel after appearance before PHC seeking establishment of judicial commission against agreements and rehabilitation of Taliban in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He blamed that Imran Khan, Faiz Hameed and their wreckages had pushed Pakhtunkhwa into another wave of terrorism. The rehabilitation of Taliban has dramatically deteriorated while terrorist attacks are reporting on daily basis while Pakhtuns are martyring but unfortunately the media has them, ANP president added. He claimed that Peshawar's police line attack happened after rehabilitation of terrorists while added that Taliban are roaming freely in Buner and Swat as well as in other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Every political worker of PTI irre-

spective of file and rank involved in 9th& 10th May vandalism should must treat equally not like that poor activists should face hardship of prisons while leadership can obtain forgiveness certificate after press conference, Aimal Wali said. He added that it may ordinary worker, Imran Khan or Khajida Shah must treat equally before law.

If the apology is the only option then thousands of ordinary PTI's workers should must be release otherwise it would be selective, he added. Aimal Wali said that he wouldn't accept neither PTI and Imran Khan as democratic entities in the contemporary politics of Pakistan. ANP president agreed with PTI consequences but argued that it may happened earlier and claimed that it was buildup by six generals while now only one General is tinkling it. He argued that such projects (like PTI) never obtained acceptance in past and wouldn't be tolerable in future.

Pak-Italy JEC agrees to tackle climate change

ROME (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman and Italy's Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Maria Tripodi on Tuesday co-chaired the 5th meeting of the 'Pakistan-Italy Joint Economic Commission' (JEC) at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two sides agreed to set up a joint framework to tackle climate change and cooperation in water management, hailing the establishment of an Italian Trade Agency office in Islamabad the next week, a news release said. Speaking on the occasion, Senator Sherry Rehman said it was a pleasure to co-chair the 5th meeting of the Pakistan-Italy JEC in Rome with the Deputy Minister.

She added that the establishment of the Italian Trade Agency office in Islamabad would boost bilateral trade. "We are building a common framework with Italy to tackle climate change and improve water management. The trade partnership between Pakistan and Italy is stronger than ever. Our bilateral trade is to reach \$2 billion in 2022, and Pakistan's exports will cross \$1 billion," Sherry Rehman said. The next JEC meeting would be hosted in Islamabad at a mutually convenient time, which we look forward to, she added.

While welcoming the finalisation of the 'Visa Waiver Agreement for Diplomatic Passports', both sides reiterated their commitment to speedy negotiations to finalize the framework for Migration and Labour Mobility. Businessmen from Pakistan and Italy participated in the meeting. The event concluded with the signing of an important 'Roadmap for Cooperation' covering climate change, trade and investment, heritage, culture, agriculture, higher education, technical cooperation and technology transfer in reference areas.



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Drones hit Moscow, confirms Russian officials

MOSCOW (BBC): Russian President Vladimir Putin has responded to Tuesday's drone attacks on the capital Moscow, accusing Ukraine of trying to frighten Russians. He said civilians were targeted, but air defences dealt satisfactorily with the threat. The defence ministry said at least eight drones caused minor damage, but Kyiv has denied responsibility.

This is the first time the city has been targeted by multiple drones since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said no-one was seriously injured. Several drones fell on an exclusive western suburb where senior officials live. Speaking on Russian TV, Mr Putin said the attack had been a response to what he described as a Russian attack on Ukraine's military intelligence HQ in recent days. The BBC is unable to independently verify whether any such attack took place.

"In response to this, the Kyiv regime chose a differ-

ent path - the path of attempts to intimidate Russia, to intimidate Russia's citizens, and of air strikes against residential buildings," he said. "This is obviously a sign of terrorist activity." "They are provoking us into responding in kind," he added. Russia's foreign ministry said Western support for Kyiv was "pushing the Ukrainian leadership towards ever more reckless criminal deeds including acts of terrorism".

But the US state department repeated Washington's position that it did not support attacks inside Russia, adding that it was still gathering information on the drone strikes. The strikes on Moscow followed an overnight drone attack on the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv in which at least one person was reported killed. Ukrainian officials said falling debris set buildings on fire as Ukraine's air defences intercepted more than 20 drones.

Meanwhile, Russia's defence ministry said all

eight drones targeting Moscow had been intercepted. "Three of them were suppressed by electronic warfare, lost control and deviated from their intended targets. Another five drones were shot down by the Pantsir-S surface-to-air missile system in the Moscow region," the ministry said. The aerial assaults struck some of Moscow's most prominent neighbourhoods. Areas hit include Leninsky Prospekt, a grand boulevard created under Josef Stalin.

A suburb of western Moscow where Mr Putin has a residence, along with other members of the Russian elite, was also hit. Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said that Kyiv was not directly involved, but that Ukraine had enjoyed watching events unfold and predicted an increase in such incidents. Putin said that while Moscow's air defences had responded successfully they still needed "bit of work" and had to be made "more dense".