

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The NAB has decided to make former first lady Bushra Bibi a witness in the Al-Qadir Trust case. The NAB notice was issued to Bushra Bibi as a witness, not as an accused. Her statement as a witness will be recorded on June 7 next. The NAB under the amended act is bound to tell a person whether he or she is being summoned as a suspect or a witness.

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RAWALAKOT: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Javed Latif has said that party Qauid Mian Nawaz Sharif will return to the country before the elections. Talking to the media on Saturday, he said that they want implementation of the law and the constitution. "We will point out whenever any institution will go against the law and the constitution," he added.

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ANKARA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif greeting Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at his inauguration ceremony in Turkeye.

Erdogan takes oath as Turkey's president

ANKARA (Agencies): Recep Tayyip Erdogan was sworn in on Saturday as Turkey's president on Saturday following his re-election victory last weekend. In the coming days, he is expected to announce his new cabinet, which is anticipated to indicate a shift in his unconventional economic programme, Reuters reported.

"As president, I swear upon my honor and integrity, before the great Turkish nation ... to work with all my power to protect the existence and independence of the state ... and to fulfill my duty impartially," Erdogan said in his post-inauguration address. Despite facing a challenging cost-of-living crisis that was believed to have affected his chances, Turkey's longest-serving leader, Erdogan, defied the predictions of most opinion polls and secured 52.2% support in the May 28 runoff vote. His election victory highlighted his ability to overcome obstacles and resonate with a significant portion of the electorate. Many world leaders, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus President Ersin Tatar, Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro, and Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani are in Ankara to attend the inauguration ceremony of President Erdogan.

His new five-year mandate allows Erdogan to pursue what have been increasingly authoritarian policies that have polarised the country, a NATO member and strengthened its position as a regional military power. The new parliament convened on Friday and Erdogan will officially start his new term by taking his oath on Saturday at around 3 p.m. (1200 GMT) in the

Shehbaz attends ceremony

ANKARA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with other leaders of the world on Saturday attended the inauguration ceremony of President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Prime Minister on behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan conveyed heartfelt felicitations to President Erdogan on his re-election as President of Turkey and wished him continued success.

While acknowledging the visionary leadership of President Erdogan, Premier Shehbaz Sharif stated that Turkey's impressive strides in all fields during the past twenty years, was most remarkable achievement. As the Turkish Republic commemorates its centenary this year, it was befitting that President Erdogan would continue to lead the great nation on the path to progress and prosperity, he added. The prime minister also thanked President Erdogan for his efforts to promote regional peace, and for the President's commitment to diplomacy and dialogue.

general assembly in Ankara.

That will be followed by a ceremony at the presidential palace attended by high-level officials from 78 countries and international organisations, including NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, according to state-run Anadolu Agency. In the evening, Erdogan is set to name ministers. He was almost certain to include former economy chief Mehmet Simsek in his new cabinet, Reuters reported earlier this week, which would signal a potential return to more economic orthodoxy including eventual interest rate hikes.

Simsek was highly regarded by investors when he served as finance minister and deputy prime minister between 2009 and 2018. A key role for him now could mark a departure from years of years of policy that was underpinned by low interest rates despite high inflation, and heavy state control of markets.

Erdogan, 69, became

prime minister in 2003 after his AK Party won an election in late 2002 following the worst economic crisis of Turkey since the 1970s. In 2014 he became the country's first popularly-elected president and was elected again in 2018 after securing new executive powers for the presidency in a 2017 referendum. The May 14 election and May 28 runoff was pivotal given the opposition had been confident of ousting Erdogan and reversing many of his policies, including proposing sharp interest rate hikes to counter inflation, running at 44% in April.

In his victory speech, Erdogan said inflation, which hit a 24-year peak of 85% last year before easing, was Turkey's most urgent issue. Analysts have warned that if the current policies continue, the economy is headed for turmoil given depleted foreign reserves, an expanding state-backed protected deposits scheme, and unanchored inflation expectations. The lira has undergone a series of crashes in recent years and hit new all-time lows in the days after the vote.

Two Soldiers embraced shahadat

FP Report

RAWALPINDI: On 03 Jun 23, fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists in general area Jani Khel, Bannu District. Own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location resultantly 2 x terrorists were sent to hell. However, during intense exchange of fire, Naib Subedar Ghulam Murataza (age 40 years, resident of District Bahawalpur) and Havildar Muhammad Anwar (age 41 years resident of District Sialkot) having fought gallantly, embraced shahadat. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area. Armed forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Ex-AJK PM announces to move forward with Tareen

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former AJK prime minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas on Saturday announced support for senior politician Jahangir Tareen, saying that he will move forward with the latter. "We and Jahangir Tareen want to move forward together," the PTI defector said while talking to media after holding a meeting with Jahangir Khan Tareen.

Responding to a question, Tanveer Ilyas said consultation was underway regarding the formation of a new party. "You will hear good news soon," he added. Speaking alongside Ilyas, former Punjab minister Nauman Langrial, said that they will welcome anyone who is ready to leave the PTI and its narrative.

Meanwhile, former PTI MPA Niaz Gishkori joined the senior politician Jahangir Tareen's group.

As per details, the former PTI MPA from Muzaffargarh met Jahangir Tareen and announced joining their group. In his address to the group member, Jahangir Tareen welcomed Niaz Gishkori and said that the former PTI MPA discussed his future political plan with the group's members.

The members of Jahangir Tareen group MNA Faisal Jivana, Mubeen Alam, former advisor Abdul Hayee Dasti, Ishaq Khakwani, Nauman Langrial, Aon Chaudhry, Saeed Akbar Nawani, Amin Chaudhary, Qasim Langah were also present in the meeting. Earlier, Jahangir Tareen held consultations with the members of his group over the name of the new political party under consideration.

200 Indian fishermen released

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan released another 200 Indian fishermen on Friday, bringing the total number of fishermen from the hostile neighbour set free in about three weeks to around 400.

According to Kashmir Media Service, "Today, Pakistan is releasing 200 Indian fishermen and 3 civilian prisoners," Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari tweeted on Friday. He also mentioned that 198 Indian fishermen were repatriated on May 12. "This is in line with Pakistan's policy of not politicising humanitarian matters. Compassion should take precedence over politics," he remarked.

The development comes a day after the foreign office spokesperson hinted at the release of another group of Indian fishermen and civilians. "The release of Indian fishermen and civilians demonstrates Pakistan's consistent policy of not politicising humanitarian matters. We also hope that India would undertake similar humanitarian gestures and release Pakistani civilians and fishermen as well,"

The Frontier Post

PM invites Turkish businessmen to invest in Pakistan

ANKARA (APP): Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif Saturday invited Turkish businessmen to invest in Pakistan and establish strategic collaboration in sectors of energy, agriculture, information technology (IT), and construction.

The Chief Executives of select Turkish business groups called on the PM here, during his visit to Turkey, at the invitation of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. During the meetings, the PM outlined the government's vision to facilitate foreign direct investment and encouraged joint ventures. Their exchanges spanned around expanding trade and investment ties to maximize mutual gains from available opportunities in Pakistan and to enhance cooperation in key sectors of the economy through the direct presence of Turkish enterprises and via joint ventures with Pakistani counterparts.

It may be recalled that after the signing of the historic Trade in Goods Agreement by the two countries in August last year, which became operational on May 1, new opportunities for trade of traditional and non-traditional products have emerged between the two countries. Therefore, for the effective utilization of these opportunities, the PM urged Turkish companies to invest in Pakistan, assuring them of complete facilitation and a conducive business environment. The PM held separate meetings with leading Turkish companies that have already invested in Pakistan, including Anadolu Group, Arcelik, Zorlu, Albayrak, Limak, Dolsar, Turkish Contractors Association and Pak Yetirim.

During the meeting, the PM encouraged them to benefit from an investment-friendly environment and to expand their operations. The Turkish companies briefed the PM on their existing and future plans for

investment while thanking him for facilitating their operations in Pakistan. A considerable number of Turkish enterprises are already operating in Pakistan in various sectors and have contributed to the economic development of the country. Nevertheless, there are excellent opportunities for cooperation and collaboration in the areas of energy; especially hydro and solar, housing and construction, infrastructure, tourism, and transportation.

During a meeting with Sinan Ak of Zorlu Group, the two sides discussed projects regarding wind power and solar energy. The PM welcomed the interest of the Zorlu Group in different fields including electronics and energy. Ahmet Albayrak, Chairman Board of Directors of Al-Bayrak Group during the meeting informed the PM about their interest in investment in affordable housing projects, solid waste management, generation of electricity from waste, and tractor industry.

The PM hailed the projects of Al-Bayrak Group in Pakistan. The delegation of the Turkish Contractors Association led by its President Erdal Eren during the meeting discussed with the PM, the immense prospects of investment in the construction sector of Pakistan. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatimi and Pakistan's ambassador to Turkey Dr Yousaf Junaid were also present in the meetings. The Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also invited the Turkish investors and businessmen to expand the investment in diverse areas of Pakistan.

He was talking to a delegation of Anadolu Group comprising of CEO Coca Cola CCI, Karim Yahi, Coca Cola CCI Chief Strategy Office Atilla Yerlikaya and Coca Cola CCI Head

of Public Policy Taylan Coban which called on him here. The prime minister encouraged the Anadolu group for bringing investment in Pakistan and providing job opportunities to the people of Pakistan.

The prime minister is on a two-day official visit to Turkey to attend the swearing ceremony of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Fatimi and Pakistan Ambassador in Turkey Dr Yousuf Junaid were present in the meeting.

Chairperson Limak Holdings calls on PM: Chairperson Turkish firm Limak Holdings Ebru Özdemir called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to explore the prospects of investments in Pakistan's diverse areas including energy, infrastructure, tourism and construction.

During the meeting, it was informed that Özdemir will visit Pakistan with a delegation soon to directly interact with the relevant stakeholders and finalize the joint ventures to contribute to expanding trade and investment between Pakistan and Turkey. Ebru Özdemir also shared the details of the unique and inspiring project Global Engineer Girls, an international philanthropic initiative to inspire the next generation of female engineers and provide girls and women with education, mentorship and career opportunities.

She said that the initiative, in Pakistan, would educate and enable girls and women to gain experience and pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Tariq Fatimi and Pakistan Ambassador in Turkey Dr Yousuf Junaid were present in the meeting.

Court reserves ruling on granting remand of Elahi

G U J R A N W A L A (Agencies): A court in Gujranwala on Saturday reserved its verdict on whether to grant physical remand of PTI Central President and former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi in a corruption case.

Senior Civil Judge Musawwar Ashiq reserved his ruling after hearing arguments from both the sides. Earlier, Pervaiz Elahi was produced in the court in connection with a corruption case. Anti-Corruption Establishment officers sought physical remand of Pervaiz Elahi, who was taken to the court of Senior Civil Judge Musawwar Ashiq.

Strict security arrangements have been put in place at sessions court in Gujranwala as Anti-Corruption Department produced Pervaiz Elahi in the court. Sources in the department told a private television channel that the former chief minister was facing the charge of receiving Rs5 million in kickbacks in a four-kilometer-long road project.

Meanwhile, Pervaiz Elahi's spokesman Chaudhry Iqbal and PTI leader Khawaja Waqar have been arrested by police from the premises of session court in Gujranwala. Their arrested triggered protest against the police and the administration. Later, the authorities released both of them. Pervaiz Elahi was rearrested on Friday in an other graft case after being released by a Lahore court in Gujrat development projects corruption case.

A spokesman for the Punjab's Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) said the PTI president was arrested in a corruption case, registered by the ACE Gujranwala. The spokesman said the ACE Punjab would file an appeal against the local court's verdict, as many important points were ignored in the matter.

Earlier on Friday, a lo-cal court discharged Pervaiz Elahi in the Gujrat development projects corruption case and ordered for his release. Judicial Magistrate Ghu-lam

Murtaza Virk announced the ver-dict, which had been reserved after hearing de-tailed arguments of parties on the 14-day physical remand plea, earlier in the day.

The ACE Punjab officials produced Pervaiz Elahi before the court and sought his 14-day physical remand for investigation. The court was apprised that Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi misused his powers as the Punjab chief minister and caused loss to the exchequer. PTI President Pervaiz Elahi has said that he won't abandon the party "at any cost".

Talking to the media outside the court in Gujranwala, Pervaiz Elahi claimed that he was kept inside a C-class jail last night and wasn't given medicines. Pervaiz Elahi told his lawyers in the courtroom that he was kept at a police station. "They even did not give me medicines," he said and added "This all circus is a well-thought-out conspiracy but we are standing rock-solid against them."

Six cases filed against Imran: IHC told

ISLAMABAD (INP): The capital police has told the Islamabad High Court that six cases have been registered against PTI Chairman Imran Khan after the violent incidents of May 9.

According to a report submitted by the police to the high court, six cases were registered against the PTI chairman after May 9. Two cases each were registered in Shahzad Town and Tarnol police stations, while one each was registered in Khanna and Karachi Company police stations.

The court directed the police to provide the details of the cases to the petitioner. Justice Mianul Hasan Aurangzeb of the IHC issued the written decision. The court also extended the interim bail of Imran Khan in the six cases till June 10. The order not to arrest the PTI chairman in any case filed during his arrest was also extended.

6 terrorists arrested

RAWALPINDI (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) arrested six terrorists of banned outfits besides recovering suicide jackets, explosives, grenades and other items from their possession during combing operations in different areas of Punjab.

Spokesman of CTD said on Saturday that intelligence based operations (IBOs) were conducted against members of defunct organizations in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Dera Ghazi Khan, Sahiwal and Gujranwala.

He said that during separate actions, the CTD detained six terrorists of banned outfits along with explosives, suicide jacket, detonators, hand grenades, weapons, ammunition, cash and cell phones. The nabbed terrorists included Shoaib Rafique, Baqir, Zahir, Shehzad, Afzal and Asif. Five different cases were registered against the nabbed terrorists and investigations were underway. The CTD spokesman said that as many as 33 suspects have been arrested in 238 combing operations across Punjab during last one week.

Yasmin sets free from Jinnah House attack case

LAHORE (Agencies): Lahore Anti-Terrorism Court Saturday set free Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Dr Yasmin Rashid in May 09 vandalism saying if not required in any other case she be released immediately.

According to details Lahore Police sought 14-day remand of PTI leader Yasmin Rashid in the matter from Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Amber Gul Khan on Saturday, however, the Judge didn't agree with the prosecution story and issued release order of Dr Yasmin.

According to court

order in which the Amber Gul Khan stated in the order, "Investigation Officer has requested for 14-day physical remand of Yasmin Rashid for photogrammetry, voice match test and recover of mobile phones etc. whereas perusal of record reveals that neither Dr Yasmin Rashid is nominated in FIR nor involved through supplementary statement.

The Judge further said in the order, "Dr Yasmin Rashid was summoned in this case on the disclosure of co-accused which has no evidentiary value in the eye of law - Since no

incriminating material is available on record to connect her with the commission of offence, therefore, request of investigating officer is turned down and she is accordingly discharged from instant case. "She be released forthwith, if not required in any other case", the Judge concluded.

Prosecution counsels Amjad Javed and Syed Farhad Ali Shah appeared on behalf of the state before the court whereas Muhammad Sarwar Inspector Police appeared with record before the court.

Qualification standard of teaching staff:

Governor for further improving transparency

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Saturday praised role of KP Public Service Commission in recruitment process and stressed that procedure being adopted to ensure transparency in qualification standards of lecturers and teachers should be further improved.

He was talking to Chairman KPPSC, Sikandar Qayum in Governor

House. On the occasion, Chairman KPPSC presented annual report of 2022 to the governor.

Speaking on the occasion, governor appreciated performance of the commission and directed to further improve transparency in qualification standard for recruitment of teaching staff in education department.

He said that clarity in recruitment of teachers

must be ensured keeping in view its impacts on standard of education.

He also directed concerned authorities to timely inform commission about vacant posts of professors, lectures and teachers.

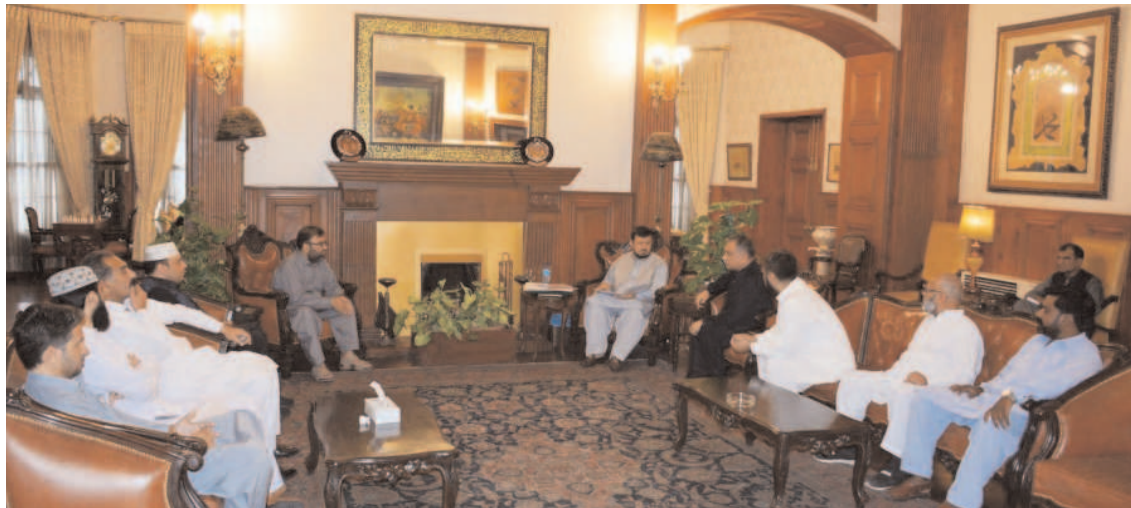
Later Chief Minister's aide on tourism, Zafar Mehmood called on KP Governor and highlighted steps taken by the government to boost tourism in the province.

Fatimid hold blood donation camp F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Fatimid foundation arranged blood donation camp at University of Technology in which faculty members and students donated blood for Thalessemia patients.

Vice Chancellor University of Technology Dr. Zafar Muhammad Khan and Director Tauseef Ahmad facilitated the blood donation camp for Thalessemia patients.

He said that varsity students and staff will contribute for betterment of humanity and society. He added that such welfare and humanitarian activities should be arranged in future too.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of Civil Defence Organization led by Sartaj Khan meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

Secretary for action over misinformation regarding vehicles' return by ex-KP rulers

PESHAWAR (APP): Secretary Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control, Ehsanullah here on Saturday directed Director General Excise to call explanation from employees who misinformed the department about the return of vehicles that were earlier used by former public representatives.

In a notification, it was revealed that details of vehicles allotted to the former public office bearers are still in their possession. It has also been discovered that a land cruiser is still parked at the residence of Ex-Chief Minister KP while other vehicles are reportedly being used by former ministers and Ex-MPAs.

The act of the concerned staff is tantamount to misconduct, dishonesty, concealment of facts, misuse of govt assets, and provision of concocted information to the administrative secretary.

In the light of the above circumstances, Secretary Excise expressed displeasure over the provision of incorrect information by employees and sought explanations from the concerned staff as to why the facts were concealed.

Those who provide unsatisfactory replies will proceed under the Efficiency and Disciplinary Rules, the notification added.

Police recovered illegal arms during operation

PESHAWAR (APP): Chamkani Police Station in a very successful operation recovered illegal weapons with the alleged accused were also arrested.

According to detail, the Chamkani Police Station during a successful operation have recovered illegal arms and arrested one main alleged accused involved in arms smuggling. During the operation ladies Police also participated.

The arrested accused include Naeemullah, Naseer Khan, Police official while confirming the arrest of the arms smugglers said. The alleged accused were involved in illegal weapons and other crimes, including keeping the citizen in custody, Police said.

During the important operation, two Kalashnikovs, two rifles, several magazines and hundreds of cartridges were also recovered from the possession of the alleged accused, Police officials said.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Mediators and citizens for Democracy at their Meeting issued the following statement: The Citizens for Democracy and Peoples' Rights and The Mediators, condemn and express their deep concerns over the adverse ramifications of May 9 anarchist and violent attacks on state installations and martyrs' monuments that have further exacerbated the crisis of a hybrid political formation while further narrowing civilian space and squeezing

Service Tribunal stops pre-mature transfer of DPP

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Service Tribunal stopped pre-mature transfer of District Public Prosecutor (DPP) Bajaur Sher Zada and may not be posted as subordinate under junior officer.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Service Tribunal chairman Kalim Arshad Khan and Executive Member Fareeha Paul while Yasir Saleem advocate appear on behalf of petitioner and Additional Advocate General Fazal Shah Mohmand on behalf of respondents including Chief Secretary, Secretary to Government of KP and Director General Prosecution. The decision was announced in open court.

The petitioner appointed as DPP Bajaur on 06 January 2021 and took over the charge of the new

responsibility on 1st February while transferred to Swabi district as Senior Public Prosecutor 31st January 2022 as pre-mature because applicant has hardly served for one year at the station, the decision stated.

The departmental appeal didn't serve within the statutory period of 90 days and then filed instant service appeal. However, the respondents denied claim of appellant in their written reply submitted to services tribunal.

The counsel argued that petitioner didn't treated fairly in accordance with law and rules. The appellant hardly served for one year at Bajaur and had not completed his normal tenure of posting thus the transfer is illegal and unlawful.

The counsel further stated that appellant was purposely posted at a station

where he is made junior to a BPS-18 Office while requested for acceptance of appeal.

The tribunal granted sufficient time to respondents to come up with resolution so that grievance of the appellant, that he should not be posted under his juniors, could be redressed privately but they didn't.

Therefore, this appeal is dispose of with the observation that the appellant shall be allowed to complete his normal tenure at place from where he was transferred vide impugned notification issued on 31st January 2022 and in case he has completed his normal tenure he may be posted anywhere at the discretion of authority but having regard to his seniority so that discipline of the department may not disturb and the costs shall follow the event.

Post-promotion statutory training for AD&SJ concluded

PESHAWAR (APP): A month long post-promotion statutory training for twenty two Additional District and Sessions Judges (Izafi Zilla Qazis) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa concluded at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy, Peshawar (KPJA) said a press release issued here on Saturday.

Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, Senior Puisne Judge, Peshawar High Court and Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors KPJA graced the ceremony as the chief guest. The ceremony was also attended by Inamullah Khan Registrar and Muhammad Zeb Khan Member Inspection Team Peshawar High Court. The Director General, Dean Faculty and Directors of the Academy were in attendance.

Issa Khan Afridi Class Representative thanked the Academy for designing diverse training program that helped them in refining their personality not only as judicial officer but as person too. Farah Jamshed Director General KPJA, in her address, expressed gratitude to the Chief Guest for gracing the concluding ceremony. She shed light on various components of the training including week long study tour to Lahore High Court, Punjab Judicial Academy, Punjab Forensic Science Agency and Fountain House with logistic support of UNDP. She wished trainees, the best of luck for their future endeavors. Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan shared his professional and experiential journey with the participants. He encouraged participants to have undaunted faith in Allah while administering justice. After formal addresses, course completion certificates were conferred to the participants. Besides, three awards 'Best Player', 'Well Dressed', and 'Best Presenter' were awarded to Muhammad Sher Ali, Adam Khan, Qaiser Khan Afridi, Additional District and Sessions respectively. Special certificates "Star of Academy's Night" and "Lady of the Academy Night" were also conferred to participants namely, Adam Khan and Shams-ul-Huda Salarzai. The Chief Guest was presented with a plaque by the Director General of the Academy and a souvenir by the participants.



PESHAWAR: Chairman All Municipal Workers Union WSSP Riaz Khan addressing a meeting. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

Mediator denounces 9th May violence, demanded fair trails

F.P. Report

ing scope of civil and human rights.

The mediators and citizens for democracy thorough and credible investigations into the May 9 violent attacks on state installations and desecration of Martyrs' monuments. The culprits be prosecuted without duress through due process in civil courts while respecting women, releasing innocents and avoiding coercive desertions in the PTI.

Announcement of elections schedule for all assemblies on one day and establishment of caretaker setups in consultation with

the erstwhile opposition parties in the outgoing assemblies at the end of their non-extendable tenures. In the meanwhile, Election Commission of Pakistan must engage all political parties to finalize an inclusive framework, without excluding any party, for holding a free, fair and transparent franchise and an agreed code of ethics for all political parties and the media.

Bringing an end to ongoing tension between the judiciary and the government and certain civilian outfits and the establishment to create a con-

genial political atmosphere for free elections. Lifting of censorship across all media platforms, ensuring freedom of expression and all civil and political rights, including peaceful assembly.

Fixing of minimum wage and pension of Rs 50,000 for all wage earners and diversion of sustainable development funds to social sectors and poverty alleviation. An end to the forcible disappearances, including Jibran Nasir, and recovery of all missing persons for due process of law.

Ministers discussed matters of mutual interest and current security situation



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister Information, Auqaf, Haji, Religious and Minority Affairs, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil has visited Lahore, the provincial capital of Punjab, on Saturday. Where Provincial Caretaker Minister Housing Punjab and Auqaf Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir, Minister Information and Culture Aamir Mir welcomed him warmly.

On this occasion, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah held special meeting with Punjab Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Aamir Mir and Caretaker Housing Minister Punjab Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir. The caretaker ministers discussed matters of mutual interest and the current security situation in the country. In the meeting, attacks on military installations and martyrs' memorials on May 9 have been strongly condemned. Full solidarity with the martyrs and their families has been expressed in the meeting.

Information Minister Punjab has informed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

09. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil has said that the elements involved in the incidents of May 09 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be given severe punishments, no concessions will be made with those involved in the said tragic incidents.

Meanwhile, the provincial ministers also visited Jinnah House where on May 9 miscreants set fire and damaged property. The provincial ministers also inspected the various parts of Jinnah House and not only condemned the attack on Jinnah House on May 09 but also expressed great sorrow and regret. After that, the caretaker provincial ministers went to Allama Muhammad Iqbal's shrine and recited Fatiha and laid flowers on the shrine of Pakistan national poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

Later on, Minister Auqaf and Religious Affairs Punjab Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir and Minister of Information and Auqaf Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah visited the shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hajveri. The provincial ministers have placed wreaths of flowers on the shrine and recited Fatiha. The ministers prayed for the country's security and prosperity and said that the teachings of saints and Sufis teach philanthropy. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil has said that the spiritual retreats of Sufis are sources of growth and guidance. The Punjab caretaker minister Auqaf Syed Azfar Ali Nasir said that shrines are a source of sacred spiritual comfort and the Sufis' message of peace and love. If we also follow the footsteps of the Sufis, we would get success in this world and the hereafter.

Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhil said that Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hajveri has taught love, humanity and moral values. Hazrat Data Ali Hajveri has enlightened the people with the teachings of Islam by following the Tariqat and Shariat.

College of Veterinary Sciences Training workshop organized

PESHAWAR (APP): National Vocational and Technical Training Commission in College of Veterinary Sciences, University of Agriculture Peshawar, with regard to promoting artificial production in animals on modern basis and bringing revolutionary changes in the livestock sector and providing opportunities to the young generation to advance in this field of education.

Organized a six-month training workshop under Prime Minister Hunarmand Pakistan Program in Cooperation with Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht was the chief guest of the closing ceremony.

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht while speaking said that this training workshop is very important, through this our students, experts and other related people got opportunities to learn a lot.

He said that most of the country's economy is dependent on agriculture,

livestock and poultry, so it is a good initiative to make the young generation skilled in these fields. The country can also be taken on the path of development and prosperity, the countries which paid attention to technical education by making it a part of their general education have a high economic development speed, most of the population of Pakistan consists of youth, he added.

The dream of development and prosperity can be fulfilled by training them in modern sciences, information technology and skills according to market needs and in their respective fields, he said.

Dean Faculty of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences Prof. Dr. Sarzamin Khan expressed the hope of getting other benefits from this training workshop and said that the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht welcomed the other guests and participants.

Principal College of Veterinary Sciences and Vice-Chancellor University of Veterinary Sciences, Swat Prof. Dr. Umar Siddique said that these kinds of workshops are very necessary, enabling him to earn dignified employment so that he can lead an economically prosperous life.

The organizers of the training workshop Dr. Humayun Khan thanked the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht, Dean Prof. Dr. Sarzamin Khan, Principal Prof. Dr. Umar Siddique, officials of National Vocational and Technical Training Commission and Lucky Core Industries and other participants thanked them for organizing the workshop.

Explaining the benefits and objectives, at the end of the ceremony, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht along with Dean Professor Dr. Sarzamin Khan, Principal

Professor Dr. Umar Siddique and Organizer Dr. Humayun Khan distributed shields and testimonials among the participants of the training.

CCPO: Police arrest 1,557 suspects, seize arms, narcotics

PESHAWAR (APP): The Capital City Police arrested a total of 1,557 suspects during 289 search and strike operations conducted in the provincial metropolis in May 2023.

According to a monthly performance report issued here on Saturday by Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Syed Ashfaq Noor, the police busted 16 criminal gangs, recovering stolen goods worth millions of rupees including 231 smartphones, three-tola gold ornaments, seven vehicles, and 26 motorcycles.

All police stations carried out effective search and strike operations, snap checking, night patrolling, blockades, and other comprehensive operations, resulting in the arrest of 800 suspects involved in drug trafficking.

Police also seized Illegal weapons and narcotics from the arrested, including 13 hand-grenades, 57 Kalashnikovs, six Kalakovs, 36 shotguns, 180 rifles, 718 pistols, and over 18,000 cartridges of various bores.

In addition, police recovered 29 kilograms of ice drug, 14 kilograms of heroin, 54 kilograms of opium, and 300 kilograms of hashish during the same period, the report added.



PESHAWAR: A shopkeeper selling food items at Chowk Yadgaar.



In brief

Admn reduces roti price by Rs 5

ABBOTTABAD (INP): Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal on Saturday chaired a meeting regarding the reduction of the price of 120-gram tandoori roti in the district. The meeting was attended by the members of the Nanbai Association and other stakeholders. After detailed deliberation, the rate of roti (flat-bread) was decreased to Rs. 20 from Rs. 25, as the tandoor owners were previously purchasing 80 kg wheat flour bags at a price of Rs. 15,000, whereas now the price had been reduced to Rs. 12,000. Addressing the meeting, the DC mentioned that the benefit of reduced flour prices should be passed on to the public. He directed all magistrates and the District food Controller to closely monitor tandoors in the market and take strict action against those selling roti at higher than the prescribed rate and below the weight of 120 grams. Khalid Iqbal also urged the citizens to immediately inform the district administration and the District Food Controller if they found any tandoor owner violating the prescribed rate and weight.

Five arrested for different crimes

SARGODHA (INP): The police arrested five alleged criminals in different cases across the district on Saturday. A spokesman said that law-enforcers of different police stations raided various localities in their respective regions and arrested Aqib, Saqib, Razaq, Usman and Talha. The police also recovered 2kg hashish, 0.2kg opium, nine pistols, three guns, 234 bullets, 290 litres of liquor and valuables worth millions from them. Further investigation was under way.

8 women among 11 abducted

FAISALABAD (INP): Eleven people including eight women were abducted in different parts of Faisalabad during the past 12 hours. A police spokesman said here on Saturday that unidentified persons kidnapped 12-year-old Ehsanullah from Gulberg, while nine-year-old girl Sidra Bibi was abducted from Sultan Nagar. Similarly, Zahra Bibi was kidnapped from Chak No 449-GB, Mehwish from Allama Iqbal Colony, Nayab Bibi from Mukhtar Colony, Phool Bibi from Shehbaz Town, Pathani Bibi from Jaranwala Road, Noor Fatima from Jamshaid Town, Amina Bibi from Mansoorabad, Zain from Ali Garden and Arsalan Ali from Zulfiqar Colony. The police have registered separate cases and started investigation, he added.

Drugs smuggling bid foiled

D I KHAN (APP): The district police foiled a drugs smuggling bid and arrested two alleged smugglers recovering more than 29-kilogram hashish from them in the precincts of Gomal University Police station. According to a police spokesman following the special instructions of District Police Officer Dera Abdul Rauf Babar Qaisrani, a police team led by Gomal University Police Station SHO Azeem Khan Wazir, took action on a tip-off, created a special blockade at Dera-Darya Khan Bridge. The police stopped a car and arrested two accused including Waqas Ullah Marwat son of Ameer Jan and Azeem son of Qasim Shah residents of Lakki Marwat while their two accomplices managed to escape from the scene.



QUETTA: Activists of Government Teachers Association along with student holding a rally in favour of their demands.

Consultative workshop on mental health held

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: The Ministry of Human Rights, Government of Pakistan, in collaboration with the University of Chitral, organized a "Consultative Workshop on Mental Health as a Human Rights Concern". The workshop, held at the University of Chitral, brought together representatives from line Departments and organizations to address the critical issue of mental health in our society.

The workshop commenced with recitation from the Holy Quran, emphasizing the significance of spirituality in promoting mental well-being. Prof. Dr. Tajuddin Sharar, representing the Vice Chancellor of the University of Chitral, warmly welcomed the distinguished guests, expressing the university's commitment to contribute towards redressal of mental health challenges in the region.

Mr. Zahid Rehman Niazi, Regional Director of the Ministry of Human Rights in Peshawar, shared aims and objectives of the workshop, highlighting the importance of raising awareness and formulating effective strategies to protect mental health as a human right. Mr. Zulfiqar Ali, representative of the Ministry of Human Rights Islamabad, after giving an overview of the issue as a human rights concern, followed by recent developments and initiatives to address this challenge, moderated the session which remained interactive.

The technical session of the workshop was conducted by Dr. Fayaz Amir, a mental health professional, who delivered a comprehensive presentation on the causes of suicide. He drew attention to the alarming statistic reported by the World Health Organization, stating that approximately 700,000 people worldwide die by suicide each year. Additionally, Dr. Amir presented the findings of a study conducted by Peshawar University, which reported 176 cases of suicide in Chitral between 2013 and 2019.

Nasar Khan, a lecturer at the Department of Sociology, University of Chitral, conducted another technical session focusing on the role of academia in preventing suicide. He shed light on the responsibilities of educational institutions and shared insights on how academia can contribute to suicide prevention efforts.

Addressing the social aspects of suicide, various participants including Niaz A. Niazi, a prominent human rights activist from Chitral, gave suggestions aimed at preventing suicide among youth. He highlighted that while mental disorders can contribute to suicidal tendencies, there are several social issues that act as triggers. The religious perspective on suicide was presented by Mr. Fazal Maula, District Khateeb of Chitral, and Mr. Khaliq U Zaman, Khateeb Shahi Masjid Chitral. They underscored that suicide is strictly prohibited in Islam and provided insights on Islamic teachings and principles related to mental

well-being.

Ibad Ur Rehman, representing the Ismaili Tariqa and Religious board, suggested solutions to address the underlying causes of suicide. He emphasized the importance of spiritual guidance and community support in promoting mental health and well-being. The concluding remarks were delivered by Mr. Fida ul Karim, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Upper Chitral. He highlighted that suicide is a complex issue with multiple causes, including mental health challenges, economic conditions, and a sense of hopelessness. Mr. Karim emphasized the need for collaborative efforts among various stakeholders to effectively address this issue.

The workshop witnessed active participation from representatives of the Health Department, Police & Prisons Department, Girl's Degree College, Boys' Degree College, District Administration, Higher Education Department, and civil society. Mr. Zia ur Rehman, a lecturer in the Department of Management Sciences, and Rukhsana Omer from the Ministry of Human Rights served as the focal persons, ensuring a constructive and engaging discourse. The workshop concluded on a note of collective responsibility and determination to prioritize mental health as a human rights concern. The stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to continuing efforts to raise awareness, prevent suicide, and promote mental health.

Provision of basic facilities to residents our priority

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Vice Chairman Abbottabad Cantonment Board (ACB) Fawad Ali Saturday said that the Cantonment Board is committed to ensuring the provision of basic facilities to all residents within its jurisdiction. He expressed these views while talking to the media.

The elected members of the Cantonment Board are actively working together to prioritize and resolve the issues faced by the residents based on urgent needs, developmental projects with a budget of over 60 million rupees have been approved in all wards, and work is underway on these projects.

The Vice Chairman said that the responsibility for addressing encroachments on waterways lies with the Department of Revenue and after their sanction building plans got approval from the board. He said that ACB is providing municipal services where encroachments exist ACB will not create any hurdle for the elimination.

He said that the sincere efforts of the Board members have resulted in the restoration of public trust in the Cantonment Board. The Vice Chairman mentioned that proposals have been made to increase the rent for commercial centers within the Cantonment Board's jurisdiction by up to 10% annually to maintain them and this includes

lease shops as well.

Fawad Ali said that the Department had proposed a 70% increase but I opposed the suggestion and emphasized the need for a more moderate approach. Replying to a question about the graveyard he said that in Ward No. 10, three kanals of land have been allocated for a cemetery for the residents within the Cantonment Board's jurisdiction and work is underway to level the area with a four-wall structure, and legislation is in progress to designate additional land near the stadium for the cemetery.

The Vice Chairman, Fawad Ali, stated that the population within the Cantonment Board's jurisdiction has reached one hundred and thirty thousand while ACT is utilizing its capabilities to provide facilities to the public according to the available resources.

He mentioned that 120 dedicated employees are working in all wards of the Cantonment Board to ensure cleanliness. Under the tree plantation campaign, the Cantonment Board is carrying out annual work and planting trees in various locations to maintain the historical significance of Abbottabad, adding Fawad Ali said.

He emphasized that the Federal and provincial governments should allocate annual funds for the

Cantonment Board so that the issues of the public can be resolved more effectively. The issues and developmental work related to traders on Empire Road and Kareem Pura fall under the responsibility of the Bazaar Committee, any matter related to traders should be referred to the Cantonment Board's office for resolution.

Body of woman found

ATTOCK (APP): A tortured body of a woman was found in a deserted place near Dhoke Nawaz in the hilly area of Gharshien in the limits of Saddar Hassanabdal Police Station in the wee hours of Friday.

Police and rescue 1122 sources said that some farmers spotted the body lying in the deserted place and accordingly informed local police who shifted the body to tehsil headquarters hospital for autopsy. During the preliminary medical examination the deceased, a woman in her early 40s was subjected to serve torture before shooting in the head. Police investigators believed that the woman was killed somewhere else and later her body was thrown there to conceal the crime.

JI hold demo for Aafia release

F.P. Report

BUNER: The Jamaat e Islami Khadukhel leadership were organized a demo demanding early release of Aafia from US prison. The other parties leaders also joined them and took out procession from police station Totali to Ziarat staff. The participants were carried banners inscribed slogans in support of Aafia early release.

They were also chanted in support of demand. They praised and appreciated senator Mushtaq efforts for Aafia release so he along with Aafia sister visited US and meet Aafia in US prison. The Jamaat vice Amir Mohamad Hanif Advocate, candidate PK 25 Rawali Khan, JI youth district vice chief Israr Advocate, PTI Khadukhel general secretary Amjad Khan, PTI Insaf wing MKD president Shahid Khan, lawyers wing president Amjad Advocate, PML-N Subhanullah, JUI general secretary Yousaf Ali, Youth leader Mansor Ali and dozen others addressed.

The speakers were bitterly condemned those were handed over Aafia to US and condemned US for life term conviction to an innocent lady. They demanded of the Pakistan state agencies and government functionaries Aafia early release from US prison so as to fulfill the responsibility and sought support from UN agencies in this regard. They were vocal to praise senator Mushtaq for his over due role in connection Aafia release and announced warm welcome for senator Mushtaq on his arrival back to Pakistan fro US.

Hashish recovered, two arrested

F.P. Report

KOHAT: City police during a crackdown on Saturday arrested two drug smugglers and hashish from their possession in two separate incidents.

According to details, police recovered 3.56 kilogram hashish from a smuggler near Police Post Indus Highway. The smugglers who was identified as Saif-ur-Rehman was travelling in a Suzuki van with the contraband.

In another incident, police recovered 1.7 kilogram hashish from a smuggler during checking near Mills Chowki police. Cases have been registered against smugglers in Mohammad Riaz Shaheed Police Station and investigation is underway.

Water level swiftly rises constantly in Mangla Dam

MIRPUR (APP): The water level in the country's second-largest reservoir - Mangla dam, located at Mirpur district of AJK, is constantly raising swiftly, but, with a normal pace, official sources said.

The water level in Mangla dam was reported as 1128.20 feet, maximum conservation level 1242 feet, live storage today 1.016 MAF against maximum conservation level 1242 feet on Thursday, official sources told APP. On Thursday, June 1, the water level in the reservoir was recorded at 1126.25 feet which rose by about 02 feet during the last 24 hours.

The inflows of Jhelum river at Mangla reservoir were reported as 62800 cusecs with the outflows of 35000 cusecs of water from the reservoir. The overall position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the reservoirs levels

and the barrages in the country remained on Thursday as under:- Rivers: Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 61300 cusecs and Outflows 60000 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 36400 cusecs and Outflows 36400 cusecs, Khairabad Bridge: Inflows 57700 cusecs and Outflow 57700, Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 62800 cusecs and Outflows 35000 cusecs, Chenab at Marala: Inflows 39400 cusecs and Outflows 22800 cusecs.

Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 90300 cusecs and Outflows 85100 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows: 102300 cusecs and Outflows 93000 cusecs, Taunsa: Inflows 90700 cusecs and Outflows 81900 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 64300 cusecs and Outflows 55200 cusecs Sukkur: Inflows 49100 cusecs and Outflows 16100 cusecs Kotri: Inflows 9500 cusecs and Outflows Nil cusecs Trimmu: Inflows 24800 cusecs and Outflow

10300 cusecs Panjnad: Inflows 10200 cusecs and Outflows Nil cusecs.

Reservoirs (Level and Storage): Tarbela: Minimum operating level 1402 feet, present level 1426.15 feet, maximum conservation level 1550 feet, live storage today 0.426 million acre feet (MAF). Mangla: Minimum operating level 1050 feet, present level 1128.20 feet, maximum conservation level 1242 feet, live storage today 1.016MAF.

Chashma: Minimum operating level 638.15 feet, present level 643.20 feet, maximum conservation level 649 feet, live storage today 0.082 MAF. The inflows and outflows of River Indus at Tarbela, Jinnah and Chashma, River Kabul at Nowshera and River Jhelum at Mangla have been reflected as mean flows of 24 hours, whereas the other flows have been gauged.

Teachers can change fate of a society: Ex-Director

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Former Director Education Hashim Khan has said that teachers can change the fate of the society by imparting knowledge to the new generation to make them responsible citizens of the country. Key of the developed countries is the high literacy rate of the citizens residing in it.

The views he expressed while addressing the gathering as a chief guest were initiated in connection with granting cash, stationary, school bags and other assistance to the deserving students here in Government High School Painsi Larma, Mullagori on Saturday. No one could deny the role of teacher in society and he or she was the one who brought real change in the society, he remarked.



The teacher's community to lead the students and take active part in character building of the students, he maintained. He also stressed upon them to utilize all their energies to educate the new generation of tribal regions. He appreciated positive role of the organization for rising voice for the rights of teachers and students

Provincial representative of Tanzeeme Asateza, Pakistan Sikandar Khan Yousafzai shed light on the activity of the organization it conducted for the welfare of teachers and students. He insisted on the philanthropists to assist them to work for the betterment of poor and orphan students in the State-run education institutions.

Deputy District Education officer Shahid Ali, Circle Officer Abdunawaz, Principal Shahid Ali beside a large number of teachers, students and people from different walks of life participated in the gathering. Earlier, the chief guest distributed cash assistance beside free stationary and begs organized by the Tanzeeme Asateza, Khyber with support of Dia Pakistan to the 250 deserving and poor students.

Appointment from Lakki in BISE Bannu sought

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Office bearers of Wahdat-e-Asateza, a teachers' body have asked the provincial government to appoint officers from Lakki Marwat against the key posts in Bannu Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE).

Talking to journalists here on Wednesday, the association's district chapter chairman Maulana Tamezuddin and others said that officers hailing from Lakki Marwat district had been deprived of their right of posting in the educational board. The government should consider local officials for posting as chairman, secretary, controller and deputy controller of examination in the board", they maintained.

Maulana Tamez-u-Din said that education department officials from Lakki Marwat district had served

on key posts in the educational board in the past. "Local officials have vast experience and they are fully capable of executing challenging tasks", he added.

He asked the teachers' organisations to jointly raise their voices for acceptance of the sole demands of the provincial government. The teachers' leaders said that they would soon convene a meeting of teachers' bodies to formulate a strategy with consensus in this regard and take up the issue with quarters concerned.

GPS Haqdadabad solarized: A solar power plant was installed in a government run primary school of Haqdadabad locality in Lakki Marwat City.

ESED ASDEO circle Meenakhel Sher Zaman along with headmaster Jamil Ahmad Khan inaugurated the school solarisation project. Teachers, members

of the parent teacher council and elders of the locality were also present. ASDEO Sher said that long and excessive power outages during daytime had troubled the teachers and students of the school in urban locality to a great extent. He said that he arranged the solar power plant on a self-help basis and installed it in the school with the help of experts.

The ASDEO said that the public sector schools were equipped with basic facilities and had a friendly learning environment for students. He called upon the parents to enroll their children to school as getting education was their basic right. The school's headmaster thanked the education department for the solarization of the school and said that the installation of a solar power plant would help provision of uninterrupted electricity to the school.

Three killed, two injured in car, trailer collision

RAHIM YAR KHAN (INP): In a tragic road accident at least three persons were killed and two other were wounded in collision between a car and trailer in Rahim Yar Khan on Saturday.

According to details, the

accident occurred at the Motorway M5 near Taranda Muhammad Panah Interchange where a car going to Multan from Sukkur collided with a trailer due to over-speeding, killing three people on the spot and injuring two

other. Rescue teams and Motorway Police shifted the dead and injured to a nearby hospital for medico-legal procedure. According to Motorway Police, the accident occurred to over-speeding and negligence.



CHAKWAL: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf meeting with Maulana Amir Abdul Qadeer Awan the spiritual figure of Minara.



NEW DELHI: People busy in relief and rescue work after collision between two trains in Odisa State of India.

Senegal shuts social media as protesters die

DAKAR (BBC): Social media and messaging platforms have been blocked in Senegal after unrest erupted over the sentencing of opposition leader Ousmane Sonko. At least nine people were killed when Sonko's supporters clashed with police in several cities.

Sonko was not in court when he was given a two-year jail term for immoral behaviour, but cleared of rape charges. The justice minister said he could be arrested at any time - and police are surrounding his house in the capital. His supporters fear the conviction could prevent the 48-year-old politician from contesting next year's presidential election.

Hundreds of officers are blocking his supporters from reaching his home in Dakar - and even his lawyers have been unable to visit him. When the court handed down its verdict, Sonko's Pastef party called on people to "take to the streets". Interior Minister Antoine Félix Diome said the government had imposed restrictions on social media to stop the "dissemination of hate and subversive messages". People are upset about the move, which is affecting popular apps like Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Telegram, TikTok, WhatsApp and YouTube. They can be accessed using a virtual private network (VPN), but not everyone is aware about such software and how it works.

Several districts of the capital saw clashes - some of the worst confrontations were at the university campus in the city centre where police fired tear gas as vehicles

burned and black smoke billowed over the area. Many businesses closed - and some remained shut. There was also violence in the southern city of Ziguinchor, where Sonko is mayor. Sonko is very popular among unemployed youth and has undergone a meteoric political rise in the last few years.

After his dismissal as a tax inspector in 2016, he was elected to parliament and became mayor of Ziguinchor. The government has rejected accusations that this case against the opposition leader, as well as others he has faced, were politically motivated. He was accused of sexually assaulting and threatening a massage therapist at a beauty salon in 2021, which he denied.

Adding to the political tension is the belief that President Macky Sall plans to stay in office for an unconstitutional third term, though he has made no mention of such intentions. Earlier, a court in Senegal has sentenced opposition leader Ousmane Sonko to two years in jail for "corrupting youth", but has cleared him of rape. The ruling means he was found to have acted immorally towards an individual younger than 21. The charges stemmed from allegations made by a massage therapist.

He denied any wrongdoing, and said the case was aimed at blocking his presidential ambitions. His supporters are protesting against the ruling. Police are reported to have clashed with them in the capital, Dakar. Sonko, who boycotted the trial, remains at his house in the city. One of his lawyers, Abdy Nar

Ndiaye, said it was suspicious that the judge had not ordered the immediate arrest of the 48-year-old politician.

"This means that their objective is not to arrest Sonko, but to keep him out of the next elections," he said. The government has rejected accusations that the case against the opposition leader, and others he has faced, are politically motivated. Sonko was accused of sexually assaulting and threatening a massage therapist at a beauty salon in 2021. She was 20 when she made the accusations, which he denied. He said he went to the salon for a massage for chronic back pain and that the case against him was politically motivated, AFP news agency reports.

The owner of the beauty salon, Ndeye Khady Ndiaye, was also sentenced to two years in prison by the judge for the same offence of "corrupting youth". Sonko, who is very popular amongst unemployed youth, has undergone a meteoric political rise in the last few years. After his dismissal as a tax inspector in 2016, he was elected to parliament and became mayor of the southern city of Ziguinchor. He ran in the 2019 presidential elections, coming third. Sonko accuses President Macky Sall of planning to stay in office for an unconstitutional third term. The president has not yet announced his intentions, but with political tensions rising across the country he invited opposition parties to talks this week. Sonko's party refused to attend. When Sonko was arrested in 2021 for disrupting public order, clashes left at least a dozen people dead.

Ethnic cleansing continues in Tigray

TIGRAY (Agenceis): Ethnic cleansing campaigns have continued in Ethiopia's Tigray region, despite a November 2022 peace agreement, according to a new report by Human Rights Watch.

"The November truce in northern Ethiopia has not brought about an end to the ethnic cleansing of Tigrayans in Western Tigray Zone," Laetitia Bader, deputy Africa director for Human Rights Watch, said in a statement. "If the Ethiopian government is really serious about ensuring justice for abuses, then it should stop opposing independent investigations into the atrocities in Western Tigray and hold abusive officials and commanders to account."

The new report highlights that Tigrayans have suffered forced expulsions and deportations, torture, death and life-threatening treatment that "may amount to the crime against humanity of extermination" on the basis of their identity. The Ethiopian military entered Tigray, a semi-autonomous region in the northern part of the country, on Nov. 4, 2020, in response to claims the Tigray People's Liberation Front attacked a military base in the region, according to the country's prime minister.

The war in Tigray is estimated to have claimed the lives of up to 600,000 civilians between November 2020 and August 2022, according to researchers from Belgium's Ghent University. Han Nyssen, senior professor of geography at Ghent University, told ABC News in January that the true scale of death in Ethiopia's Tigray region remains hard to ascertain. "We [still] have almost no view of what happens in Western Tigray," he said.

Human Rights Watch conducted dozens of interviews with witnesses, victims and humanitarian aid staff in gathering information about the bleak conditions for Tigrayans. "The [militias] came into my home and said I need to leave because it's not our land," a woman from the town of Adebai who was forced to flee toward Sudan told Human Rights Watch on the condition of anonymity. "They would knock at midnight and say Tigrayans can't come back."

‘Navalny pokes fun’

MOSCOW (AP): Imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny released excerpts of his correspondence with prison administrators, detailing his sarcastic demands for things like a bottle of moonshine, a balalaika and even a kangaroo. His requests were denied.

Responses from prison officials, posted on his social media account apparently by his team, came after he has spent almost 180 days in solitary confinement since last summer at Penal Colony No. 6 in the Vladimir region east of Moscow. Navalny, 46, is serving a nine-year sentence after being convicted of fraud and contempt of court — charges he says were trumped up for his efforts to expose official corruption and organize anti-Kremlin protests. He was arrested in January 2021 upon returning to Moscow after recuperating in Germany from nerve-agent poisoning that he blamed on the Kremlin.

"When you are sitting in a punishment isolation cell and have little entertainment, you can have fun with correspondence with the administration," wrote Navalny. Among his denied requests: a megaphone to be given to the prisoner in a nearby cell "so he can yell even louder," and to award another inmate who "killed a man with his bare hands" with the highest rank in karate.

He also was turned down for his requests of moonshine, tobacco for rolling cigarettes and the balalaika. But Navalny expressed particular mock outrage at the administrators' refusal to allow him to keep a kangaroo in his cell. The politician said inmates can to have a pet if the prison administration allows it.

US, Japan, S Korea aim to share N Korea missile warning data

PHNOM PENH (AFP): The United States, Japan and South Korea aim to share North Korean missile warning data before the end of 2023, the three countries said on Saturday after a record number of missile tests by Pyongyang this year. Leaders of the three allies committed to the real-time data sharing at a summit in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh in November.

North Korea has ramped up military development since diplomatic efforts collapsed in 2019, conducting a string of banned weapons tests, including test-firing multiple intercontinental ballistic missiles. Defence chiefs from the United States, Japan and South Korea announced the data-sharing agreement after they met at a forum in Singapore. The three sides "recognised trilateral efforts to activate a data sharing mechanism to exchange real-time missile warning data before the end of the year in order to improve each country's ability to detect and assess missiles launched" by North Korea, their joint statement said.

US Defense Secretary

Lloyd Austin and his Japanese and South Korean counterparts Yasukazu Hamada and Lee Jong-sup met on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue defence summit. They "discussed the growing nuclear and missile threats from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) as well as efforts to enhance trilateral security exercises and address common security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region", the statement said.

South Korea's defence ministry said in a separate statement that they "committed to making further progress in the coming months towards the activation of a real-time sharing mechanism for missile warning information".

Hamada told a news conference the initiative "will improve the ability of countries to detect and assess the threat of missiles launched by North Korea, and we will work firmly to achieve this as soon as possible". Pyongyang's record-breaking number of launches this year includes test-firing the country's first solid-fuel ballistic missile - a key technical breakthrough for its military. The

United States and South Korea have in turn been ramping up their defence cooperation, staging a series of major military exercises that included two trilateral drills involving Japan this year.

North Korea attempted to launch a spy satellite this week but it ended up crashing into the sea after a rocket failure. Pyongyang does not have a functioning satellite in space and Kim has made developing a military spy satellite a top priority, despite UN resolutions barring its use of such technology. Pyongyang has said its weapons are meant to defend against what it describes as aggression by the United States and South Korea.

Kim last year declared his country an "irreversible" nuclear power and called for an "exponential" increase in weapons production, including tactical nuclear weapons. The North's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes "pose a grave threat to international peace and stability", the United States, Japan and South Korea said in their statement.

Iran releases 1 Danish, two Austrian citizens

BERLIN (AP): Iran has released one Danish and two Austrian citizens, the European countries said, thanking Oman and Belgium for their help in getting the trio freed. Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg said he was "very relieved" that Kamran Ghaderi and Masoud Mossaheb were being brought home after "years of arduous imprisonment in Iran."

Denmark's foreign minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, said that he was "happy and relieved that a Danish citizen is on his way home to his family in Denmark after imprisonment in Iran." He didn't name the person, saying their identity was "a personal matter" and he couldn't go into details. Schallenberg thanked the foreign ministers of Belgium and Oman for providing "valuable support," without elaborating on what form it took. Løkke Rasmussen also thanked Belgium and said that Oman "played an important role."

Last week, a prisoner exchange between Belgium and Iran returned to Tehran an Iranian diplomat convicted of attempting to bomb exiles in France, Assadollah Assadi. Belgian aid worker Olivier Vandecasteele, looking visibly gaunt, headed back to Brussels as part of the swap. There was no immediate word on what, if anything, Iran obtained in return for the latest releases.

Belgian Foreign Minister Hadja Lahbib tweeted that her country was "unwavering in our dedication to advocating

for other Europeans who are being arbitrarily detained" and had "successfully secured the release of two Austrians and one Dane who were unjustly held in detention in Iran." Belgium's prime minister, Alexander De Croo, said he had briefed his Austrian and Danish counterparts at a meeting in Moldova on the "imminent release" of the three prisoners "heading to Belgium via Oman."

Iranian state media and officials did not immediately acknowledge a release, which is part of the weekend in the Islamic Republic. A news outlet believed to be close to Iran's security agencies, Nournews, identified the three released prisoners as Masoud Mossaheb, Kamran Ghaderi and Behnaz Zakeri Ansari. Mossaheb was accused of links to German and Israeli intelligence services and leaking information on military and nuclear projects to foreigners, the report said. Ansari was alleged to be a member of the banned group, Mujahedeen-e Khalq. Oman often serves an interlocutor between Iran and the West and brings released captives out of the Islamic Republic. An Oman Royal Air Force Gulfstream IV, which had been on the ground in Tehran for several days, took off shortly before news of the European trio's releases came out. It landed in Oman's capital, Muscat.

The releases also came after Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq visited Iran on his first trip there since becoming the Arab nation's ruler in 2020. Ghaderi is an Iranian-

Austrian businessman who was arrested in 2016 and later sentenced to 10 years in prison for allegedly spying for the US, charges strongly rejected by his supporters. His family had criticized Austria for being silent on his case in recent years.

Mossaheb, also an Iranian-Austrian businessman, was arrested in 2019 and received a 10-year prison sentence after what Amnesty International called "a grossly unfair trial for vague national security offenses." Amnesty had said Mossaheb suffered from heart failure and diabetes, making his imprisonment that much more dangerous for him. Iran has detained a number of foreigners and dual nationals over the years, accusing them of espionage or other state security offenses and sentencing them following secretive trials in which rights groups say they have been denied due process.

Critics have repeatedly accused Iran of using such prisoners as bargaining chips with the West. Schallenberg said his ministry would spare no effort to secure the release of a third Austrian national who remains in detention in Iran and whose case is currently on appeal. Iran, facing Western sanctions over its rapidly advancing nuclear program, has experienced protests in recent months and economic strain. However, it also reached a detente with Saudi Arabia through Chinese mediation, and the International Atomic Energy Agency dropped two inquiries into the country's nuclear program.

El Salvador leader wants to cut number of municipalities

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP): El Salvador President Nayib Bukele says he wants to cut the number of municipalities in the country from 262 to 44 to reduce the tax burden.

The proposal would require the approval of the country's Legislative Assembly, in which Bukele's party and its allies hold a majority. The president also proposed reducing the number of lawmakers in that body from 84 to 60. "How is it possible that in a territory of 8,100 square miles (21,000 square kilometers) we have 262 municipalities?" Bukele said in a speech marking his fourth year in office. The president's New Ideas party controls the majority of the current municipalities.

The president said the names of municipalities would not be lost because they would be converted into districts by the same name. The conservative

National Republican Alliance (Arena) party said it saw clear electoral motivation behind the move just one year before Bukele plans to seek re-election despite a widespread interpretation of the constitution that forbids consecutive re-election.

In 2021, the Supreme Court's Constitutional Chamber, recently overhauled by Bukele's party, told electoral authorities to allow re-election. Constitutional scholars considered the court's decision unconstitutional. Bukele announced his intention to seek re-election last September. "The president changes the country's political distribution with electoral ends," the party's congressional delegation said via Twitter.

Bukele's supporters shouted "re-election, re-election, re-election" during the president's speech. Bukele also said authorities were carrying out

searches of all of the properties of former President Alfredo Cristiani who governed El Salvador from 1989 to 1994. It was not clear what the objective of the searches was. In March of last year, a court ordered Cristiani's capture, though he had already left the country. Prosecutors allege that Cristiani knew of the military's plan to eliminate six Jesuit priests and two others in 1989 and did nothing to stop them.

Last year, his daughter released a statement from Cristiani denying that he knew the military's plans. On Nov. 16, 1989, an elite commando unit killed the six priests — five Spaniards and one Salvadoran — along with their housekeeper and the housekeeper's daughter in the priests' residence. The killers tried to make the massacre appear as though it had been carried out by leftist guerrillas.

US, UN flay Vietnam

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The United States and United Nations criticized Vietnam's detention of members of an environmental group including its founder, saying such actions were part of a broader trend toward curbing free speech. "The United States is concerned by the detention of leaders and staff of CHANGE, including the ongoing detention of CHANGE's founder Hoang Thi Minh Hong," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement.

Hong and the other members were taken into custody according to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. While others were released, Hong was detained on charges of tax evasion, it said in a statement. She is the fifth prominent environmental human rights defender arrested in Vietnam for alleged tax evasion in the last two years, the UN rights agency said.

"We call on Vietnam to respect the rights of those detained and to respect and protect the freedoms of expression and association for all Vietnamese people," Miller said. The United States and the United Nations both said the detentions were part of a wider trend of Vietnamese authorities targeting free speech. "These detentions by Vietnamese authorities are part of a concerning pattern of arrests of local environmental and civil society advocates," the State Department's Miller said. In Hanoi, the foreign ministry spokesman did not comment on Hong's detention. Hong founded the non-governmental organization CHANGE in 2013 to take action against climate change, illegal wildlife trade and pollution.

Aid agencies in Sudan grapple with looting

CAIRO (Reuters): Aid workers in Sudan say fierce fighting, rampant looting and reams of red tape are hampering efforts to deliver vital humanitarian supplies to the millions of people who now rely on a relief effort since a conflict erupted in mid-April.

The United Nations estimates 25 million people, or more than half the population, now need help, up from 16 million before the army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) began fighting. "Often we cannot move because the warehouse is being looted or because it's unsafe for our staff to move, or because for the transporter it's unsafe to go," said Jean-Nicolas Armstrong Dangelser, emergency coordinator for medical aid group MSF.

Truck drivers have sometimes been detained and supplies seized, he said. The most intense fighting has been in the Khartoum area, one of Africa's biggest urban sprawls with 5 million or more people, but it has spread beyond that, including to Darfur, a region in the far west already racked by years of conflict. At least eight aid workers are among the hundreds of people killed in nearly seven weeks of fighting. Several ceasefires have been agreed, but they have been routinely violated and talks in Saudi Arabia between the combatants have collapsed.

At least 1.2 million people have been displaced inside Sudan and another 400,000 have fled to neighbouring states. "It's not just the fighting ... it's also the looting, the general state of lawlessness which makes things extremely complicated," said Alyona Synenko, a spokesperson for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

At least 162 vehicles have been stolen from aid organisations, while 61 offices and 57 warehouses have been looted, an official from UN humanitarian agency OCHA said. "It's almost impossible to get anything from outside Darfur into Darfur at the moment," said MSF's Dangelser. Aid workers say communications have been broken down, hindering both the coordination of aid and payments to staff, which rely on mobile apps after the regular banking system largely ceased to function.

Port Sudan, the army-controlled port on the Red Sea in the east, has become a hub for aid deliveries, as well as a centre for government officials and diplomats flee-

ing the capital, 820 kms (510 miles) away by road. But OCHA said only 129 of the 168 truck deliveries that were ready to deliver aid since May 24 had reached their destinations around Sudan.

Aid agencies also say they have struggled to secure visas to Sudan or travel permits to deliver relief inside the country. "On a national level, it seems from a bureaucratic perspective, the situation is getting worse and increasingly securitised," said one senior representative of a non-governmental organisation, asking not to be named to avoid jeopardising sensitive negotiations about access. The OCHA official said that, as of May 27, at least 40 visa applications were pending at Sudanese embassies, and some people had not applied because the process was unclear. MSF said it had teams stranded for more than two weeks in Port Sudan without being allowed to move to other states.

General Mohamed Othman Mohamed, the military head of Red Sea State, said there had only been small delays for dealing with security procedures. "There are no obstacles to the distribution of this aid," he told Reuters. An army official said the foreign ministry was handling visas for aid workers and a national committee was coordinating aid distribution with Red Cross/Red Crescent officials. The ministry did not respond to requests for comment.

The United Nations, which says it needs \$2.6 billion to meet Sudan's aid needs this year, said the number of people going hungry would exceed 19 million in coming months. "We're looking at about 40% of the population that will not know where their next meal would come from," said Leni Kinzli from the UN World Food Programme, which suspended work for two weeks after several staff were killed early in the conflict. The WFP said food for 4.4 million people was now at risk due to an attack on its warehouses in El Obeid, a city southwest of Khartoum and home to one of the WFP's largest logistics bases in Africa. The UN agency said it had already lost supplies in Sudan worth \$60 million during the conflict. "As much as we can respond we are responding and we are providing support, but it's extremely challenging to meet all the needs and reach everyone," said Kinzli.

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Afghan-Iran ties and water dispute

THE Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said that the countries' shared history and culture could overcome any attempt by enemy forces to sour relations between Iran and Afghanistan. During his recent interview with the Iranian State News agency IRIB, the Iranian Foreign Minister stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation between the two neighbors by establishing border markets alongside the Afghan-Iran border. According to him, Iran will pursue its water rights from the Helmand River through legal and political means.

The bilateral relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan had largely deteriorated over the past months because of the Helmand River's water share dispute that flows from Afghanistan into eastern Iran. On 27 May, border skirmishes broke out between security troops of both countries along the Afghan-Iran border which led to the killing of two Iranian border guards and one Taliban fighter and injuries to several others on both sides. The fighting comes amid rising tension between the two neighbors over the flow of water from the Helmand River about which the Iranian side complained that it did not receive its due share of water from Afghanistan. According to the statistics, over 90% of Iran's population depends on the water it receives from the Helmand River for its agriculture and human consumption, while the country faced severe drought conditions since last year. The Iranian side accused the Taliban government of violating the water accord, disregarding international law, and border protocol since the group gained power in Afghanistan about two years ago. Recently, President Ebrahim Raisi gave a stern warning to Afghan rulers to immediately give water rights to the Iranian people. Raisi's statement attracted similar responses from various Taliban leaders, however, Islamic Emirate urged Iran to use diplomatic channels to resolve the water issue that has become a life-threatening phenomenon for both nations.

Historically, over 1000 kilometers long Helmand River flows from the Hindu Kush mountains through Afghanistan and enters Southeastern Iran. The river water had been crucial for irrigation, fishing, and human and household consumption for millions of people on both sides of the border in Afghanistan as well as Iran. According to the Helmand Water Treaty of 1973, Afghanistan has to annually share 850 million cubic meters of water with Iran. The water dispute had been a recurrent issue between the two neighbors throughout the past and both countries agreed on another water-sharing formula based on the previous accord in 2021. Afghanistan and Iran are water-deficient nations and face periods of water scarcity, and droughts that commonly inflamed tension between Kabul and Tehran. There are multiple environmental and metrological reasons for droughts in any nation, yet the construction of multiple dams on riverine could be the most legitimate reason for the reduction in the volume of water entering into a particular region. The Iranian government is of the view that the construction of the Kajaki, Kamal Khan, and Selma dams on the Helmand River has reduced its water share and turned its country into a barren land. Therefore, the Iranian government strictly opposed the construction of dams and pressed Afghan rulers to abide by the water accords. Previously, a few purblind Afghan leaders had been advocating for the trading of water for oil with Iran which is a very insane and counter-productive strategy.

After the exchange of allegations, bullets, and bolts, both neighboring nations are currently in a diplomatic and border standoff, leaders are calling shots for dialogue and discussions to resolve water disputes. Water is essential for human survival and both nations face an acute dearth of precious Adam's ale that is important for humans, animals, crop cultivation, and greenery. Water is a matter of concern for each country while the nations sitting upstream mostly claimed undue favor for their geographical locations from the communities located in the lower basin. Pakistan also faces similar situations from Afghanistan and India regarding the river water entering through their territories. There is a dire need that the upstream nations to feel their responsibility under the global water convention and use water judiciously without causing problems for communities that lay in the downstream. As for Iran-Afghanistan is concerned both nations must use talks and diplomacy to resolve their issue as both nations face diplomatic isolation and their mutual hostility will further hurt their interest and support their enemies.

Why Erdogan's win isn't all it seems

“We are here, we will not surrender to this darkness!” declared dozens of well-known Turkish women in an open letter urging their peers to vote in Sunday's runoff elections for the presidency of Turkey. "Let's build a country where fear has no place, where equality and freedom prevail," said the women, including academics, artists and politicians. Days later, it seems those dreams of equality and freedom won't be realized any time soon.

The victory of incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdogan - securing 52.1% of the vote against opposition candidate Kemal Kilicdaroglu's 47.9% - gives him another five-year term. This was a very strong result for the opposition, given the difficulties of competing against an autocrat who has increasingly stifled dissent. In the run-up to the first round of voting, Erdogan's interior minister, Süleyman Soylu, tellingly likened the election to the 2016 attempted coup. But this election told the world that another Turkey exists - a Turkey devoted to democracy. Off the back of Erdogan's win, we can expect Turkey to draw even closer to Russia, which supplies more than one-third of its petroleum and oil products. Already, Russian President Vladimir Putin allowed Turkey to defer a multimillion dollar gas payment as a pre-election show of goodwill.

So look for Erdogan to follow whatever geopolitical path benefits his Russian patron, including continued opposition to Sweden joining NATO. But to understand really what comes next, it's worth looking at how Erdogan laid the ground for this election. In power for two decades - first as prime minister and then as president - he has emerged as one of the most wily and repressive strongmen ruling today. Erdogan markets himself as the

champion of Muslims everywhere, building mosques and Islamic schools around the world, but he represses his own people if they dare to oppose him.

Turkey still reels from the purge of society sparked by the 2016 attempted military coup. In the fallout, more than 332,000 people were detained between 2016 and 2022, and tens of thousands

Electoral autocracy is the name for the modern-day version in which elections are held but the field of competition is gamed from the beginning, so the results are far more likely to come out the way the government needs them to. A case in point was the more than two-year jail sentence slapped on opposition leader and mayor of Istanbul, Ekrem Imamoglu, late last year for apparently insulting officials years earlier. Erdogan specializes in "insult suits": lawsuits levied on people who supposedly criticize him or his government. In 2019, a staggering 36,066 people were investigated for "insulting" Erdogan, and 12,298 were prosecuted and more than 3,800 convicted. But this particular suit - which saw Imamoglu banned from politics and prevented from becoming head of the opposition coalition - was clearly politically motivated. Erdogan has not commented on Imamoglu. Imamoglu, a devout Muslim who is younger and more charismatic than Kilicdaroglu, triumphed over Erdogan's chosen candidate in the 2019 mayoral race by campaigning on an anti-authoritarian platform of love and bridge-building.

remain in jail, according to the Turkish Interior Ministry's own statistics from 2022. Erdogan, of course, denies he is an autocrat. "Would a dictator ever enter a runoff election?" he asked CNN's Becky Anderson just before the election. In the 21st century, the answer is yes. Today authoritarianism works differently. Electoral autocracy is the name for the modern-day version in which elections are held but the field of competition is gamed from the beginning, so the results are far more likely to come out the way the government needs them to. A case in point was the more than two-year jail sentence slapped on opposition leader and mayor of

Ruth Ben-Ghiat

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The domination of the media by a sitting autocrat, especially one such as Erdogan who persecutes opposition journalists, including those living in exile, also makes such elections undemocratic.

Selvin Korkmaz, executive director of the independent pollster IstanPol, observes that Erdogan had the power to make sure that

caused devastating destruction across the country. "Such things have always happened. It's part of destiny's plan," Erdogan callously told earthquake victims early on, exemplifying how strongmen are often at their worst when their people need them the most. Like that of authoritarians from Mussolini onward, Erdogan's popularity has resided in part in his image as a modernizer who brings

one. Erdogan has targeted many nongovernmental organizations as foreign agents or terrorist groups, weakening their footprint. And the slow response of the military - now a shadow of its former self after Erdogan's post-2016 attempted coup reforms - also factored in. And Turks were outraged at the revelations that government officials had allowed substantial buildings to pass inspection and had been granting amnesties for violations of building codes - in effect, creating the conditions for mass death and injury in a famously earthquake-prone country. (The government later arrested dozens of contractors, inspectors and project managers for violating building rules - something critics dismissed as scapegoating.) Yet none of this was enough to compensate for Erdogan's popularity among his devoted followers and the advantage he had as an authoritarian incumbent, including the power to detain anyone who made critical comments on social media about the government's response to the earthquake - 138 people were detained in February alone. If history is any judge, Erdogan, despite his victory, will be consumed with rage at the opposition having done so well. He may also feel empowered to silence critics further and may well launch another round of detentions and insult suits to punish those who dare to challenge him.

For all his bluster about modernizing Turkey, Erdogan has created an environment of fear, hostility and economic hardship. This is not a country where many of Turkey's young people see a future for themselves. Erdogan may have won this election, but he has lost the hearts and faith of large numbers of the Turkish population. And more repression will not turn that around.

CNN

US' rising debt is mother of all debt traps

OVER the past 60 years, US Congress has raised the debt ceiling 78 times. For most of this period, raising the debt ceiling was a non-event. But over the past decade or so every time the US government reaches its debt ceiling, a drama of global proportions unfolds. Republicans and Democrats blame each other for the looming government shutdown; pundits issue stern warnings of a financial meltdown resulting from default; equity markets fluctuate between hope and fear; and the US president cancels important international engagements in order to deal with the crisis.

When the largest economy and holder of the international reserve currency is on the brink of default, no country can remain indifferent. But make no mistake, this is political theater. US Congress and the administration know too well that shrinking the deficit requires increase in government revenues through taxation coupled with deep spending cuts. Both options are political

anathemas. So the only solution is to kick the can down the road and continue the charade that Republicans and Democrats really care about the ballooning debt. They don't. Republicans like to present themselves as "fiscal conservatives", but their leading presidential candidate for 2024, Donald Trump, the self-proclaimed "king of debt", added more trillions to the national debt in one term than other presidents added in two. Democrats are no better, however, clinging to a dubious economic philosophy known as "modern monetary theory" which holds that "deficits don't matter". This is why the debt ceiling drama always ends the same way: after weeks of brinkmanship and partisan bickering, a last-minute deal is reached to raise the debt ceiling, allowing the administration to re-indulge in overspending for two additional years.

The United States is addicted to debt. With its federal deficit persistently above \$1 trillion a year, US debt is growing by leaps and bounds, nearing \$32 trillion. Ten years ago,

when former US president Barack Obama fought with Republicans to raise the debt ceiling, the debt stood at \$16 trillion. In other words, it doubled in just 10 years. According to the Congressional Budget Office, at the current spending rate the debt is poised to surpass \$46 trillion by 2033 which is almost half of today's global GDP. Economic historian Niall Ferguson once said "if you really want to see when an empire is getting vulnerable, the big giveaway is when the costs of serving the debt exceed the cost of the defense budget". The Congressional Budget Office projects that the interest rate on US debt will surpass \$1.4 trillion, about the size of today's federal deficit and almost twice today's defense spending.

If any other country had been so reckless, its credit rating would have fallen like a rock. Not the US. The big three credit rating agencies - Moody's, Standard and Poor's and Fitch - together dominating more than 80 percent of the global market, are American. No matter how obscene the

Gal Luft

US debt level gets these agencies continue to rate US government bonds as "prime grade". These rating agencies could be easily coerced if they step out of line and downgrade the very same government that regulates them. This biased grading misleads central bankers all over the world as well as pension funds, hedge funds and other institutional investors into buying more US debt. At what point will the music stop? It's already slowing, it seems. With the de-dollarization concept becoming mainstream, central bankers are increasingly reluctant to over-expose themselves to dollar-denominated debt. In 2022, the total ownership of Treasury securities held by foreign countries fell by a quarter of a trillion dollars. The federal deficit for the same year reached \$1.38 trillion.

The US administration needs to borrow more and more money, but the global appetite for US Treasuries is weakening. And that's why the US administration must increasingly rely on its own public to finance

the deficit. But to attract so much domestic money, the government would have to offer higher interest rates which could in turn send the economy into a recession. Debt addiction is not only a US problem. It is endemic to most developed countries. With the exception of Canada and Germany, other G7 countries that lectured recently in Hiroshima on the dangers of China's so-called debt traps have debt greater than their GDP. Japan, the host of the G7 summit, has a debt-to-GDP ratio of 225 percent. Compare this to the five Central Asian countries, whose leaders attended the China-Central Asia Summit in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, around the same time. Their ratio is only 30 percent.

Rich countries can borrow as much money as they wish and provide their citizens with perks and entitlement programs people in developing countries can only dream of. Developing countries are forced to stabilize their currencies through the purchase of debt instruments denominated in rich economies' currencies like the dollar or the euro. This facilitates the

biggest transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich in history. This unjust system has run its course and a global financial reform is long overdue. But don't count on Western politicians to take any action to avoid a financial meltdown one minute before they must. It is up to the Global South to draw the line and direct world attention to the mother of all debt traps - the G7's out-of-control borrowing practices.

Sadly, if history is our guide, the only way major powers can deal with unsustainable debt levels is to embark on aggressive foreign policy, militarization and provocation and to instigate war against one or more of their major lenders, or - even better - pit them against each other, in the hope that post-war negotiations would result in debt cancellation, restructuring, asset seizure or reparations. Indeed, when it comes to unsustainable debt, war is the only realistic alternative to bankruptcy. Which is why the debt ceiling drama in Washington and the deteriorating US-China relations should be viewed as two scenes from the same plot.

Weaponization of refugee crisis must be addressed

DURING the Turkiye presidential elections, the status of Syrian refugees became a central topic. The winner of the election, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, took a strong stand and stated that it was the nation's duty and role to support "unfortunate people." The opposition ran a strong anti-migrant message throughout the election campaign. With 3.7 million refugees, Turkiye is the biggest host of refugees in the world. Most of them come from Syria; some 6.8 million Syrians have been displaced by conflict according to the UNHCR. The main debate around refugees and displaced populations reveals in fact the political weaponization of this issue.

At the beginning of the Syrian revolution, when millions of Syrian refugees crossed toward Europe, Erdogan was accused by many states of weaponizing the refugee issue to put pressure on geopolitical files and other negotiations. His position on refugees during the last elections was a big change, and indi-

cated a commitment not to weaponize this issue with the EU. It is in line with the reconciliatory foreign policy approach Erdogan has pursued within the region lately.

From the Levant to Europe and to the other side of the Atlantic, we find similar confrontations on refugees and displaced populations. The vocabulary is important and there is an amalgam between refugees and economic migrants. A refugee is someone who is forced to leave their home country due to persecution, conflict, or violence, while an economic migrant is someone who voluntarily moves to another country primarily for better economic prospects. Indeed, when looking at the images shown of economic migrants at the borders of any country or in convoys, many commentators and politicians describe them as asylum seekers. This is a mistake because an asylum seeker leaves his home country and seeks international protection in another country, typically due to fear of persecution. This difference does not undermine the right of economic migrants to seek a better

future for their children. Yet it is important to understand the difference as it is exploited in the weaponization of displaced populations.

Following Brexit, we noticed a similar situation between France and the UK. Tensions on the passage of "asylum seekers" started in 2021 as the UK withdrew from the Dublin Agreement, which determines that refugees can be sent back to an EU country. This increased the difficulty of the situation and Channel crossings by migrants. It became a point of negotiation between the two countries, just like the fishing rights dispute and other disagreements that followed Brexit. It also became a domestic issue for both countries. Earlier this year, Rishi Sunak and Emmanuel Macron reached an agreement on the issue and the prevention of migrants crossing the Channel. France also faces tensions on refugees with the Indian Ocean archipelago of the Comoros over the expulsion of refugees from its poorest territory, the island of Mayotte.

Khaled Abou Zahr

The same is happening in the US too. Here it has become purely a domestic political file amongst the Democrats and the Republicans. The Republican Party is not against immigration but demands legal immigration whereas the Democratic Party in its majority looks for federal support to accommodate illegal immigration.

The reality is that the US is one of the most welcoming countries for lawful immigration. It is part of the DNA and set-up of the country to welcome new migrants every year. According to the US State Department and the Department of Homeland Security, the US welcomes more than 1.5 million new migrants, including economic migrants and refugees, every year. With the upcoming expiration of Title 42 (which allowed for expulsions during the pandemic) and the 2024 presidential election, it is difficult to see a solution for this issue as political polarization will reach its peak. Weak and broken Lebanon bears more than its capacity

with the highest refugees per capita worldwide. There are 12 Palestinian camps in Lebanon with roughly a population of 480,000. They live in extreme dire conditions and do not have the same rights as Lebanese citizens. And, since 2011, more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees have been hosted in Lebanon. They, too, live in terrible conditions and face abuse. In a country of minorities such as Lebanon, which has a total population of 5.5 million, one can understand the difficulties of this situation. Today, the most pressing issue is the risk that Syrian refugees could face if they return to their own country.

And so, similar to the images of Syrian refugees' convoys at the beginning of the 2011 war, the images at the borders of the US and in France or Lebanon all point to the weaponization of the global migration and refugee crisis. There are now new threats in various geographies. The conflict in Sudan will be added to the growing list of countries such as Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Venezuela, where conflict has dis-

placed millions. This puts more pressure on bordering countries than on Europe and the US. And so, bigger efforts for conflict resolution and more resources devoted to local capacity-building need to be put in place. Unfortunately, like many problems, we look at treating the symptoms rather than the root cause. It becomes even more impossible when domestic politics are thrown into the mix. As a first step and at bare minimum, a commitment to stopping the weaponization of migrants should be achieved. It is too often true that refugees are abused within international negotiations or even in domestic political rivalries.

This is exacerbated by the impact on elections in Western countries, which are facing inflation and debt and witnessing their own populations in precarious situations. A sincere question remains about the duty of nations toward "unfortunate people" from far away places versus a duty to their own people. As we notice more and more disparity within society, is there still a place for global solidarity?

Arab-Iranian dialogue makes strides in Doha

Dr. Abdel Aiz Aluwaisheg

DOHA this week hosted three days of informal Arab-Iranian dialogue. The conference, held largely behind closed doors, acquired a special significance as it came shortly after new developments indicated that we may be on the cusp of a new beginning.

Iranian participants included former officials and high-level representatives from universities and semiofficial institutions. They offered varied perspectives on Tehran's regional policy. Most expressed a fresh desire for engagement, reconciliation and cooperation. For the first time, they accepted the idea of having talks with the GCC on Iran's nuclear program. On some regional issues, they offered flexibility, which was even more evident during talks on the sidelines of the main event. Some of the others appeared to dwell on the past and did not offer new ideas.

Relations with Iran have been difficult for most of the time since the revolution in 1979, when it declared its goal of exporting that revolution. Since then, Tehran has managed to export a version of its model to parts of the region, but with disastrous results for both Iran and its neighbors. Militarizing Iran's economy and its external entanglements have impoverished its people and reduced a once-thriving country to the verge of collapse. The countries where Iran has been involved, such as Syria and Yemen, have fared even worse.

The Arab League Summit, held in Jeddah on May 18, took the initiative toward regional de-escalation. For that purpose, it revisited its positions on Iran, attempting to defuse some of the regional crises where Tehran has been involved, including Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, encouraging dialogue and reconciliation. Inviting Bashar Assad, a close Tehran ally, was part of that effort. Saudi Arabia chaired the summit and will lead the Arab League until the next summit is convened in 2024, which will give it a chance to shape the implementation of the decisions made in

Jeddah. In March, Saudi Arabia and Iran agreed, with China's help, to resume diplomatic relations after seven years of rupture. This diplomatic breakthrough sent shockwaves through the region and paved the way toward the reconciliatory positions adopted at the Arab League Summit. Going beyond the mere resumption of diplomatic relations, the two countries stressed in a joint statement issued in Beijing their commitment

There are significant disagreements between the two sides. At the same time, they share the same space and have equally significant shared economic and strategic interests, making it imperative to deal with those disagreements. On those issues where concurrence is elusive, there should be a clear way to manage them politically and peacefully, according to international standards and norms for relations between states. The Arab summit stressed that Arab regional security is indivisible. Gulf security is an integral and important part of Arab security, and the security of Arab states is equally important to the Gulf. Iran is uncomfortable with this fact. It does not understand why GCC states are concerned about Iran's domination of Arab states such as Syria, Lebanon or Yemen.

to the "sovereignty of states and noninterference in their internal affairs," referencing two important principles underpinning the conflict with Iran. The fact that Iran agreed to make this commitment was another breakthrough.

On both shores of the Gulf, there is great yearning to go back in history to when the region lived in relative peace, security and stability. Over the centuries, the same tribes and families lived on both banks of the Gulf and enjoyed rich cultural and thriving economic ties. However, things have gotten complicated over the past four decades. There are significant disagreements between the two sides. At the same time, they share the same space and have equally significant

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The Arab summit stressed that Arab regional security is indivisible. Gulf security is an integral and important part of Arab security,

and the security of Arab states is equally important to the Gulf. Iran is uncomfortable with this fact. It does not understand why GCC states are concerned about Iran's domination of Arab states such as Syria, Lebanon or Yemen. It also does not see the need to refrain from forming, funding or arming militias in Arab countries, even when they use force to seize power and engage in serious human rights violations. There is also a serious disagreement between Iran and its Gulf neighbors over international security cooperation. GCC states are active members of important security partnerships, including the Combined Maritime Forces, which coordinates the work of 38 countries to combat illicit activities by

nonstate actors, such as piracy and smuggling.

Conversely, Iran is strenuously opposed to any foreign security presence, employing populist discourses about ending colonialism and foreign domination. The stage must be prepared well for the success of substantive talks on the issues of pressing concern, by agreeing on the rules governing relations between the states of the region and confidence-building measures, with a view to maintaining de-escalation. Those issues can be discussed along five interconnected tracks.

The political and diplomatic track covers discussing regional issues, such as Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen, to encourage political solutions according to UN resolutions, without the use of force or threats to achieve political goals. It also covers nuclear, missile and drone proliferation, especially to nonstate actors. The security track covers terrorism, sectarian militias and other armed groups operating outside the law.

The economic track explores trade and investment opportunities, including in renewables. The sustainability track explores possible cooperation in efforts to reverse climate change and rehabilitate the Gulf marine environment.

Finally, reviving the historically rich Arab-Iranian cultural exchanges could be discussed in the cultural track. To ensure the success of this engagement, discussions should include both official and nongovernmental channels, including business groups, universities and research centers. The great strides achieved by GCC countries over past decades in terms of the economy, social development, education, culture and the arts can be made more robust, comprehensive and sustainable once Iran and its neighbors are able to restore the requisite confidence and spirit of collaboration and integration. Iran could then attain the same benefits of integration that the GCC states have already gained.

Arab News



What we need now from the leadership of COP28

THERE is a big difference between national leaders and global leaders. The former push national interests on the global stage, often using the rhetoric of global solutions. The latter carry a vision that extends beyond personal interests, election cycles or profit margins to do the best for humanity.

The position of president of the Conference of the Parties (COP), the United Nations' annual climate summit, requires a global leader. This year's conference will be held in the United Arab Emirates under the presidency of Sultan Al Jaber, CEO of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company. It is hard not to be deeply sceptical of the idea that the head of an oil company will be able to drive the 28th summit of COP towards an outcome which gives the world hope about its future in the shadow of a devastating climate crisis. That is because fossil fuels account for 75 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, and in order to have some hope, we must end the use of oil, gas and coal in a rapid and just manner.

Unfortunately, with only six months to go until COP28 begins in Dubai, Al Jaber is living up to widespread low expectations. In a speech earlier this month, he spoke of "phasing out fossil fuel emissions" - a reference to using carbon capture and storage technology to reduce the emissions from burning fossil fuels, instead of phasing out fossil fuels themselves. Such an approach is unrealistic and incompatible with the Paris Agreement. The United Nations has made it clear that the world needs to cut its emissions by 45 percent by 2030 to have a chance at staying under the 1.5C warming threshold. Currently, carbon capture

Vanessa Nakate

and storage technology is highly expensive and simply does not exist at the necessary scale to make even a scratch on that target. We do not have time for fairytale solutions designed to save the oil and gas industry.

The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called investing in new fossil fuel projects "moral and economic madness". The International Energy Agency says we cannot afford to put in any new finance for coal, oil or gas if we are to meet net-zero targets; instead, we need a massive deployment of renewable energy. The science is clear and the goal is clear, but we are still missing the global leadership to take us there. COP28 must change that. For too long, UN climate summits have ignored the central cause of the climate crisis; no longer can they afford to. This year's summit must signal the beginning of this rapid shift away from fossil fuels, towards clean energy. To do this, the UAE has to facilitate an agreement between the world's nations on phasing out all fossil fuels.

COP28 also needs to ensure that finance going to the Global South to fund this transition is massively increased. Currently, Africa has 39 percent of the world's potential for renewable energy, yet it receives just 2 percent of global investment in the sector. COP28 should also secure real money for the Loss and Damage Fund which was agreed upon at COP27 and which still sits empty despite increasingly devastating climate events hitting the poorest countries. Still, funding for loss and damage will never be enough to compensate for the chaos and destruction

that the climate crisis will cause if we keep burning fossil fuels.

That is why we cannot have a COP presidency that puts national or corporate interests over the interests of humanity. In taking on this role, Al Jaber has promised to represent us all. His priority must be people - and particularly the people suffering the worst effects of climate change - not the fossil fuel industry. In East Africa, the climate crisis is having a devastating impact. Last September, I went to Turkana, Kenya with UNICEF to visit children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. Twenty million people are currently facing starvation in the region, largely because of an unprecedented drought that, scientists say, was made 100 times more likely by climate change.

In Turkana, I met a six-year-old boy at a hospital where the worst cases of severe acute malnutrition are referred. His grandmother had not been able to access the life-saving care he needed in time. Tragically, he passed away later that same day. We can no longer prevent the climate crisis, but every fraction of a degree of further warming will make heatwaves more intense, droughts more prolonged and storms more powerful. Every year that passes without a rapid transformation of our economies away from fossil fuels means more will be lost to the climate crisis. In June, the world's climate negotiators will meet in Bonn, Germany, to assess progress towards COP28. Its president, Al Jaber, must head to Bonn with a credible plan for decarbonisation. This will be his opportunity to save countless lives, he must not miss it.

Aljazeera

Boris's messages are just the start of it: The government is run on WhatsApp

WHAT are WhatsApps? No, really, what are they? This may sound like a question asked by an increasingly puzzled grandad at Christmas, but it has become central to British politics. Westminster has, over the past few weeks, waited with bated breath to see if the messages sent to and from ministers during the pandemic would be handed over to the Covid inquiry. Heather Hallett, who is running the investigation, demanded that the full cache be released before the public evidence sessions began, but to no avail. Boris Johnson has said he has given his messages to the Cabinet Office, which decided on Thursday afternoon to launch legal action to avoid having to pass them on.

If we care about the way that government is run and how records are kept, the three-way tussle between the inquiry chair, mandarins and the former prime minister about whether these messages can remain private concerns all of us. As everyone who follows British politics will know, WhatsApp is now where most discussions are had. It's used by MPs needing to talk to ministers, by whips' offices trying to keep their benches in check, by journalists confidently talking to their sources, and by everyone else for gossip and general title-tattle. Coups against serving prime ministers have been organised in WhatsApp groups and so have leadership campaigns and rebellions on parliamentary votes. The story's quite simple, really: over the past decade, WhatsApp has

taken over Westminster. Still, the question remains: what are WhatsApps? How should the messages be treated? Are they official correspondence? Should they be subject to freedom of information requests? Have they replaced more formal emails? Should they? As is often the case with sweeping technological advances, the world changed so quickly that no one had time to stop and ask about the wider ramifications of it all.

Last year, the Institute for Government called on "the prime minister to uphold guidance stating ministers, special advisers and officials should not use personal phones for substantive government business". It was hardly a radical demand, but it knew there wasn't much more it could ask for. The horse was already long gone, there was little point in closing the stable doors. Transparency campaigners have spent some years arguing that the wholesale move to WhatsApp in British politics is dangerous, and they aren't exactly wrong. Quick, round-the-clock, private messaging is not a proper way to run a government. Still, it is worth wondering if they are entirely right, and if the WhatsApp supremacy may not be symptomatic of a wider and older problem. Scandals about WhatsApp may be eyecatching, but that is - perhaps ironically - because they are bringing a previously hidden part of politics into the public eye. Not long ago, a lot of the conversations now happening online were not taking place through official channels, but

face to face on and around the parliamentary estate, with no scrutiny whatsoever.

Ministers went to the tearooms to speak to their backbench colleagues; hacks haunted the bars to try to pick up some stories; would-be rebels met in each other's offices to start plotting. There wasn't any meaningful way to find out what was really going on behind the scenes at any given point, as so much of it happened entirely informally. In a paper on the importance of informal spaces in politics, the professor of government Philip Norton wrote that "space within legislatures is not distributed randomly. It is the product of political choice." Because the Palace of Westminster was at least partly modelled on gentlemen's clubs, it naturally encourages camaraderie and private asides. As Churchill once noted, "We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us."

Of course, circumstances can also alter human behaviour. In this case, the change was threefold. First, MPs are now expected to spend more time in their constituencies and away from Westminster than they once did. Second, the times at which they vote was changed some years ago, meaning that they do not need to spend as much time on the estate as previously. Finally - and you may well remember this one - the pandemic meant that everyone was stuck at home for months on end, and thus only able to communicate digitally. As a result, parliamentarians ended up taking a lot of their

personal conversations online, and the waters between professional and personal conversations were muddied further. The rest is, if not quite history yet, then certainly this week's headlines.

This doesn't mean widespread WhatsApp use shouldn't be a concern. MPs should be allowed to speak freely to one another without worrying about the messages eventually getting out, but they must also understand that the line between official business and personal chatter has become too thin for comfort. Good governance does require a level of formality, and the government must act in a way that means it can be held accountable. WhatsApp is now so ingrained in British political culture that simply telling MPs to refrain from messaging one another won't quite cut it.

The availability of technology will always influence the way people behave but smartphone apps are, ultimately, nothing but a tool. If we are serious about trying to change the behaviour of our politicians, their surroundings are what we should turn our attention to. Perhaps one way to drastically alter the way future generations of politicians communicate would be to finally make them leave the Palace of Westminster so it can be renovated. It wouldn't be an immediate shift, as only new intakes would benefit from the more professionally suited surroundings, but it would be worth it. Technology will keep evolving whatever happens - thinking differently may be the only way to deal with it.

The Guardian

Marie Le Conte

Russia may be devoured by its neighbours

UKRAINE'S resistance to Putin's invasion has demolished the idea of Russian invincibility. Everyone knows Russia is not the unbeatable empire Moscow was at pains to portray itself as both outwardly and inwardly. And just as Russia is trying to claim Ukraine as its own, other countries are eyeing chunks of Russian land, spotting an opportunity as the war shows just how weak the Russian army is. Nations within Russia are waiting for the right time to oust the bully. The Kremlin should be wary of promoting a world where it is acceptable to seize territories through force; it only invites others to join in and claim parts of Russia for themselves.

Japan was the first country to break its silence after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year. Tokyo said of the Kuril Islands that it was "completely unacceptable that the Northern Territories have yet to be returned since the Soviet Union's illegal occupation of them 77 years ago". That annexation saw the expulsion of Japanese people from the southern islands, and since then, the countries have failed to reach a compromise. Talks broke down when Putin showed he was not willing to share lands but only to gain new ones.

Then China started drawing maps marking part of Siberia and the Russian Far East region as originally Chinese. Great areas of Chinese land were annexed by Russia in the 19th century. Unable to claim this territory back in a peaceful way, Beijing has pursued economic expansion around Baikal and has been actively purchasing and leasing lands near the border. In Poland, there are narratives suggesting that Russia occupied the Kaliningrad region in 1945, and that Warsaw has the right to claim it. Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and even Ukraine could also stake interests in vying for Russian lands. Russian fighters infiltrating the Belgorod region under the Ukrainian flag served as a reminder to Putin that others could also reclaim their "primordial territories". Kyiv aims to restore its 1991 borders and end the war. Yet the prospect of exiled Russians on tanks turning Russian border regions into "national republics" is seen as a welcomed payoff for Moscow's deeds in the Donbas.

As Moscow pursues the expansion of its European borders, national autonomies in Russia and their exiled leaders envision the decolonization of Russia, dreaming of dividing it into 34 independent

Svitlana Morenets

states. For now, national liberation movements are absent due to oppression and persecution within Russia. When the Soviet Union fell apart, several regions of Russia declared their state sovereignty but were silenced. These regions have constitutions stating their sovereignty as separate states, with power-sharing treaties governing their relationship with Moscow. These norms are "dormant", but they can be activated as soon as the regime demonstrates its inability to keep the empire under control. The Kremlin has well-founded fears of a possible cascade of sovereignties in Russia. The Russian economy relies on resource redistribution from the regions to Moscow. The prospect of gaining control over their own finances could prompt local elites to seek independence. The destruction of Chechnya showed other nations that were forcibly joined to Russia how Moscow handles "separatists". Still, the Kremlin pushes the populist of these regions to the edge, throwing their men into the battlefield in Ukraine as cannon fodder.

The poorest regions in Russia were affected by conscription the most. Anti-war rallies have taken place in Dagestan, Kalmykia and Buryatia, with the republics' lead-

ers speaking out against the conscription. They feel they are treated as second-class citizens based on ethnicity compared to those residing in St. Petersburg or Moscow. The mounting number of caskets delivered from the front line to small towns and villages further fuels the flames. Once ignited, the liberation movement could sweep through numerous regions, leaving the regime with only those territories firmly aligned with the Russian narrative and unwilling to break free from imperial rule. The Ukrainian government believes that Russia's imperialistic ambitions must end with justice for everyone. It has recognised the Kuril Islands and Chechen Republic of Ichkeria as temporarily occupied by Russia and supports the exiled politicians of Russian national minorities. Ukraine insists that to achieve a prolonged peace in Eastern Europe, Moscow's troops must leave not only Crimea and Donbas but also Transnistria, Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh. It is an idealistic dream, almost impossible, because Putin won't give up an inch of land for free. Still, Moscow would be wise to watch its back. It may end up reaping what it has sown as Russian lands prove too tempting for its neighbours - and its oppressed citizens.

THE recent G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan, concluded with the release of a Leaders' Communiqué, which among other things, said the Western powers "stand together" on nine "elements underpinning" their respective relations with China, apart from claiming that "there is no legal basis for China's expansive maritime claims in the South China Sea".

On the one hand, the communiqué seems to extend an olive branch to Beijing by pledging that "our policy approaches are not designed to harm China nor do we seek to thwart China's economic progress" and insisting that "we stand prepared to build constructive and stable relations with China" and that G7 states are "not decoupling" from China. On the other hand, it says: "We recognize that economic resilience requires de-risking and diversifying". The term "de-risking" sounds like a politically innocent reference to a practice common in the business world, especially the financial sector. The US Department of State describes de-risking as the phenomenon of financial institutions terminating or restricting business relationships with clients or categories of clients to avoid, rather than manage, risk.

A 2016 article by the World Bank, titled "De-risking in the Financial Sector", warned that "de-risking practices by global financial institutions threaten to cut off access to the global financial system for remittance companies and local banks in

Harald Brüning

certain regions, putting them at risk of losing access to the global financial system". And according to the Council of Europe, "De-risking" should never be an excuse for the private sector to avoid implementing a risk-based approach. Vistage Worldwide, Inc, a US-based executive coaching organization, points out that for entrepreneurs de-risking and re-risking are a "liberating decision-making strategy", that is, a way to repeatedly adjust risk levels. Inherently, both de-risking and re-risking are risky operations. "De-risking", incidentally, has become the latest favorite term of many Western politicians (European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has developed a particular liking for the term) to describe their relations with China. It is no longer just a business term but a political shibboleth in Washington, Brussels and elsewhere in the West.

According to the G7 communiqué, "de-risking" means the G7 countries "will reduce excessive dependencies in our critical supply chains". The terms "excessive" and "critical" are, of course, a matter of opinion. As the world's biggest and second-biggest economies, the US and China play a preeminent role in global trade and investment relations. But since the European Union is a supranational entity whose 27 member states compete with each other for economic opportunities in, for instance, China, EU countries should be extra cautious

in "de-risking" their economic ties with China, because rival EU states' governments are likely to compete through their different "de-risking" strategies with each other in overseas markets. Besides, some Western politicians may be using the term "de-risking" as a convenient euphemism for "de-coupling" with China perhaps because the latter term has gone out of fashion.

Accusing China of "economic coercion" without mentioning at least one alleged case is both insolent and impudent - and an insult to 1.4 billion Chinese people. The G7 summit concluded with a ray of hope, though, that Sino-US relations could be on the mend, with US President Joe Biden saying at a news conference on Sunday: "I think you're going to see that (Sino-US ties) to begin to thaw very shortly." Let's hope his words become reality soon. The world would be a better place if that happens. China's new ambassador to the United States, Xie Feng, got to the heart of the matter upon arriving in New York en route to the embassy in Washington early last week. Xie said the Sino-US "relationship is too important for us to let it fail", adding that "working together, both will come out as winners; fighting each other, both will lose, and the world will be hurt as well". I hope political realists still hold enough influential positions in the US to be able to put the world's most consequential bilateral relations back on the right track.

The China Daily

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Govt provide business, investment-friendly environment in country through upcoming budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Saturday assured the participants that despite economic challenges, the government is determined to provide a business and investment friendly environment in the country through the upcoming budget of Fiscal Years 2023-24.

"In order to attract more companies and investments in Pakistan and put the country's economy on a positive trajectory soon", he added.

Federal Minister for Finance said this while in a meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Stock Exchange led by Farrukh Hussain Khan, MD/CEO PSX, said

a press release issued here.

Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr. Aisha Ghaus Pasha, SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Chairman RRMCM Ashfaq Yousif Tola, Governor SBP, Chairman FBR, and senior officers from Finance Division, FBR, and PSX attended the meeting.

The delegation appreciated the initiative of the Finance Minister for taking on board all the stakeholders while preparing the budget for upcoming Fiscal Year 2023-24.

The delegation also brought to the notice of Finance Minister various challenges being faced by the capital markets and investors and presented rec-

ommendations to the Finance Minister to be taken into account in the upcoming Federal Budget.

Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar acknowledged and appreciated the role of PSX in providing a reliable, orderly, liquid and efficient digitized market place for investors in Pakistan.

The delegation expressed sentiments of gratitude to the Finance Minister for taking on board all the leading businesses and investors before drafting the budget for upcoming budget 2023-24.

Dar assures govt's support to business sector

Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday said that the government would fully support the business sector

by providing the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget that is both business- and people-friendly.

He said this while meeting with delegations from the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) and the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) to discuss the budgetary proposals for 2023-24, said a press release.

Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha, SAPM on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Chairman RRMCM Ashfaq Yousif Tola, Governor SBP, Chairman FBR, and senior officers from Finance Division and FBR attended the meeting. The delegations from

PBC and OICCI thanked the finance minister for inviting budgetary recommendations from the business community, including all the leading private-sector businesses and conglomerates and multinationals as well.

They presented particular financial solutions and recommendations to the finance minister to be taken into account in the upcoming Federal Budget.

They further assured FM Dar that the commerce sector would support the government to enhance the economic and commercial activities in Pakistan.

The finance minister highly valued the delegations' budgetary recommendations from both delegations.

He also appreciated the prominent role of PBC as an advocacy forum to

improve the general business environment of the country.

Senator Dar also praised the role of OICCI in successfully promoting foreign investments in Pakistan, thereby playing a major role in the growth of economy in the country.

He also reaffirmed the government's willingness to address the issues being faced by the business community and investors, both within Pakistan or from abroad, to ensure the country's economic prosperity.

Both delegations expressed gratitude to the finance minister for taking their budgetary recommendations into account.

Delegation of KCCI Calls on Finance Minister

A delegation of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) called on the

Federal Finance Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

The delegation comprised Mohammad Tariq Yousuf, President KCCI, Zubair Motiwala, and other members of the Chamber, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

The Finance Minister was accompanied by Dr Aisha Ghaus Pasha, Minister of State for Finance Tariq Bajwa, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (PM) on Finance Tariq Mehmood Pasha, Special Assistant to the PM on Revenue Ashfaq Tola Chairman of Reforms and Resource Mobilization Commission (RRMC) Asim Ahmad Chairman Federal Board of Revenue and other senior officers from the Finance Ministry and Governor State Bank

Jameel Ahmad also attended the meeting.

The visiting delegation highlighted the issues being faced by the business community especially the restrictions imposed by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on imports.

They were of the view that in order to increase exports they required raw materials for which imports were imperative.

The Finance Minister and the Governor SBP assured the delegation that their concerns would be taken care of and Karachi Chamber has a crucial role in the economic stability of the country.

The minister said, "The Government will incorporate the suggestions given by the Chamber to stabilize the economy and promote businesses in the upcoming budget."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar addressing delegation of Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry during a meeting.

Raja Nasir: ICCI Tourism Summit to promote tourism, business activities in Gilgit region

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Tourism Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Raja Nasir has said that the tourism summit scheduled next month organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce is a great news for the entire region.

The tourism summit will not only promote tourism in the region but also provide an opportunity for local products to access the international market, said a press release issued here.

Gilgit government will participate as a host in this summit and will fully cooperate with Islamabad Chamber in all other arrangements including security, best arrangements will be made for the guests coming to the summit.

He expressed these views during his meeting with President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtavari on the occasion of his visit to Islamabad Chamber on Saturday.

On this occasion, the arrangements for ICCI Tourism Summit 2023

scheduled next month organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce were reviewed. In the meeting, Tourism Minister Gilgit-Baltistan announced the appointment of Raja Zaeem as the focal person for the summit by the Gilgit government.

He said that this summit organized by Islamabad Chamber will be the first event of its kind, I hope Islamabad Chamber will keep this tradition alive in the coming years.

He said that gathering diplomats from all over the world in Gilgit is the best idea of Islamabad Chamber. This will not only boost tourism in the area but also benefit the local industry. Gilgit-Baltistan region has dozens of such products including dry fruits, minerals.

Which can be well received in the global market. During the tourism summit, the Gilgit government will make it possible to display all the same

items, he said that the Gilgit government is working to improve the infrastructure.

In this regard, we also need the cooperation of the federal government. He said that there are vast investment opportunities in the hotel industry in Gilgit.

Islamabad Chamber should take advantage of this, there is a need for work in this field from the platform of the Chamber. We wish Islamabad Chamber to work in this regard as well.

Speaking on this occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtavari said that Gilgit-Baltistan region can prove to be the hub of tourism for Pakistan. The purpose of the summit proposed by the Islamabad Chamber is to showcase the vast resources we have in terms of tourism.

This should be brought before the world, the foreign ambassadors partici-

pating in the summit will be the cause of conveying the soft image of Pakistan to the world.

He said that I hope the Islamabad Chamber will get full support from the Gilgit government, administration and security agencies for the successful holding of the summit.

He said that there is a need to increase direct flights to promote tourism in Gilgit region, many private airlines want to start their flights.

We demand from the Federal Government, Civil Aviation that all the measures in this regard should be ensured in a timely manner. He said that the Gilgit government should organize a display for its local products in the Islamabad Chamber, we will give full cooperation. The data of the skilled youth of Gilgit should be shared with the Islamabad Chamber so that the Chamber can play its role regarding their employment.

Myanmar exports nearly 1.7 million tons of corn in 9 months

YANGON (APP): Myanmar exported nearly 1.7 million tons of corn in nine months between September last year and May this year, the Myanmar Pluses, Beans, Maize, and Sesame Seeds Merchants Association (MPBMSMA) said on Saturday.

The country's 2022 corn season started in September last year. During the nine months, Myanmar shipped over 1 million tons of corn by sea, while it exported nearly 600,000 tons to Thailand and about 50,000 tons to China via land borders.

The Southeast Asian country has set a target to export over 2 million tons of corn in the 2023-24 fiscal year, according to the Myanmar Corn Industrial Association. Myanmar exports corn to several countries, including Thailand, Vietnam, China, the Philippines and Malaysia.

In Myanmar, over 2 million acres of land were used to cultivate corn. Every year, the country produces 3.2 million tons of corn. Around 70 percent of corn is cultivated during the rainy season, while the remaining 30 percent is grown in the winter season.

PBF stresses essential changes in taxation system to boost economy

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan's tax assessment system needs essential changes to prompt development of the national economy. Fiscal policy and tax administration are crucial for businesses in the formal sector to compete on an equal footing with those in the informal sector.

These views were expressed by Pakistan Business Forum Additional Secretary General Dr Urwa Elahi while talking to APP here on Saturday. She said that the capability and capacity of FBR to implement policies and the political will to pursue those outside the tax net were required for these reforms.

She said any action taken in a hurry for instant tax revenue would affect the profitability of formal sector businesses as well as the tax collection system. "Taxes ought to be straightforward, foreseeable, and in favour of business expansion and the formalisation of economy. It should be the goal to increase tax revenues by expanding the tax base and improving the profitability of current taxpayers. Currently, the sector that accounts for 20 percent of GDP contributes a disproportionate 56 percent of taxes. More jobs should be created, value-added exports should rise, and sensible import substitution should be encour-

aged. Taxes should be looked at in relation to manufacturing and commercial importers, as well as corporates and other types of business structures like Association of Persons," she elaborated.

Dr Urwa asserted that corporations, particularly those which were listed and adhered to a higher standard of governance and accountability, their owners and shareholders should not be penalised. According to the PBF office-bearer, the wholesale, retail, and real estate sectors had the potential to bring in Rs747 billion in tax revenue.

She explained that by raising the initial investment required to cover the tax that must be paid in early loss years, minimum tax based on turnover acts as a barrier to new players' entry. Because this is a simpler option than assessing taxable profits, FBR's reliance on minimum, advance, and withholding taxes has increased significantly. It is necessary to gradually phase out this reliance. Imposing a base turnover charge on SEZ (Special Economic Zone) undertakings and others in their expense occasion periods nullifies the point of the duty occasion.

To check for imports which were under-invoiced, electronic data exchange should be imple-

mented with key trading partners. Pakistan's under-invoicing of imports from China, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Germany, according to the Pakistan Business Council, results in annual losses of up to Rs 500 billion. The regions have minimal motivation to check pirating as customs obligation and GST avoided were government burdens and didn't hurt their incomes straightforwardly. It's possible that provinces will be rewarded for facilitating raids at shops that deal in illegal goods. The success of cellphone registration with the PTA and the Urdu language labeling requirements for imported food could be applied to other goods that were susceptible to smuggling, she suggested.

Dr Urwa Elahi said that provinces had the potential to generate Rs 372 billion in untapped tax revenue from agriculture taxes and Rs 380 billion from property taxes. Presently, all territories were assembled to raise just Rs 3 billion from agrribusiness charge and Rs 20 billion from local business charge. The case for renegotiating the National Finance Commission Award, which is unsustainable for the federal government in its current form, should be strengthened by higher provincial tax revenues, she concluded.

Stocks rise after bumper US jobs report, debt breakthrough

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Stock markets rallied Friday, closing out the week on a high in the United States following a bumper jobs report and a deal in Congress to avert a potentially catastrophic debt default.

The stronger-than-expected employment data released Friday morning suggests the US economy remains resilient despite concerted action from the Federal Reserve to suppress demand and bring down high inflation.

The passage of a debt limit deal through both houses of Congress appears to have eased market fears of a debt default as well, with Wall Street's "fear gauge" sinking to its lowest level since before the Covid-19 pandemic.

The US dollar strengthened against rival currencies as foreign exchange traders digested the news,

while Asian and European stocks also closed in the green Friday.

"The Senate swiftly approved the new debt ceiling deal in the US prompting relief in the markets," said AJ Bell investment director Russ Mould.

"A bigger bounce might have been forthcoming had investors not already been very much factoring in an agreement, with only a modest sell-off around the crisis," he added.

Official data released Friday showed that the United States added 339,000 jobs in May even as the unemployment rate climbed to 3.7 percent and wage gains fell, signaling a persistently strong labor market.

The debt deal and the "Goldilocks" jobs report -- neither too good nor too bad -- suggests the US economy "is not facing an

immediate risk of a recession," Edward Jones investment strategist Angelo Kourkafas told AFP.

Monetary policy officials have said a softer labor market and much lower inflation were key to the central bank being able to stop lifting borrowing costs.

Analysts had expected the Fed to relent on more than a year of interest rate hikes aimed at curbing historically high inflation if jobs market numbers cooled.

But Friday's job data drew different reactions, with some predicting the Fed is now under more pressure to increase interest rates later this month, while others suggested it can still afford to skip a hike this time around.

The higher-than-expected job creation figures "will add pressure on the

Federal Reserve to continue its path of increasing rates," said Srijan Katyal at the international brokerage ADSS.

"It's likely that the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates by at least 25 basis points when it next meets," he added.

But Kourkafas of Edward Jones said the "mixed" jobs report "suggests that they could possibly skip a hike in June and deliver more tightening if needed later in the year."

Oil prices meanwhile

jumped as traders eyed a weekend output meeting of the OPEC+ grouping of crude producers. London stocks were also lifted after pet care firm Dechra Pharmaceuticals agreed to a £4.5-billion (\$5.6-billion) takeover by Swedish private equity firm EQT and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority.

China's internet firms reports growth in first four months

BEIJING (APP): China's major internet companies and related services companies saw notable profit increase in the first four months of the year, data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology showed.

Profits of these companies surged 62.1 percent year on year to 38.4 billion yuan (about 5.4 billion US dollars) during the period, the data showed.

The combined business revenue of these companies stood at 408.3 billion yuan, up 3.3 percent year on year.

Major internet companies and related services companies are those with an annual business revenue of at least 20 million yuan.

China's electronic information manufacturing expands 1.8 pct in April

China's electronic information manufacturing reported steady expansion

in April, with the added value of major firms in the sector up 1.8 percent year on year, official data showed.

During the first four months of the year, the added value of major electronic information manufacturing companies edged down 0.4 percent year on year, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology.

This decline narrowed from a 1.1-percent fall in

the January-March period.

During the January-April period, the fixed asset investment in the sector grew 14.2 percent year on year, 5.9 percentage points higher than that of all industries in the same period, the data showed.

China's major electronic information manufacturers are those with an annual main business revenue of at least 20 million yuan (2.82 million US dollars) each.



In brief

Frenchman to stay at Real Madrid

MADRID (BBC): Real Madrid manager Carlo Ancelotti says he has "no doubts" that forward Karim Benzema will stay at the club. Reports this week linked the Frenchman with a lucrative move to Saudi Arabia. Benzema, 35, claimed "the internet is not reality" when asked about his future on Thursday. "Benzema is ready to play tomorrow, he's recovered nicely and he has a year left on his contract, so we have no doubts here," Ancelotti said on Saturday when asked about the player. Real Madrid play Athletic Bilbao on Sunday in their final La Liga game of the season. "The internet is not reality. I agree with Benzema," Ancelotti added. "The club's legends should finish their careers at Real Madrid. This is what the fans and the club want. The club, the fans and I think so." Benzema has won 25 trophies in 12 seasons with the club. However one player who will not feature for the Spanish giants next season is Marco Asensio, who is set to depart after eight years at the club. Forward Asensio, 27, shared a farewell video on his Twitter page and will leave when his contract expires this summer. He has won three league titles and the Champions League three times in his time at the club, scoring 61 goals in 285 appearances.

Coach Sammy's first test

LONDON (BBC): Daren Sammy hasn't even coached West Indies in one competitive game yet, but his selection has already been questioned in the Caribbean. Former West Indies batter Ramnaresh Sarwan is the latest to question Sammy's appointment ahead of Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who had led Jamaica Tallawahs to the CPL title last season. Sammy is no stranger to taking charge of a side amid turmoil. More than a decade ago, Sammy had been named West Indies' captain in a major shake-up after having played just eight Tests. He thrived as a leader, particularly in T20 cricket, marshalling West Indies to world titles in 2012 and 2016.

Quaid-e-Azam National C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 1st Quaid-e-Azam National Championship, 2023 continued here at Mushaf Squash Complex on Saturday. On 2nd day of the championship, quarterfinals and semifinals of Senior Men, Senior Women, Men Masters & Women Masters were played. In quarterfinals (Men), Farhan Zaman beat Faraz Muhammad 11/6, 11/4, 11/7 15 min, Waqar Mehboob beat Murahir Ali 11/7, 11/4, 11/4 18 min, M Aamad beat Abdullah Nawaz 11/3, 11/4, 13/11 27 min, Mehmood Mehboob beat Usman N a d e e m 7/11, 11/8, 12/14, 11/9, 11/9 61 min. In semifinals (Men), Farhan Zaman beat Waqar Mehboob 11/7, 11/9, 3/11, 11/5 32m, M Aamad beat Mehmood Mehboob 11/4, 7/11, 11/9, 11/2 29 min. In quarterfinals (Women), Amna Fayyaz beat Rushna M e h b o o b 12/10, 11/1, 11/3, 11/6 18 min, Zaynab Khan beat Anam Mustafa 11/4, 11/2, 11/4 15 min, Noor ul huda beat Noor ul a i n 11/6, 11/8, 9/11, 11/8 22 min, Maryam Malik beat Sana bahadur 11/5, 8/11, 11/8, 11/9 33 min. In semifinals (Women), Maryam Malik beat Noor Ul H u d a 9/11, 11/7, 10/12, 11/5, 11/3 38 min, Amna Fayyaz beat Zaynab Khan 11/6, 11/13, 8/11, 11/6, 11/6 39 min.

Josh Tongue claims five-wicket haul on debut as England seal victory

LORD'S (Agenices): Four balls was all it took... four balls and more than two sessions as Ireland's batters put on a dogged display to take their Test against England into a third evening - just - when making it to tea had looked like a sturdy ambition.

Josh Tongue's five-wicket haul on Test debut put his name on the Lord's honours board and the hosts on the brink of victory and Zak Crawley struck three fours off the first four balls of the innings to overhaul the 11-run target. Droll predictions abounded overnight about how long England's golf-loving players would need before booking their tee times and the fact that England were forced to bat again was down a 163-run partnership between Mark Adair and Andy McBrine after Harry Tector and Lorcan Tucker had laid the foundation with a fifty stand that signalled an improved Ireland batting performance compared to the first innings.

McBrine kicked on after Adair's dismissal but was stranded on 86 when Stuart Broad bowled Graham Hume with the eighth ball after tea to end Ireland's second innings, 10 runs in front. England claimed

three wickets in the morning session, including one for Tongue, which left him just one shy of the five-for to neatly cap a great week for the Worcestershire seamer. He was drafted into the squad for this match as injury cover for James Anderson and Ollie Robinson and retained his place alongside them in a 16-man squad for the first two Ashes Tests, unveiled on the stroke of lunch.

It wasn't until shortly before the scheduled tea break and with a ball that was 79 overs old that he sealed a spot on the joint honours board, as Tongue had fellow debutant Fionn Hand out edging a length ball just outside off stump to Crawley at slip.

England took the second new ball after 81 overs and handed it straight to Tongue, but McBrine and Hume stood firm to go to tea unbeaten on 85 and 9 respectively with Ireland four runs ahead.

With opener James McCollum playing no further part in the match after retiring hurt with a badly twisted ankle he sustained while batting on Friday evening, Ireland were effectively effectively 162 for 7 during the morning session. Scans showed no fracture, but McCollum

suffered suspected ligament damage and was resigned to watching from the sidelines in a moon boot.

Tector and Tucker had batted well the previous evening and comfortably navigated the first half hour on Saturday, adding 29 runs to Ireland's overnight 97 for 3. But then Jack Leach entered the attack and struck second ball as Tucker attempted to sweep and succeeded only dragging the ball back onto the stumps with his glove to end an assured innings on 44 and a fifth-wicket stand worth 63.

Joe Root came on and saw his fifth delivery muscled for six by Curtis Campher. Then Tongue, who had taken all three of Ireland's second-innings wickets the previous day, returned to action and went for back-to-back fours by Campher, the first a well-drilled cover drive and the second a complete miscue through mid-on.

Tector brought up a deserved half-century driving through mid-off and running two but Tongue had him out with his next ball, a short, wide delivery which Tector sent straight to backward point where Harry Brook juggled momentarily before holding on.

Rafael Nadal ruled out for five more months after hip surgery

MADRID (BBC): Rafael Nadal will be sidelined for another five months after having surgery on the hip injury that has kept him out of action since January.

The 22-time Grand Slam champion, who turned 37 on Saturday, had an arthroscopic procedure on Friday.

His team said it had gone well and the damaged areas had been cleaned and reinforced, and an old injury was also treated.

The Spaniard has said he plans to retire at the end of the 2024 season.

"Rafa will begin his progressive functional rehabilitation in a few hours and the normal recovery process is estimated at five months," Nadal's representative Benito Perez-Barbadillo said.

The former world number one wrote on Twitter: "Thank you for all the support you have shown me and that you show me every



day. "Today is also my birthday. Not in the desired or dreamed place, but still, thank you."

Nadal, who is missing the French Open for the first time in 19 years, had been practising in recent weeks but was not fit enough to play competitively at Roland Garros, where he is a record 14-time champion.

When outlining his retirement plans last month,

Nadal said he would be aiming to put himself in the best position physically for his farewell season next year, when he wants to say goodbye to the tournaments that have meant the most to him. Given the latest time-frame around his recovery, it looks unlikely he will return to the tour this season but could be back in time for January's Australian Open, which has won twice.

Austrian female Olympian Sabrina to attempt K2 on bicycle



ISLAMABAD (APP): Four-time Austrian female Olympic judoka Sabrina Filzmoser deems to attempt K2 (8,611-metre) the world's second highest peak, on a bicycle.

"Weeks before it wasn't easy for me to decide but with support from the Austrian embassy I want to start the mission. I intend to ride on a bicycle on Sunday from Islamabad to K2 Base Camp via Skardu before climbing K2," she said in a press briefing here at a local hotel.

Sabrina Filzmoser was a 2005 and 2010 World bronze medalist 2008 and 2011 European Champion. 7th at the 2012 Olympic Games. Winner of the Super World Cup Tournoi de Paris 2006 and 2008. Winner of the Grand Slam in Paris twice. Bronze medalist at the Grand Prix in Cancun in 2017. In 2019 she took bronze at the Grand Prix in Budapest as the oldest medalist ever in the Judo World Tour, and Tokyo 2020 was her fourth Olympics.

She did Judo for a peace

has been associated with the silver Jubilee celebrations of Youm e Takbeer. Takbeer Judo Club is a club for all. Any talented judoka doing a job in any private or public organisation can be taken care of by the club. Only he has to sign up with the club. The club administration will scrutinize the credentials and his future prospects would be on the stipend roll of the club," he said.

He also welcomed Asim Qureshi Chief Scientist, Convenor of PAEC sports and Member Governing Body of Takbeer Judo Club. "Two times Olympian by Qualification, Two times Commonwealth games medalist, Asian Medalist, South Asian Championship and games champion for a complete decade son of our National Legend Hussain Shah Olympic medalist of 1988 Shah Hussain Shah has consented to be the representative of Takbeer Judo Club," he said.

About Sabrina, he said PJJF came to know that Sabrina was coming to Pakistan for a peace mission to promote Judo through K2 Expedition. "Pakistan Judo Federation is grateful that Sabrina chose our beautiful country for this peace mission. She has consented to hold talent hunt and training sessions before the expedition, during the expedition as well after the expedition. Takbeer Judo Club has requested her to accept the post of Brand Ambassador of TJC which she has kindly consented," he said.



LORD'S: Josh Tongue leads England off the field after his five-for, England vs Ireland only test.

French Open 2023 Swiatek earns double bagel at Roland Garros, Coco beats Mirra

PARIS (BBC): Top seed Iga Swiatek says she does "not want to get lazy" after thrashing China's Wang Xinyu 6-0 6-0 to reach the French Open fourth round. Poland's Swiatek, going for a third Roland Garros title, has won four of her six sets without dropping a game. Coco Gauff used her greater experience to fight back from a set down against 16-year-old Russian Mirra Andreeva.

American sixth seed Gauff, who is still only 19, remained calm and turned the match around to win 6-7 (5-7) 6-1 6-1.

Swiatek, who beat Gauff in last year's final on the Paris clay, needed just 51 minutes to record her first "double bagel" at a Grand Slam. "I always try to kind of be careful, because you don't want to get lazy after winning these matches," Swiatek told a news conference. "It's never easy to win these matches. But on the other hand, sometimes all your head can remember is the score, and I always want to kind of be ready for every situation."

Swiatek, 21, has become known for the ruthless nature of her victories and winning a lot of sets by a 6-



0 or 6-1 scoreline - known as 'bagels' and 'breadsticks' - led to the creation of a Twitter account called Iga's Bakery. Asked about it following her win against Wang, she said: "I don't want to talk about the bakery. 'Twitter can talk about it but I'm just going to be focused on tennis. With respect to my opponents, I really don't want to get into that."

"I really get why people do that, because it's fun and tennis is entertainment. But from players' point of view, I want to be respectful to my opponents and you don't see the stuff that is behind the scenes."

"Sometimes it's not easy to play such matches and sometimes it's not easy also for the opponents." The world number one will face Lesia Tsurenko in the last

16 after the Ukrainian beat 2019 US Open winner Bianca Andreescu 6-1 6-1.

Despite suffering a thigh injury in Rome before Roland Garros, Swiatek has quelled any fears about her fitness with dominant performances in the opening three rounds.

Alongside Belarusian second seed Aryna Sabalenka, Swiatek is widely considered a favourite to win the clay-court Grand Slam and the pair's chances were also strengthened when Kazakh fourth seed Elena Rybakina - part of the emerging 'big three' on the WTA Tour - withdrew. Wimbledon champion Rybakina, who won the Rome title last month, pulled out shortly before her third-round match on

Saturday after struggling with a virus.

With Gauff bursting on to the scene as a 15-year-old at Wimbledon in 2019 still feeling fresh in the memory, it felt odd seeing her in the rare position of playing a younger opponent. Andreescu was still only 15 when she started her stunning run to the Madrid Open quarter-finals in April, turning 16 during the tournament and attracting praise from seasoned professionals - including Britain's former world number one Andy Murray - in the process.

Gauff insisted "age would not be a factor" when the two teenagers, who have practised together recently, played competitively for the first time.

But it was the American's greater experience that shone through. In front of an enthralled Court Suzanne Lenglen, packed with fans eager to see two players who could be around at the top for years to come, the pair demonstrated their talent in a dramatic first set full of stunning shot-making, intense long rallies but also fragility.

Polo exhibition match ends in draw

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exhibition match between Islamabad Club Polo junior team and Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club ended in a 4-4 draw here at the Islamabad Club Polo Ground on Saturday.

As the match began, the score was equal by 1-1 in the first chukker while both teams scored one goal each again in the second chukker. Charlie Matthews scored two goals making it three for Dubai Club in the third chukker.

Chengiz Khan Leghari scored the third goal for Islamabad in the fourth and final chukker. Saim Abbas was the second to score a goal and took Islamabad to 4-3 lead. Muhammad Ali Malik scored the fourth goal for Dubai and levelled the game by 4-4.

Dubai scorers were Charlie Mathew, Ayden Al Ahmed and Muhammad Ali while Akbar Aurangzeb, Chengiz Khan Leghari, Saim Abbas and Hashim Waheed scored one goal each for Islamabad.



The visiting team players included Hassan Al Abbar, Ayden Al Ahmed, Charlie Matthews and Harmes Werle. They are accompanied by Lisa Matthews (Team Manager) and Jan Azam (Team Coach).

The players for Islamabad Club Polo team comprised Chengiz Khan Leghari, Akbar Aurangzeb, Saad Mirza, Muhammad Ali Malik and

Hashim Waheed.

The Islamabad Club was for the first time hosting a series of exhibition matches on June 3 and 4 between the junior team of Islamabad Club and Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club. This was the first time a junior polo team is visiting Pakistan which as part of the sports diplomacy of Islamabad Club.

Challengers to take on Dynamites in final on Sunday

KARACHI (APP): The stage is set for an exciting final as Sidra Amin-led Dynamites take on Omaira Sohail-led Challengers in the 45-over final of the Pakistan Cup Women's Cricket Tournament 2022-23. The final will be played at the State Bank Stadium in Karachi and will be live-streamed on Pakistan Cricket Board's official social media channel.

The toss will take place at 0830, while the first ball will be bowled at 0900. Both sides met in the final of the one-day tournament before on 20 February 2018, when Dynamites overcame Challengers by 190 runs at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

The victors of the final this year will pocket PKR1 million along with the silverware. The losing team will end up taking Rs500,000.

The player of the match will earn Rs20 million and the player of the tournament will get Rs50,000.

Before Sunday's final, both sides had met each other twice in the one-day phase of the tournament.

In the first encounter staged on 27 May, Dynamites defeated

Challengers by eight wickets, while the final-round match of the second phase on 2 June between the two sides ended with Challengers winning a thriller by seven runs.

Sidra Amin, the captain of the Dynamites, has been leading from the front with her stellar performances in the competition. She currently tops the batting charts with 231 runs from four matches, including two half-centuries. Her highest score of 95 against Blasters demonstrated her ability to anchor the innings and provide stability at the top of the order.

Sidra's form will be crucial for Dynamites as the team will be without their star player Bismah Maroof, who featured in three matches and will not be available for the final due to prior family commitments.

Meanwhile, Challengers will be relying on their skipper, Omaira Sohail, and opening batters Javeria Khan and Javeria Rauf, who have been in fine touch throughout the tournament. Javeria Rauf is second on the batting charts with 150 runs from four matches, while Javeria

Khan, currently placed third on the batting charts with 133 runs, played a match-winning knock of 83 runs against Dynamites in their previous encounter. Omaira has scored 108 runs from four matches with her 75 helping her side to a five-wicket win over Blasters on Wednesday. In that match, Javeria Rauf was declared player of the match for her 82-run innings. Challengers will be hoping the senior players replicate their performances and guide the team to victory once again in the final.

Dynamites hold the upper hand in the bowling stocks. Spinners Gulam Fatima and Nashra Sundhu have been exceptional, bagging nine and seven wickets respectively in the tournament. Their ability to pick up crucial wickets and create pressure will be vital in restricting the Challengers' batting lineup. However, the Challengers possess their own bowling threat in the form of Noreen Yaqub, who sits at the third spot on the bowling charts with six wickets. Off-spinner Noreen could pose a challenge for Dynamites' batters.



In brief

IRSA releases 167,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 167,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 191,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1426.13 feet and was 28.13 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 60,000 cusecs each. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1129.95 feet, which was 79.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 53,500 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 80,400, 81,900, 59,100 and 16,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 36,300 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 23,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

10 suspects held during operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the special directives of City Police Officer CPO Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani, Rawalpindi Police conducted search operations aiming to prevent crime here on Saturday, informed a police spokesman. The law enforcement agencies including district police, elite force and lady police participated in the search operations. Bani Police conducted a search operation in Kohati Bazaar and its surroundings, during the search operation, 07 suspects Owais, Bilal, Ghulam, Akhlaq, Imran, Zeeshan and Shaukat were arrested. Similarly, Waris Khan held 03 suspects Yasin, Tahir and Saeed. During the search operation, various houses were searched, data of 88 tenants collected, 10 shops and 270 people were questioned. SSP Operations Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi said that the purpose of the search operations was to take action against organized criminal gangs. Rawalpindi Police was making all-out efforts to protect the life and property of the citizens, he added.

Hospital's medical practitioners' issue

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) on Saturday met with the Executive Director, PIMS, Professor Dr Rana Imran Sikandar and discussed matters related to medical practitioners, working with the federal capital's major hospital. During the meeting, the ED PIMS assured the delegation that the increase in salaries of PGR and Medical Officers is under consideration keeping in view the prevailing high inflation situation. He listened to the concerns of doctors on the increasing incidents of attacks on them in the hospitals. He said that issues related to the functioning of the hospital's air conditioning system will be addressed by June 30. The delegation led by PMA PIMS President Dr Mushtaq expressed the hope that immediate steps will be taken to ensure the safety of doctors in the hospital by taking concrete steps. The delegation discussed the matter of promotion and increase in salaries of medical officers of PIMS besides making PGR's duty hours on a specific-hour basis system. The PMA members stressed the need to make more learning opportunities for trainers on emergency laparoscopic procedures.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in a meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Stock Exchange led by Mr. Farrukh Hussain Khan, MD/CEO PSX at FBR (Hqrs).

Mushaal urges world for urgent steps to stop HR violations in IIOJ&K

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Saturday urged the global community, especially the European Union to take urgent steps to stop the human rights violations and crimes against humanity in the Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K).

Talking to a private news channel here, she said that "The Modi regime is attempting to silence the legitimate political voices of the people in IIOJ&K through such brutal measures". Modi-led Hindutva government has miserably ruined the lives of innocent people of occupied Kashmir, she added.

"The people of IIOJ&K were continuously facing the worst form of brutalization and abuses by Indian occupation forces", she added.

She further said that her husband Yasin Malik was facing life imprisonment in Tihar Jail and India was subjecting him to vengeance to break his resolve of freedom, but he is firm in his stand on the Kashmir dispute.

India has a long history of using the judiciary and other state apparatus to suppress the political and democratic dissent and legitimate political voices in the occupied Kashmir, she said.

"Yasin Malik is being targeted merely for his political beliefs. His only

crime is that he refused to accept the Indian dictation on Kashmir", she said.

The Modi leadership has totally failed to fulfill people's aspirations, adding, most parts of Jammu are facing scarcity of potable water and power and dilapidated condition of lanes as well, she mentioned.

She also urged the international community especially the EU to play its role in facilitating a just and peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people for ensuring durable peace in South Asia.



ANKARA: Marriyum Aurangzeb Federal Minister for information and broadcasting greets Turkish president recap Tayyip Erdogan at his inauguration ceremony.

JEPTs key to renewable energy transition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Just energy transition partnerships (JETP) are vital to phase-out coal and mobilize investments towards renewable energy transition in Pakistan.

This was the crux of a symposium on "Just energy transition in Pakistan" jointly organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Network for Clean Energy Transition in Pakistan: Research and Advocacy here on Saturday.

SDPI Joint Executive Director Dr Vaqar Ahmed highlighted that the current challenges slugging rapid offtake of renewable energy in Pakistan arise from inadequacy of infrastructure and grid stability. He stressed innovative decentralized energy models, micro-grids, encouraging development of local RE industry and building storage capacity to address these challenges. Michael Waldron, Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) emphasized the need to increase energy sector investments by 3-4 folds to meet SDGs.

He highlighted that JETP can play key role by providing low-cost finance to renewable energy, promote investment-grade domestic policies to phaseout fossil fuels, and support just transition for affected workers. He further stressed prioritizing halting coal power development and retirement of existing plants and considering solutions for repurposing of coal power plants and incentivize RE solutions. Dr Khalid Waleed, Lead Researcher, SDPI highlighted that Asian Development Bank's Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM) can provide technical assistance, policy support, capacity building, and financing mechanisms. He highlighted various factors which must be considered for

effective implementation of the ETM.

These include analyzing the long-term sustainability and accumulation of debt, conducting comprehensive research and data collection, establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, promoting knowledge sharing and learning from other countries experiences, adapting the approach to the local context, building capacity, raising public awareness, and engaging stakeholders.

Fiza Qureshi, Manager Program, Indus Consortium, expressed that ADB's ETM lacks a direct communication line for all stakeholders to air their concerns. Stakeholder mapping does not consider the broader communities that are impacted by these powerplants and there is no indication of carrying out an assessment for compensating broader communities

and areas that are adversely impacted due to polluting assets. Data disclosures, transparency and openness in the ETM process are essential to take all stakeholders' concerns on board. Syaharani, Researcher, Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL) urged for data disclosure by ADB and other stakeholders in implementation of JETP for effective monitoring of the process. A supporting policy and framework is needed to manage the workforce transition as there is still a huge gap when it comes to the socio-economic aspects of the transition. Asad Mahmood, renewable energy expert mentioned that revisiting ambitious NDC targets can demonstrate Pakistan's readiness for climate action when UNFCCC's "Enhanced Transparency Framework" comes into action and states have to report NDC tracking activities and the tools (ETM and JETPs).

NOC mandatory for sacrificial animals' hide collection

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Punjab government has made prior approval for the collection of sacrificial animal hides mandatory for welfare organisations and others said deputy commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi.

He said the provincial government had directed the district administration to strictly implement the plan regarding the collection of sacrificial animals' hides during Eidul Azha, warning anybody found violating the government orders will be dealt with in accordance with the law.

DC said applications for collecting hides of sacrificial animals would be received till June 20 and after the deadline, no application would be entertained. The charity organizations intending to collect the hides of the sacrificial animals are directed to submit applications to the office of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi for permission letter by June 20. The Home Department of the Punjab Government has banned the collection of the hides without the approval of the competent authority.

The applications to get a No Objection Certificate and formal approval for Murree and Kotli Sattian areas would be received in Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Office Murree.

691 out of 716 individuals detained in Islamabad released

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Islamabad Region President Ali Awan has said that 691 out of the total 716 individuals arrested in false cases related to the May 9 violence in Islamabad have been released.

In a statement on Saturday, PTI Islamabad Region President said that a total of 716 PTI workers including male and female were detained in connection to 34 alleged false cases related to the May 9 mayhem in the federal capital. Ali Awan said: "Thanks to PTI Islamabad organization and lawyer team's tireless efforts yielded results and 691 individuals got free hitherto. PTI Islamabad Region President held out assurance that the remaining 25 workers would also be soon set free to reach their homes safely.

'Attackers, violators in May 9 incidents to be brought to justice'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Human Rights, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada has said that the perpetrators, attackers and violators in the May 9 incidents would be brought to justice and termed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) accusation of ill-treatment of women in Punjab prisons as false propaganda.

Talking to the PTV News channel on Saturday, he strongly condemned the negative propaganda against the Pakistan Army including attacks on military installations and public and private properties.

He said people should have trust in their institutions. Everyone was arrested according to the law, Pirzada stressed, adding, there was no human rights viola-

tion against any woman in jails.

The minister said women inmates in jails were being provided facilities as per the rules.

Replying to a question, he said the jail administration expressed concern that despite a committee from the Punjab government visiting the jail and meeting with all the female inmates of PTI, a propaganda was being circulated on social media about the maltreatment of women.

To another question, he replied the political and economic stability of the country was the topmost priority of the PDM-led coalition government, adding, the government tried every bit during the last year to revive the economy.

Islamabad police elevate officers on merit

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad Capital police have elevated the number of its personnel to various ranks on merit and renewed commitment to boost the morale of the force by encouraging its personnel on merit, a police public relation officer said.

Following the directions of Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah Khan, a large number of officers and personnel were promoted in Islamabad Capital Police.

Islamabad Capital City

Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan presided over the departmental promotion committee meeting. On the recommendations of the committee, six DSPs have been promoted to the posts of SP besides promotions of 174 officers to other ranks during the current month. Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, which was attended by CPO Headquarters Awais Ahmed, CPO Security Division Hassan Raza Khan and AIG Establishment Syed Zeeshan Haider.

promotion against vacant seats. Following his directions, promotion of officers and personnel in Islamabad Capital Police is going on a large scale. A meeting of the departmental promotion committee was held under the chairmanship of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, which was attended by CPO Headquarters Awais Ahmed, CPO Security Division Hassan Raza Khan and AIG Establishment Syed Zeeshan Haider.

RDA demolishes under construction commercial building at Asghar Mall Scheme

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General (DG), Muhammad Saif Anwar Jappa here on Saturday conducted an operation at Asghar Mall Scheme and demolished an under-construction commercial building.

According to an RDA spokesman, the Enforcement Squad of RDA while carrying out an operation against an unauthorized and illegal residential cum commercial building being constructed on property no P-1566 in front of Allah Wali Mosque at Asghar Mall Scheme demolished it. He said the enforcement squad including Deputy Director Building Control, Incharge and Assistant Director Building Control, Building Inspectors and others took part in the operation and took action in accordance with the law against the rules violator.

He said that the owner of the property Dr. Abdul Haq was illegally constructing a

commercial building without approval and No Objection Certificates (NoC), plans and maps violating the building and zoning Regulations.

He said that the DG had directed the LU&BC Wing to take strict action against encroachments, illegal and unauthorized constructions and commercial activities without any discrimination.

He said that the DG had also directed the authorities to conduct a survey to categorize illegal residential and commercial buildings, constructed without approval, and regularize all illegal residential cum commercial buildings in the controlled area of RDA.

He asked the citizens to remove encroachments on their own to avoid legal action. The RDA also advised the citizens not to invest in illegal and unauthorized real estate projects and check their status before investment at RDA's official website.

ANF recovers over 130 kg drugs in eight operations; arrests seven

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), in its ongoing operations, conducted eight raids in different areas of the country and recovered over 130 kg of drugs besides netting seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman on Saturday.

He informed that in an operation near Islamabad Motorway Toll Plaza, seven kg of heroin was recovered from the possession of a drug smuggler resident of Charsada, traveling in a passenger van.

In another operation near Burhan Interchange Attock, 17.3 kg opium and over

41.2 kg of charras were recovered from a vehicle.

In the third operation near Ring Road Peshawar, 36 kg of charras was recovered from the secret cavities of a vehicle while an accused, a resident of Khyber was rounded up.

In the fourth operation, near NADRA Chwok, Torkham area, one kg of Ice drug was recovered.

The spokesman informed that in fifth operation, a raid was conducted near Al-Sadaat Hotel Quetta, 25 kg charras was recovered from the possession of a motorcyclist, resident of Quetta. In the sixth operation conducted near

PSO Petrol Pump in Sarai Sadhu area, in Kabiwala tehsil of Khanewal district, 1,500 grams of charras was recovered from the possession of an accused, a resident of Khanewal.

In the seventh operation near Government Islamia Graduate College, Sambrial Sialkot, one kg of charras was recovered from the possession of two motorcyclists who were allegedly involved in supplying drugs to students. Whereas in the eighth operation, 673 grams of charras was recovered from the possession of a biker, a resident of Gilgit, intercepted on Jalalabad Road, Gilgit area.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science & Technology, Agha Hassan Baloch addressing during the Award ceremony 2023 organized by Journalist Foundation at Ministry of Science and Technology.

Ministry extend condolences

KABUL (Agencies): Afghan Ministry of Foreign extends its condolences to the families of the victims of the train collision in India that killed and injured hundreds of Taiwan President Tsai-Ing Wen, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, European Council President Charles Michel, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and American envoy to India Eric Garcetti sent their condolences to those affected by the train crash, reports say on media.

16 historical sites discovered

BAGHLAN (Agencies): Sixteen historical sites were discovered in the Northern Province of the country Baghlan. Afghan archaeologists say that the history of the fifteen discovered sites dates back to the Sassanid and Kushanid, pre-Islamic periods, and the sixteenth historical site, which is a hill, belongs to Amir Abdul Rahman Khan time, a statement said. These historical sites have recently been discovered in the course of excavations by archaeologists.

4th case of polio reported in Nangarhar

JALALABAD CITY (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Health said that another case of polio has been reported in Bihsud district of Nangarhar province, bringing the national total in 2023 to 4 cases, all of which are in Nangarhar. "This new case of polio was reported in Bihsud district of the province. The child who was infected by the disease is 48 months old. Nangarhar and all eastern zones of the country are in danger of polio," the statement said. An official of UNICEF, Kama Shah Sayed, said that the children who are deprived of the vaccine are most likely to be affected by the polio. "However, there have been many campaigns for



polio, but still polio cases happen, the reason is that the children who are deprived of vaccine, are being affected," he said. Meanwhile, some residents of Nangarhar urged officials to launch further vaccination campaigns. "The medical teams should

be increased. The common people should be advised about it," said Mohibullah, a resident of Nangarhar. Prior to this, one polio case was registered in Bati Koot, one case was registered in Koot and another was registered in Nazian district of Nangarhar.

Sugar, flour and cooking oil prices down in Kabul

KABUL (Pajhwok): The prices of Indian sugar, Kazakh flour, Malaysian cooking oil and gold decreased during the outgoing week in Kabul, market sources said on Saturday. Zmarai Safi, head of the Food Traders Association, said the rate of 49 kilograms of flour decreased from 1,650afis to 1,550afis, 16-liter tin of Malaysian cooking oil from 1,750afis 1,700afis, and 49-kilogram of Indian sugar from 3,700afis to 3,600afis. Today as last week, the price of a 24-kilogram sack of Pakistani rice accounted for 3,000afis, a kilogram of African black tea for 400afis and the same amount of Indonesian green tea for 350afis, he said. Hamid Sufizada, a retailer on the Dahna-i-Bagh Market, said the retail price of a 49-kilogram bag of Kazakh flour was 1,600afis, a 24-kg bag of Pakistani rice 3,050afis and a 49-kg sack of Indian sugar 3,650afis. Similarly, a 16-liter bottle of cooking oil accounted for 1,750afis, one kilogram of black tea for 400afis and the same quantity of green tea for 450afis.

Gold price Mohammad Fawad, a jeweller in Timor Shahi area, said the price of one gram of Arabian gold decreased from 4,600afis to 4,550afis and the Russian variety from 3,550afis to 3,500afis.

Fuel prices remain unchanged A worker at the Ahmadaydar Group of Pump Stations said the price of one litre of petrol accounted for 65afis and diesel 63afis.

Afghani exchange rate Haji Hussain, owner of the Sadaqat Money Exchange Service, said one US dollar traded at 87afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees at 280afis.

Last week, one US dollar accounted for 87afis and 1,000 Pakistani rupees for 285.

Interim authorities to provide facilities for businessmen, investors

KABUL (Khaama Press): Taliban's acting Prime Minister Mawlawi Abdul Kabir met with the head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment, Mohammad Yunus Mohmand and stressed providing facilities for businessmen and investors in the country. During the visit, local investors and entrepreneurs said they are interested to take part in the economic development of the country by investing and providing job opportunities for the citizens, the statement said. Meanwhile, investors and entrepreneurs shared some of their challenges and suggestions and asked the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to provide facilities so that they could invest in different sectors and industries, which will benefit both the general public and the government. PM Kabir emphasized that the ruling regime has already taken concrete steps toward the economic



development of the country. He added that work on a number of major projects is underway and job opportunities have been created for thousands of people across the country. These remarks come as Afghanistan is currently going through dire economic challenges and a humanitarian crisis, among other critical issues, which has

already complicated the living conditions for ordinary people. Since the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, a large majority of national investors and entrepreneurs fled the country fearing persecution and death threats from the Taliban. Due to the late regime change, both private and public business sectors

faced unexpected changes, resulting in the closure of certain small and medium-sized businesses. Thousands of people lost their jobs and are now struggling for survival. Dire poverty and hunger have hit the war-torn country the worst in decades, largely depending on donations and aid from the international community.

Ministry pledges to build cold storage areas

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock intends to create standard cold storage and processing facilities to increase the agricultural capacity of the country. Sadrazam Osmani, technical deputy of the ministry, on a trip to Parwan said that the Ministry of Agriculture has prepared a plan for the establishment of these cold storage plants to solve the challenges facing farmers. "We have prepared a plan and sent it to the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate, we hope that it will be approved in the future, and we will work on it," said Sadrazam Osmani.

"We are faced with a lack of cold storage and markets, we have sent our requests to related organizations and the ministry, Insha Allah they accept our proposals," said Mohammad Rahim Namani, head of the agriculture department in Parwan. Meanwhile, some farmers said that the lack of cold storage is a serious challenge for them. "When it is tomato season, we don't have cold storage. Today, we sell 7 kilos of tomatoes for 30 afghani, but we could sell two kilos for 100 afghani," said Hamidullah, a farmer. Some plant owners of the agricultural sector in Parwan said that many of

their factories stopped operating after the fall of the previous government and they need the support of the current government to reactivate these factories. "Previously the production capacity of tomato sauce reached 100 tons in 24 hours, but this has stopped," said Mohibullah Rahmani, head of an agriculture processing plant. The harvest season of agricultural products has arrived in the country, but the lack of standard cold storage has become one of the most fundamental challenges for farmers and processing plant owners who cannot prolong the value of their produce.

Iran holds good talks with IEA over water rights



KABUL (Agencies): Iran's foreign minister has said that Tehran had "good negotiations" with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan over the issue of water rights. "We have the water rights issue on the agenda, and the [Iranian] president has assigned Hassan Kazemi Qomi (Iranian ambassador to Afghanistan) to follow up on the matter, with

the view that the issues between the two countries should go in the direct direction and be resolved," Hossein Amir Abdollahian told Iranian state media. On the recent border clash, he said that the clash did not have any agenda, and the situation in Afghanistan is understandable for Iran. Tensions between Iran and IEA escalated after

Tehran accused Kabul of restricting the flow of water to Iran. The tensions began last month after Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi warned the IEA needs to "honor" Iran's rights over the Helmand River. IEA officials have stressed that they are committed to the 1973 water treaty between Iran and Afghanistan, but there is a lack of water due to drought.

KANDAHAR (Agencies): The traditional annual "Anar Gul" or pomegranate flower and poetry festival held in Aino Mena township of the country's southern province of Kandahar, the provincial Information and Culture Department Mawlawi Inamullah Samangani, said that this is a place of pride and happiness and that the festival is celebrated in a secure and peaceful atmosphere, according to the statement. "After the takeover of the country by the IEA and

ending of the 20-year occupation, now the IEA's officials are making efforts towards building a progressive and prosperous Afghanistan in terms of economy and culture," the statement quoted Samangani. Pointing to the importance of culture and the national languages, Mujahid said that culture and language are the 'life of the nation' and we must protect and use them for the development of the country

and benefit of Islam, the statement added. Mujahid further said that the goals of lots of effort and sacrifices over defeating invaders were the establishment of the Islamic system, and now the writers, poets, and pen holders should work and support the Islamic system. Meanwhile, Minister Khairkhwah, said that the occupiers and enemies have been defeated, but still, they are making efforts to again interfere in the interi-

or affairs of the country, so there is a need to jointly work to neutralize the enemies' destructive intentions and plans, the statement further added. "Lots of the country's writers and poets had been targeted by the enemies in the past 20 years and now security has been country-wide ensured, therefore; all Afghans should work towards the maintenance of the culture and national unity," the statement added.

Conclusion Even though the UN and the international community have repeatedly condemned the restrictions on women, nothing has changed in the past 20 months, while more restrictions have been placed on women's participation in society. The research findings suggest that the current situation in the country will keep Afghanistan in a disadvantaged position for many years to come, with little chance of compensation. Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021, they have left a shameful track record in human rights, particularly women's rights. This record explains that the Taliban mindset is alien to accepting human rights, particularly women's rights. The present research says that in addition to poverty, the Taliban is a major contributor to more significant issues that now threaten Afghanistan, one of which is the promotion of a "misogynist mentality" in a society that does not recognize women's social engagement.

Women's social and economic engagement in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): Several analytical, illustrative, and comprehensive international publications highlight women's marginalized in Afghanistan under the Taliban administration. Based on a statistical survey, the current survey demonstrates how women have become disengaged from their families and society and become more isolated. There is no universal definition of women's engagement in various countries, even though women are an essential component of human society, and their engagement in society is as inevitable as men's engagement is. For instance, in societies with low literacy rates and structures prioritizing religious values over inclusive human values, the definition of women's engagement is reduced to serving men, and in this context, maintaining survival is balanced with the responsibility of raising children. Afghanistan is one of the countries where human values are negated in favour of ethnic and religious values.

Years of conflict and extreme poverty are the other factors that have prevented women from achieving meaningful social engagement. Despite the mediaeval culture, expecting women to preserve it by putting on veils, seeking out shadows, and being passive, the last two decades have opened horizons for women to engage society, and they have nonetheless acquired what is known as "relative engagement." The issue of women's participation in Afghanistan before and after the collapse of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the US military withdrawal on August 15, 2021, is discussed and analyzed in comparison. The current report is based on the Survey conducted through Digital Data Collection "Google Form". In the present Survey, the majority of participants (90%) were women, and the question of how much they could financially support their families prior to the fall of the previous government in Afghanistan was

asked. It was assumed that the understanding of participation problems lies in the economic concept and that women's engagement should start from families, known as society's most fundamental unit. In response to the question on how much they could financially support their family before the fall of the Republic government, about 70 % of female respondents answered in favour of "very much, and "much", 14.9% said they could "hardly" financially support their family, 10.3% and 5.7% have chosen "very less" and "Do not Know" respectively. It can be asserted that 45 % of women, including those who chose the "No Idea" option, were "actively" financially supporting their families, and 25% contributed less financially supporting their families. Overall, the research finding shows that before the fall of the previous government, a sizeable portion of women had what is referred to as "social engagement". Meanwhile, after the fall

of the previous regime, about 5.7% of the respondents answered in favour of "very much" and "much" regarding how much they could financially support their families. In other words, about 70% of women before the fall could financially support their families, while this decreased after the fall of the regime in less than two years, with 8% in the women's engagement of "very much and "much". In response to the question on how much they could financially support their family after the fall of the Republic government to show the women's engagement in society, among the given option, 61.4% chose "less" and "very less", and 33% selected "No Idea" options. The finding of the Survey shows that women's engagement has been strongly affected by the Taliban, both in society and family. According to the Survey, women lack social participation/engagement in the family and society. The consequences of the complete and systematic

exclusion of women from public life have also left a destructive impact on the country's economic situation and families. Among the respondents, 26.1 % said that the monthly expenditure of families has changed from 40 thousand AFG in the past to 10 thousand AFG 27.6% of respondents. The survey finding shows that the monthly expenditure of 55.6% of families in Afghanistan was between 30 to 40 thousand AFG before the regime change. In comparison, 31% of families had a monthly expenditure of 30 to 40 AFG after the regime change. Finally, 3.4% of the respondents, including male and female, said that their family's monthly expenditure before the fall of the regime was 10 thousand AFG or less. In comparison, this has increased to 27.6 % after the fall of the previous government. International organization reports In addition to the Survey's findings, briefly discussed above, reports

from international organizations were released, reiterating the Taliban's decrees denying women's participation in Afghanistan and highlighting other aspects of the issue. According to a report released by the UN Development Program (UNDP) in October last year, the ban on women's work in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime has estimated one billion dollars lost to the country's economy. Meanwhile, it has also been estimated that the ban on women's social activities in Afghanistan will cause a 20 % decrease the country's net income. In addition, a report released by UNESCO shows that the presence of women and girls in Afghanistan's universities has increased 20 times after 2001, while it has decreased to zero again since the Taliban took control of the country in 2021. Furthermore, it has been almost 700 days since girls were prohibited from attending school beyond the sixth grade, considered one of the most significant

pillars of society. Since December last year, women have been banned from working with domestic and foreign non-governmental organizations. Reports indicate that the Taliban has issued at least 43 separate decrees to "systematically erase women and girls from the public space." As many as 400 women working with the United Nations and relevant organizations were also banned in April; as a result, women are even denied from working with aid agencies. UN experts, and the international community, including Amnesty International, have described the current suppressive policies in Afghanistan as "discriminatory" and that the Taliban have committed a "crime against humanity" by "systematically erasing women from public space. The World Economic Forum (WEF) reports that Afghanistan is at the bottom of the list for the "gender gap" with the Taliban, indicating that Afghan society has "severely" perverted gender equality.

Conclusion Even though the UN and the international community have repeatedly condemned the restrictions on women, nothing has changed in the past 20 months, while more restrictions have been placed on women's participation in society. The research findings suggest that the current situation in the country will keep Afghanistan in a disadvantaged position for many years to come, with little chance of compensation. Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021, they have left a shameful track record in human rights, particularly women's rights. This record explains that the Taliban mindset is alien to accepting human rights, particularly women's rights. The present research says that in addition to poverty, the Taliban is a major contributor to more significant issues that now threaten Afghanistan, one of which is the promotion of a "misogynist mentality" in a society that does not recognize women's social engagement.



WEST BANK: Palestinians holding a protest against Jews settlement in their areas as Israeli forces clash with them.

Marriyum congratulates Erdogan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Saturday congratulated Recep Tayyip Erdogan on swearing in as President of Türkiye for the third time. According to a news statement, the minister met the President of Türkiye and first lady Emine Erdogan during the inauguration ceremony in Ankara.

The minister said the historic victory of Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Türkiye presidential election was an expression of the continued confidence reposed by the Turkish people in him. Under his leadership, Türkiye would further prosper, she added. Marriyum said Pakistan and Türkiye were brotherly countries, and their relations would get a boost in the coming days.

SC Act: Hearing fixed for 8th

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Supreme Court Saturday fixed the hearing of pleas for June 08, urging the court to set aside incumbent government legislation 'Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023'. An eight-member larger bench of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial will hear the petitions on June 08.

Earlier, the top adjudged the case on June 01 where Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had submitted a reply to the Supreme Court in the case challenging the practice and procedure law. The PTI had urged the supreme court to declare the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Law 2023 null and void. The law should be declared unconstitutional, the petitioner pleaded, adding clauses 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 of the Act should be declared illegal. The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) law was against the independence of the judiciary.

It is pertinent to mention that three days ago, Supreme Court Bar Association President Abid Zuberi had stated that parliament limited the judicial authority by enacting the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill 2023, adding the law was against the constitutional principles. Mr Zuberi said this in his written response he submitted to the Supreme Court. Under Article 191, the Supreme Court had the exclusive power to amend the rules, the response said. Meanwhile, the government taking a significant step towards implementing the Supreme Court Review of Judgments and Orders Act 2023, issued a gazette notification, marking the official commencement of the Act.

Zardari extends stay in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan PPP co-chairman and former president Asif Zardari has extended his stay in Lahore to meet political leaders and to devise future political strategy amid the fluid political senecios that have been changing with each passing day.

Asif Zardari will continue his political activities where the former president will meet more political figures on Saturday. He also convened PPP Punjab chapter meeting today to consult on party's issues and for the election preparations in Punjab.

JI says country passing through crucial period

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Hundreds of the Jamaat-i-Islami workers led by their local leaders on Saturday warmly received the party's central chief Sirajul Haq on his first arrival to the Lower Dir district after he escaped a suicide attack in Zhob area of Baluchistan on May 19. The JI workers led by their district chief and former MPA Izazul Mulk Afkari gathered at the Chakdara interchange on the Swat motorway and chanted loud shouts of 'Siraj Zindabad and Jamaat-i-Islami Zindabad' on his arrival. They also showered flower petals on their leader. The workers also gave a warm welcome to their chief at Talash, Khazana bypass road, Jail Chowk, Timergara and Balambat.

Addressing the workers at Chakdara and Timergara, the JI chief Sirajul Haq

played the government for its failure to provide relief to the general public. He said the Pakistan Democratic Movement, Pakistan Tehreek Insaf and Pakistan People Party leaderships had badly failed to govern in the country according to the wishes of its citizens. The JI chief said that 240 million Pakistanis were heir-less as there had been no ruler to resolve miseries of the people.

The JI chief said that practically there seemed no writ of the government at the center and in the provinces. He alleged the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province had become a heap of explosives and no one felt secure. He said that a suicide bomber attacked his convoy in Zhob Balochistan on May 19 but he remained unhurt. He said that despite the passage of 16 days he was yet to be informed about the

attacker. He said that it was the state and its agencies' responsibility to carry out investigations but they seemed least bothered.

The JI chief said the establishment too had no solution regarding the issues faced by the nation. Mr Haq said the country was passing through a crucial period as it faced severe political and economic instability. He alleged the country was being run on ad-hocism. He said the JI could provide an alternate leadership as it had an honest, devoted and hardworking team. He clarified that the true Islamic system was the only solution to all problems faced by the nation. The workers' receptions were also addressed by the JI nominated candidate for NA 6 and former provincial khaateeb Maulana Muhammad Ismail, district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari and others.

Over 36,000 Pakistani Hajj pilgrims arrive in S Arabia

MULTAN (Agencies): Over 36,000 Pakistani Hajj pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia and out of these, 28,000 are staying in Madinah. Out of these, 28,000 are staying in Madinah while the other 8,000 have arrived in Makkah after completing their eight-day stay in Madinah.

According to media reports, Pakistan Hajj Mission has deployed over 100 Haram Guides to assist pilgrims at the entrance, exit points of Masjid Al Haram. These dedicated Haram guides, proudly displaying Pakistani flags and sporting distinctive green caps and vests, are strategically positioned at various entrances of the Grand Mosque.

The primary role of the Haram guides is to provide valuable assistance and guidance to the pilgrims, ensuring that they are directed towards the buses that will take them comfortably to their assigned accommodations.

To ensure maximum convenience for the pilgrims, the buses for each sector are strategically stationed at designated locations.

It is pertinent to mention here that Hajj flight operation for Pakistani pilgrims kicked off on May 21 as the first Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight departed from Pakistan for Saudi Arabia from Karachi with 328 pilgrims. Pakistan International Airlines is using Boeing 777 and Airbus 320 for its massive Hajj operation. Over 65,000 intending pilgrims will be transported to Saudi Arabia in the operation.

Meanwhile, the catering companies and hotels serving Pakistani pilgrims in Saudi Arabia will be rewarded for their exceptional performance, including the provision of enhanced building capacity and food quotas, Director General Hajj Abdul Wahab Soomro said.

Talking to the intending hajj at a welcome reception here Saturday, he highlighted the significance of maintaining accountability and upholding high standards throughout the pilgrimage experience. He further emphasized that under-performing entities would be subjected to penalties as a means to

ensure their responsibility. The DG expressed the commitment to exert utmost efforts in providing optimal facilities and constructing top-quality buildings for the hajjaj.

During the stay in Makkah and Madinah, he acknowledged the possibility of encountering minor issues and assured that Moavineen e hajjaj, stationed at each building, were available to address and resolve any problems faced by the intending hajjaj. The Director General conducted personal visits to the dining halls, where he sampled the food and expressed contentment with the quality that was being offered.

Sajjad Yoldrim, the Director of Moavineen e hajjaj at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, informed the Director General that a total of 26 Moavineen e hajjaj have been deployed to 13 kitchens in Makkah Mukammal. These dedicated personnel work 12-hour shifts to monitor and maintain the quality of food served to the pilgrims.

People seen true face of PTI on May 9: Muqam

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs and National Heritage and Culture Division, Engineer Amir Muqam has said that the entire nation stands firm with its institutions as well as the armed forces of Pakistan and are proud of them.

He further said that he will not disappoint his martyrs and veterans. The adviser appealed to the people to support Muslim League-N under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif for the sake of prosperity and development in Pakistan. He said that if PML-N gets a chance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, they will run Metro and Green Line buses like in Punjab, throughout the province. The adviser said that alongwith PML-N, the best financial and economic team exists in the form of Ishaq Dar and Ahsan Iqbal. Adviser to Prime

Minister and President Muslim League-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter, Engineer Amir Muqam said that he will soon inaugurate a passport office in Tehsil Takhtbhai, which is a special gift for the people of the area. He further said that Jamshed Khan Mohmand is my brother who has truly represented his region. The adviser said that gas projects worth two billion were interrupted by the tyrannical rulers of PTI, but we will complete them soon.

Adviser to Prime Minister Engineer Amir Muqam also announced the construction of several new roads for Takhtbhai Tehsil. Former MPA Jamshed Khan Mohmand, Tehsil Takhtbhai President Mian Abdul Rahman and other prominent personalities also addressed the huge gathering present on the occasion of the workers' convention.

May 9, riots: 6 employees suspended

F.P. Report

MARDAN: The district education Mardan here on Saturday suspended six employees for their alleged involvement in May 9, riots and violence, the relevant sources told *The Frontier Post*.

The relevant officials of district education office Mardan confirmed that six employees including five teachers and one watchman were suspended over their alleged involvement in the riots and violence occurred on May 9, Mardan and other parts of the country.

They told that the suspended employees were identified as Wakeel Kah pst GPS Shah Kally, Muhammad Ismail pst GPS Khan Mian Kally Dagai, Ameer Hamza pst GPS Baro Shabbazgari, Tariq Shah ct GHS Skandary Mardan, Shakeel Ahmad pst GPbs Thawoos Tariqabad and Sher Shah watchman GHS Hadi Kally Takhtbhai.

They confirmed that all the suspended employees were nominated in the FIR no. 833 dated 09/05/2023 under sections 341, 324, 435, 427, 1208, 147, 148, 149, 7ATA, 143, 188, 500, 501, 337A(I), 337 f1 PPC/16-18 MPO.

Ex-deputy speaker KP PA arrested

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Police on Saturday arrested the former deputy speaker of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and two others in a murder case. According to police, a case containing sections related to murder and attempted murder charges was registered against him.

He is accused of opening fire over a land dispute on a rally taken out by the Essa Khel tribe within the Regi Police Station's precincts. The police sought a physical remand of the accused from a court which granted the same but only for one day. Jan was detained after a local court rejected his interim bail plea. The PTI leader has been elected twice as a provincial assembly member in 2013 and 2018 as a PTI candidate from Peshawar.

Hina to visit Norway from 5th: FO

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar will undertake official visits to Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium from June 5-13, the Foreign Office said Saturday. She will hold meetings at the Ministerial level to discuss political engagement and cooperation in development, trade and climate change. She would also meet lawmakers and local entrepreneurs, said a Foreign Office spokesperson.

In Belgium, Hina would hold meetings with Members of the European Parliament and senior officials of the European Commission. In Sweden, the Minister of State would attend the annual meeting of the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) as a keynote speaker. She would also present Pakistan's perspective on issues of regional and global importance and interact with leading European decision-makers, experts, think tanks and influencers for debates on foreign policy priorities and challenges, the spokesperson added.

NAB tightens noose around Buzdar

LAHORE (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has launched an investigation into appointment and transfers of government officials during tenure of former Punjab chief minister (CM) Usman Buzdar. Media reports said the Lahore accountability watchdog has launched the inquiry into appointment and transfers of government officials during Buzdar's tenure and sought 'complete records' from Services Secretary.

It claimed that allegations regarding bribery of millions of rupees for appointments and transfers were reported during the Usman Buzdar's tenure. Farhat Shahzadi aka Farah Gogi and former Principal Secretary Tahir Khursheed were also allegedly involved in the case, reports added.

All involved in May-9 mayhem to be punished: Atta Tarar

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Interior Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that all the attackers and instigators including women involved in the May-9 mayhem would get punishment, and cases registered against them would be taken to a logical conclusion.

Addressing a press conference at Model Town, he said that May 9 would be remembered as 'black day' as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) miscreants targeted and attacked national installations and burnt martyrs' monuments, which even the country's enemies could not dare to do. The SAPM said that those attacks were planned and instigated by the party top leadership for protection of party Chairman Imran Khan in 190-million-pound corruption case, adding that the PTI chief was involved in corruption of Rs 60 billion and plundering of the national exchequer. He said the money transferred by the UK National Crime Agency under an agreement was supposed to be deposited in the government accounts, but the PTI chief plundered it.

Atta Tarar said that the PTI chief tried to instigate his party workers after committing corruption. He said PTI leader Shahzad

Akbar should come back to the country and answer about the corruption charges levelled against him in various cases. He also condemned burning of memorials of national heroes, including Capt Karnal Sher Khan, on May 9. He said that he, on behalf of the nation, expressed sympathies with the families of martyrs and national heroes, as the violent PTI miscreants had hurt their feelings and sacrifices by burning martyrs' memorials.

Tarar said that now the PTI activists were indulging in propaganda on the social media that it was an injustice that woman activists of the party had been jailed and terrorism charges had been levelled against them. He clarified that the arrested PTI woman activists were directly involved in throwing stones at policemen, leading violent people towards Jinnah House [corps commander's house] and instigating people for an attack on the defence installations. That was why they were not innocent and they would have to face legal proceedings. The SAPM said that neither any innocent would be in jail nor any miscreant involved in attack would be spared, adding that the culprits would have to face the consequences of targeting the national institutions.

These were the culprits who, acting on the agenda of enemies, targeted the defence institutions, he said and added, "We will not rest until the arrest of all accused involved in the May 9 incidents". To a question, Tarar said that cases of such accused would be heard in the anti-terrorism courts, adding that action would also be taken against those involved in the baseless propaganda about May 9 incidents on the social media.

To another query, the SAPM said that a joint investigation team had been formed to investigate the May-9 mayhem, while the court had also ordered the PTI chief to cooperate in investigation process. He asserted that the PTI chief would have to be answerable for instigating people to attack the national installations. Atta Tarar said that the law-enforcement agencies' personnel deployed at Jinnah House on May 9 had shown restraint and tried to stop the miscreants. Responding to a query, the SAPM said that there would be no dialogue with the PTI terrorists or those who attacked the national institutions, adding that no NRO [deal] would be given to them and negotiations would only be held after completion of the accountability of the miscreants, he added.

President directs NBP to return Rs 87,000 to victim

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) to return

87,000 rupees to an illiterate female accountholder who was defrauded out of her money by the bank staff. The bank staff, taking advantage of her illiteracy used to withdraw more cash from her account and used to handover only Rs 3-5 thousand to her while keeping the rest of the withdrawn cash.

He also directed NBP to take action against those employees who exploited an illiterate woman and be on guard against such fraudsters. The President issued these directives while rejecting a representation filed by NBP against

the orders of the Banking Mohtasib which directed the bank to pay the complainant a sum of Rs 87,000.

The complainant identified as Mr Sher Muhammad had filed a complaint before the Banking Mohtasib (BM) that he was maintaining a joint account with his sister, Ms Manzoor Fatima, who was an illiterate and used to go to the bank to withdraw cash. The staff took advantage of her illiteracy and deprived her of her money. According to the complainant, there was a balance of about Rs 200,000 in their account which was reduced to only Rs 11,000 due to fraud. Feeling aggrieved, the complainant approached BM, which passed the order in his

favour. The Bank, then, filed a representation with the President.

The President rejected the representation by observing that the bank had filed the representation beyond the statutory period of 30 days from the date of the original order and was hit by limitation. He stated that the bank did not assail the original order of the BM, but chose to file an incompetent petition, which the Mohtasib rejected. He added that the existing law did not allow the condonation of delay to entertain such a representation that was time barred. The President held that the representation deserved to be rejected out rightly as time-barred and NBP was directed to return Rs 87,000 to the accountholder.

Irfan: Govt wants to boost judiciary not undermine it

LAHORE (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Accountability Irfan Qadir said on Saturday the government wanted to strengthen the judiciary and not undermine it, so that the country could come out of the current challenges.

Addressing a press conference at Governor's House here, he said: "We want the country to progress and all state institutions should work within their limits." He said the foremost duty of every citizen was to stay loyal to the state and then show obedience to the Constitution and the law.

The SAPM said that no one was above the law and Constitution, adding that every person was subservient to the law and

Constitution. He said that legislation was the privilege of the parliament and it had nothing to do with the judiciary. He said that judiciary had the right to point out whether any section of the law, passed by the parliament, was not in line with the Constitution. The SAPM said that parliament and the government were state, not the judiciary and hence all citizens were subservient to the state.

Irfan Qadir said, "We are with the judiciary and we do not want to weaken it at all." The incumbent attorney general for Pakistan was showing patience. However, he added, the state was not weak at all. The National Assembly was going to complete its tenure in the coming August, and then elections

could be held in the country at the same time, the SAPM added. Holding elections in different provinces and the centre on different dates was not financially feasible, he clarified.

He said that personal egos should be set aside and the Constitution should be respected in the larger interest of the country. To a question, he said that a judge could be appointed in accordance with the law and the Constitution, and he/she could be removed through the Supreme Judicial Council. He said that establishment of constitutional court could help manage the backlog in courts. Some big political cases and special cases could be tried in the constitutional courts to lessen the burden of courts, he added.

IHC seeks police action against delinquents using LEA uniforms

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Expressing grave concern over criminal activities of individuals who have been reported to wear Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) security agencies uniforms in the federal capital, the Islamabad High Court issued directives to take stern action against delinquents involved in heinous crimes.

Issuing a written order on Saturday, a day after the high court heard the recovery case of Murad Akbar, brother of a former premier's adviser on interior and accountability

Shahzad Akbar, Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani stated that a gang was involved in these activities. As per the court order, authorities should file a separate case against these criminals and submit a copy of it to the court.

The court was further

informed that a first information report (FIR) had been registered in the case of Murad's disappearance, the written order maintained. The IHC's order came after the ministries of defence and interior and DIG Operations informed it that neither the Rangers, nor counterterrorism department (CTD) or police officials had picked up the ex-SAPM's brother. The order also stated that it is the responsibility of law enforcement agencies to deal with such incidents.

Directing secretary interior or DG Rangers and IG Islamabad to appear in person on June 5, the IHC stated that "the protection of life and property of citizens is the responsibility of the state". A day earlier, Justice Kayani had said that people were being picked up by men "dressed in" Rangers and

police uniforms but "nobody cares".

At the outset of the hearing, the advocate general apprised the court of the case details. Following this, the IHC inquired if the people who came to "pick up" Murad were from the counterterrorism department (CTD) or from the paramilitary force. The DIG police confirmed that they were neither of them. The court then questioned, "Who is seen in the footage?". To this, the DIG replied that they will look into the footage of the incident but required some time.

Irked at the remark, the judge stated that, "Millions of rupees have been spent on the Safe City project, personal videos of people are recorded and uploaded, but they [law enforcers] do not catch thieves and robbers."