

2 killed in S Waziristan blast

WANA (INP): Two people were killed and two others injured in blast near two residential houses in tehsil Sarokai of South Waziristan, police said on Tuesday. Explosive material placed in between two houses went off with big bang damaging both houses. Two people died and two were reported as a result of the explosion. Police and rescue teams rushed the scene and shifted the bodies and injured to hospital.

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Bilawal calls for boosting ties between Pak-Iraq

BAGHDAD (Agencies): Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party and Foreign Minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, visited the shrine of Imam Musa Kazim. He offered prayers for the unity of the Muslim Ummah and the prosperity of the country at the holy shrine.

During his visit, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also planted a sapling at the shrine of Imam Musa Kazim. Moreover, he attended the shrine of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, where the new gate of the mausoleum was specially opened for him. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari recited Fatiha at Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani's mausoleum and laid flowers.

Prior to this, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was warmly welcomed by Sheikh Khalid Abdul Qadir Al Mansoor Al Jilani, the Sajjada Nasheen of the Dargah of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was accompanied by Sheikh Khalid Abdul Qadir Al Mansoor Al Jilani to various parts of Mazar Sharif.

During his visit to Iraq, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held meetings with several prominent Iraqi officials. He met with Mohammad Rikan Al-Halbusi, the Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, Hamam Hammoudi, the head of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, Ammar Hakeem, the president of the Hikmat Party of Iraq, and Abdulamir al-Shamri, the Iraqi Minister of Interior.

During the meeting with the Speaker of the Iraqi



BAGHDAD: Minister of Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari meeting with head of Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq Dr Sheikh Hamam Hamoudi during his visit of Iraq.

Parliament, Muhammad Rigan Al-Halbusi, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari discussed the relations between Pakistan and Iraq, as well as various bilateral issues. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed his belief that cooperation between the two countries in the parliamentary sector will contribute to the strengthening of fraternal relations between Pakistan and Iraq.

He emphasized the importance of fostering high-level parliamentary relations between Pakistan and Iraq, highlighting the potential for both countries to benefit from sharing their respective experiences and expertise.

During the meeting with the President of Iraq's Hikmat Party, Ammar Hakeem, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari engaged in discussions on various matters of mutual interest, with a particular focus on the political relations between Pakistan and Iraq. The leaders exchanged views and perspectives on strengthening the ties between the two countries

in the political realm.

During the meeting with the head of the Iraqi Islamic Supreme Council, Hamam Hammoudi, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari underscored the significance of high-level political relations between Pakistan and Iraq for the benefit of both nations. The leaders also discussed the potential for increased cooperation in the field of health between Pakistan and Iraq. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari expressed that Pakistan and Iraq share a special bond as best friends, deeply connected by religion and traditions.

During the meeting between Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Iraqi Interior Minister Abdul Miral Al-Shamri, they discussed the facilitation of Iraqi visas for Pakistani pilgrims and the business community. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Iraqi Interior Minister Abdul Miral Al-Shamri reached an agreement to enhance cooperation in order to strengthen public relations between the two nations.

FP raises issue of Dr Aafia at US State Dept

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: The Frontier Post asked about Dr Aafia Siddiqui at the press briefing of the US State Department. Dr Aafia has been convicted on terrorism charges in the US and is sentenced to eighty years in prison. Last ask Dr Aafia met her sister Dr Fauzia after twenty years. Jamate Islami leader Senator Mushtaq Ahmed was also present on the occasion.

When asked by The Frontier Post that according to many journalists in Pakistan, the issue of Dr Aafia Siddiqui was mishandled by the government of Pakistan, the State Department official, Vedant Patel replied by saying that he has nothing to offer and that the relevant authorities will be in better position to comment on this question.

The Frontier Post again asked that US is known around the world for respecting human rights and whether it was possible to revisit the case because she is a Phd doctor and the Pakistani government didn't pursue the case properly. The spokesperson again replied by saying that the relevant law enforcing authorities will be in better position to answer this question.

A senior Pakistani journalist while talking to The Frontier Post said that Pakistani government is not interested in Dr Aafia Siddique and that even twenty some years ago while the trial of Dr Aafia was in progress, the government

(Continued on Back Page)

Govt to bring about green revolution to achieve self-sufficiency in agriculture: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the government was launching a Green Revolution 2.0 to make the country achieve self-sufficiency in the agriculture field. The prime minister, who chaired the meeting of the National Economic Council here, said the government was taking all-out measures to innovate the agriculture sector to enhance the production and par acre yield.

He said economic development topped the government's priorities for which it was investing in education, health, modern infrastructure, and technology sectors. The NEC approved a reviewed Public Sector Development Program 2022-23 and national development budget for fiscal 2023-24 with an outlay of Rs2709 billion. Under the development program, the center would spend Rs1150 billion including Rs200 through public-private partnership and Rs 950 billion of PSDP.

The total provincial development budget would be Rs 1559 billion. This includes Rs 426 billion for Punjab and Rs 268 billion for KP, for a period of four months as both the provinces were awaiting general elections and being ruled by caretaker setups. The NEC approved Rs 617 billion development budget for Sindh and Rs 248 billion for Balochistan. The NEC has approved an increase of 17 percent in the development budget which comprised 1182 development schemes including 311 new and 871 ongoing ones.

The Ministry of Planning and Development briefed the meeting about the 4RF project. It was told that a huge amount was being spent for the reconstruction of flood-hot areas, through funding from development partners including World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank. The NEC, which discussed and held a consultation on the overall economic situation also approved Pakistan Economic Outlook 2035. The prime minister said that the country could not progress until all of its federating units were prosperous.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting to discuss budget proposals regarding the energy sector.

He said despite funding constraints, the federal government would fulfill the provinces' demand for development funds and ensure judicious distribution of resources. In this regard, the prime minister said a committee has been constituted under Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal to ensure that no discrimination was carried out in the allocation of funds to the provinces. Prime Minister Shehbaz said by the end of PML-N government in 2018, the development budget stood at Rs1000 billion which was reduced to Rs550 billion in 2021-22. The national development was deliberately impeded through this criminal act, he remarked.

Contrarily, the incumbent government double the development budget despite the economic challenges and allocated Rs1150 billion for the next fiscal to make Pakistan progress and the common man to reap the benefits. The NEC was told that the growth rate stood at 0.3% despite the economic difficulties inherited from the previous government and the \$30 billion losses inflicted by the unprecedented floods.

The meeting also approved the economic growth target of 3.5% for the next fiscal year. It was told that the investment ratio stood at 13.61 % during the current year which has been set at 15% for the next year. The planning minister briefed the participants about the 5Es under which a special focus was being given to the promotion of exports, e-Pakistan, environment, energy, and equity. Under the frame-

work, an agenda has been devised which is inevitable for the country with the top focus on export growth.

The NEC approved Pakistan Economic Outlook 2035. The planning ministry, in coordination with provinces and other stakeholders, would prepare a vision document and strategy paper. The meeting was told that in the absence of any planning, the country's growth slowed down during the previous government which could have taken the fiscal volume to \$550 billion by 2035 and the poverty ratio to 40%.

Contrary to that, the incumbent government was coming up with a Transformational Growth Model to take Pakistan's economic volume to Rs1000 billion and annual growth rate to 6.2% and poverty rate reduced to 15%. The NEC was told that the next budget would focus on infrastructural development, social sector, climate change, education, information technology, agriculture, and reformation of energy sector.

The meeting also approved the annual program report of CDWP and ECNEC from April 2022 to March 2023. The meeting approved a Rs145 billion increase in the higher education budget taking the total budget to Rs60 billion. Contrarily, the previous government had allocated Rs 24 billion during 2021-22. Besides, the NEC also approved Rs80 billion for youth loans, Pakistan Education Endowment Fund, IT Start-ups, laptops scheme, skill development and venture capital program.

Secure Your Life: Take Preventive Measures against Brain Eating Amoeba Naegleria

Naegleria is grappling with a waterborne parasite known as **Brain Eating Amoeba**, which enters the human body through the nasal passage, causing an infection that leads to death within a few days for those affected.

Breeding Grounds:

- Clear water, especially warm water sources such as swimming pools, tanks, lakes, and hot springs without proper chlorination.
- Water supplied to homes or ablution areas can also be contaminated.

Symptoms of the Disease:

Within one to five days of the parasite's entry, initial symptoms begin to appear in the affected person. These symptoms may persist even after two weeks. The patient initially experiences fever, headache, nausea, vomiting, neck stiffness, followed by unconsciousness and coma, ultimately leading to death within **1 to 14** days.

Preventive Measures:

- Ensure the cleanliness of underground and overhead water tanks, and use chlorine or bleach powder in water.
- Use boiled or chlorinated water for rinsing the mouth, cleaning the nose during bathing, or performing ablution.
- Avoid using untreated water, particularly for activities like rinsing the mouth or bathing.
- Refrain from swimming or immersing in untreated water reservoirs such as swimming pools, rivers, ponds, etc.
- Keep the head above water while swimming in ponds and swimming pools.
- Avoid storing water for more than a week.



Your Safety is Important to Us!
Health Department, Government of Sindh.

13 dead,1,181 injured in 1,142 accidents in Punjab

LAHORE (APP): At least 13 people were killed and 1,181 injured in 1,142 in accidents in Punjab during the last 24 hours.

According to the Rescue 1122, 573 drivers, 52 underage drivers, 142 pedestrians, and 479 passengers were among the victims of the road traffic crashes. The statistics showed that 271 accidents were reported in Lahore which affected 268 people placing the provincial capital at top of the list followed by 95 in Faisalabad with 94 victims and at third Multan 68 with 61 victims.

According to data, 1,005 motorcycles, 60 rickshaws, 106 cars, 26 vans, eight buses, 30 trucks and 92 other vehicles besides slow-moving carts were involved in the accidents.

Police, PS take action against arms carriers

LAHORE (APP): In a joint operation, police and the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) successfully apprehended an accused involved in arms carriers. According to a spokesman for the PSCA, through monitoring and vigilant checking of the safe city cameras and social media monitoring an accused was captured.

On identification by the Safe Cities surveillance, police arrested Abdullah and recovered 30 bore pistols with ammunition. A case has been registered against the suspect.

Furthermore, the social media monitoring led to the identification of two more accomplices of the suspect and a team has been formed to apprehend the culprits.

SP Shahzad Rafique Awan said illicit weapons escalate crime incidents, police launched a crack-down on weapon holders.

SIU arrests two street criminals

KARACHI (APP): The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) Karachi Police on Tuesday arrested two alleged accused involved in number of street crimes in different areas of the megalopolis.

According to SSP SIU, arrested persons identified as Bilal Ahmed and Shahmeer along with their other accomplices namely Qadir, Sagib, Anees and Junaid committed several robberies.

The accused committed street crimes in Shershah, Baghdadi, Garden, Ghas Mandi, Meera Naka, Nawa Lane, Chakiwara, Lee Market, Agra Taj, Ranchore Line and other areas. They revealed that they sold the stolen mobile phones to an Afghan national. Arrested were habitual criminals.

The police recovered two pistols along with rounds from their possession. Cases of arms recovered from the accused had been registered under the Sindh Arms Act at the SIU Police Station and further investigations were underway.

250,000 youths registered for IT courses: Governor

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has said that the air-conditioned marquee was in the final stages of construction and it would house information technology students of entrance test and classes till the time of construction of the convention centre at Governor House.

He was addressing a press conference at the marquee at gate number 4. IT experts Sir Zia Khan and Daniyal Nagori, JDC Head Zafar Abbas and IT Consultant of Governor House Muzzamil Ather were also present on the occasion.

The Sindh governor said, "The media has been invited to witness the progress of the construction of the marquee and inform the doubters that the initiative of IT training of 50,000 youth was not a false claim but it is a promise which soon would become a reality."

The overwhelming response from youth for registration on the website www.governorsindh.com was very encouraging where as many as 250,000 youths have registered themselves for the entrance test, he added. The Sindh governor said that

400 computers would be installed in this marquee where Sir Zia Khan and his team would start classes after the selection of youth based on the entrance test. "I am also very thankful to Sir Zia and Daniyal Nagori for extending their services free of cost for this vital initiative", he added.

Tessori said, "For the first time in the history of Pakistan, such a big marquee is being erected for education purposes as before no such arrangements were made for a political gathering or any entertainment event." He said that at the time when the IT training programme was announced, some quarters raised objections claiming that it is unimplementable. But as the doors of Governor House were opened for iftar during Ramadan, the IT training would soon become a reality, he said. The Governor House would become active as an educational institution for youth, Tessori stressed. He also lauded the support of Saylani's Maulana Bashir Farooqui and JDC's Zafar Abbas and said that their input would make this endeavour a resounding success.

KU awards 36 Phd, 68 MPhil degrees in various disciplines

KARACHI (APP): The Advanced Studies and Research Board (AS&RB) of the University of Karachi has awarded 36 PhD, 68 MPhil, and one M.S. (30 Hours Course Work) degrees in various disciplines during the recently held ASRB meeting. The ASRB meeting was chaired by the KU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi, said a spokesperson on Tuesday.

The M.Phil degrees were awarded to Syed Ghufuran Alam (Applied Chemistry), Zia Ullah, and M. Qaveem Akhtar (Applied Economics), Ilma Sharif, and Shahdah Hanif (Applied Economics [AERC]), Kulsoom Bibi, and Abeer Mohsin (Biochemistry [NCP]), Affan Tahir (Biotechnology [KIBGE]), Muhammad Askari, Kamran Ashraf, Mahnoor Khan, and Sumara Shaheen (Botany), Syeda Nida Fatima (Botany [ISHU]), Sara Zaidi, Sumera Karim, and Anas Iftikhar (Business Administration [KUBS]), Javaria Abbasi, Arshad Fazal, Sundus Ahsan, Faiza Nayyer Zaidi, and Adnan Ahmed (Chemistry), Naseer Ahmed, Ali Raza, and Rida Tehreem (Chemistry [HEJ]), Tabasam Jabbar (Clinical Psychology), Toqeer Ahmed Khan (Criminology), Kamran Khan, and Nayab (Economics), Muhammad Murid Gabol (Education), Tahira Bano, and Asifa Shahid (Food Science and Technology), Abdul Khaliq, Mehwish Kiran, Hafiz Manzoor Ahmed Kalwar, and Rabia Javaid (Islamic Learning), Aqsa Haider Memon, and Mariyum (Library and Information Sciences), Shiza Khan (Mass Communication), Linta Jabeen, and Safdar Ali (Mathematics), Quratul Ain (Marine Biology), Shuja Ahmed (Microbiology), Dr Vinita Kumari (Microbiology [BMSI]), Muniba Inam, Mehwish Jameel, Khizra Sohail, and Ayesha Sadiq (Pharmaceutical Chemistry), Monica Prakash, Iqra Haider, and Sehrish Erum (Pharmaceutics), Yusra Khan, and Amima Asif Ghouri (Pharmacognosy), Nazish Fatima (Pharmacology), Sagheera Bibi

(Physiology), Ayesha Ali, and Shahzad Afzal Kayabi (Public Administration), Muhammad Zahid, and Hafiz Muaz (Quran and Sunnah), Zubair Ahmed (Sindhi), Waheed Akber (Social Work), Aisha Khalid, and Saima (Sociology), Syed Muhammad Adnan (Statistics), Muhammad Riaz (Teacher Education), Nisar Hussain (Urdu), Abid Hussain, and Eram Akhtar Siddiqui (Usooluddin), and Hafiza Parsa Khalid (Zoology).

Meanwhile, the PhD degrees were awarded to Syed Mohammad Bilal Kazmi (Applied Chemistry and Chemical Technology), Munazah Nazeer (Applied Economics [AERC]), Mehwish Hamid (Biochemistry), Ume Kulsoom (Biotechnology [KIBGE]), Syed Muhammad Enam Ullah (Botany), Muhammad Ashtiaq Husain Ghori (Chemistry), Aaqib Ullah, and Adeeba (Chemistry [HEJ]), Muzaffar Ali (Clinical Psychology), Saadia Sultan Wahla (Geography), Muhammad Iftikhar (Health and Physical Education and Sports Sciences [HPSSS]), Muneer Ahmad (Islamic Banking and Finance [SZIC]), Zaheer Abbas, Syed Farhan Hussain Shah, Nazia Parveen, and Sadia Irum (Islamic Learning), Wajiha Shaikh (Marine Biology), Falak Naz (Mass Communication), Ambreen Zehra Rizvi (Mathematics), Dr Raziuddin Ahmad (Microbiology), Munirah, and Sumbul Zehra (Molecular Medicine), Shaista Zafar (Pharmaceutical Chemistry), Syed Hameez Jawed (Pharmaceutics), Nabha Iqbal (Pharmacology), Amjad Ali, and Shazia Nazir (Physiology), Adil Shakil Ahmed (Plant Conservation), Shazia Malik, Syed Zakir Shah, and Asif Raza (Political Science), Muhammad Mubashir Qadir, and Salman Ahmed Khatani (Public Administration), Imtiaz Begum (Quran and Sunnah), Syed Jafar (Sociology), and Beenish Siddiqua (Urdu).

Furthermore, the KU ASRB awarded M.S. (30 Cr. Hr) degrees to Muhammad Ehsan Mumtaz (Computer Science).

Hailstorm, heavy rain lashes city

LAHORE (APP): The hailstorm, heavy rain and gusty winds lashed different places of the city on Tuesday afternoon which provided relief to people from hot weather. Earlier, in the day, the temperature swelled to 38 degrees but in the afternoon, black clouds appeared over the horizon and gusty winds, hail storm and rain brought it down to 23 degrees Celsius, turning the weather pleasant.

According to a Met Office spokesperson, continental air is prevailing over most parts of the country while hailstorm caused by western currents approached into central parts of the country and same wet weather conditions with gusty winds

also reported in adjacent areas of the provincial capital.

Commuters faced difficulty while travelling on roads, however, clean and pleasant atmosphere gave the provincial capital a heavenly look. Rain in millimetre was recorded at Jail Road 18, Gulberg 20, Johar Town, 3, Airport 10, Laxmi Chowk 61, Mall Road 21, Mughalpura 21, Tajpura 22, Nishtar Town 01, Pani Wala Talab 27, Farrukhabad 10, Gulshan-e-Ravi 9, Sanabad 7 and Qartaba Chowk 43. Mainly hot and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country including the city.



LAHORE: Motorcyclists on the way during heavy rain that experienced the Provincial Capital.



KARACHI: Prominent scholars from Iran and other notables attend a program at the Cultural Centre of the Islamic Republic of Iran Karachi on 34th death anniversary of Imam Khomeini first supreme leader of Iran.

Governor Punjab hails LEAs for defense of country

LAHORE (APP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that role of officers and personnel of the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) in the war against terrorism is commendable.

Talking to a delegation of under-training officers of Sindh police at the Governor's House here on Tuesday, he said the nation salutes the LEAs who sacrificed their lives while

defending the country and the nation on the front-line.

Commandant National Police Academy Islamabad DIG Nauman Siddiqui led the delegation comprising under-tarining Deputy Superintendents (DSPs) of Sindh Police. Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the joining of police service by the young officers is encouraging

and the nation has high expectations them. He expressed the hope that the young officers would play their role in improving the police station culture and restore the confidence of people in the police. He urged the police officers to make honesty and good conduct their motto and render their services to the fullest to ensure speedy justice to the people.

Webinar held to mark World Environment Day

KARACHI (APP): Administrator Karachi Dr Syed Saifur Rehman on Tuesday said that the time has come to beat plastic pollution and protect our oceans, marking the time for action, World Environment Day 2023, urging everyone to do their part to protect future generations and contribute to the collective efforts to protect the planet earth.

By aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals, we can enable the world to tackle climate change.

He said this while speaking in a webinar on the occasion of World Environment Day organized in collaboration with KMC, Pakistan Development Forum and Universal Scout. The online session also highlighted alternatives to single-use plastics as well as how people can take steps to combat the problem.

Director of Pakistan Development Forum Dr Umair Ansari, a prominent scholar and environmentalist Dr Parvez Amir, Provincial Secretary of Sindh Boys Scout Association Syed

Akhtar Mir, Senior Director of Public Relations and Media Ali Hasan Sajid and other important personalities also participated in the webinar.

Administrator Karachi said that the world is changing, people in every country are taking steps and new innovations coming to achieve the global goals that are considered as the basis of sustainable development and new ideas and solutions are coming out every day, World Environment Day 2023 is a reminder that governments and businesses need to take timely action to tackle the problem of plastic pollution. Now is the time to accelerate this process.

He said that although plastic has many valuable uses, we have become addicted to single-use plastic products, which are having serious environmental, social, economic and medical impacts, one million Plastic bottles are purchased every minute worldwide while up to 5 trillion plastic bags are used worldwide each year. Overall, half of all manufactured plas-

tics are designed for single-use purposes, used only once and then thrown away.

Plastics, including microplastics, are now ubiquitous in our natural environment. World Environment Day 2023 calls for global cooperation and commitment to the SDGs.

Addressing the webinar, Director of Pakistan Development Forum Dr Umair Ansari said the PDF aims to educate people about the issue and empower them to take action in line with the guidelines of SDGs 13-17 which are plastic waste.

It ensures environmental sustainability. The time has come for a global response to a clean environment, responsible consumption, production, climate action, and life underwater and on land, he added.

Other speakers said plastic pollution has reached alarming levels, threatening ecosystems, human health and the sustainability of the planet. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of World Environment Day.

IPMG organizes meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) on Tuesday organized the 20th meeting of the Inter-Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) here, jointly with the collaboration of UN Women. Federal Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada attended the meeting as the chief guest. Meanwhile, Chairperson NCSW Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar, Country Representative UN Women Sharmela Rasool, Ms. Andrea S. Hillier Advisor Gender Security, representatives of Bureau of Statistics, Planning and Development Departments and Women Development Departments of all provinces and Provincial Commissions on the Status of Women including Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan were also in the attendees.

ANFseizes over 2854 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan seized 2854.398 Kg drugs & 112.7 Liters Hydrochloric Acid (HCL). Chemical worth US\$ 70.411 million internationally and arrested 18 accused including a foreigner besides impounding six vehicles while conducting 26 counter narcotics operations throughout the country during last week. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 2300.1 Kg Opium, 28.312 Kg Heroin, 45 Kg Crystal, 446.713 Kg Hashish, 34.216 Kg Methamphetamine (Ice) and 0.057 Gram Ecstasy Tabs (100 Tabs). ANF Balochistan recovered 2506 Kg Drugs & 112.7 Liters Hydrochloric Acid (HCL) Chemical in seven operations, arrested two persons involved in drugs smuggling and impounded a vehicle.

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Country's economic strengthening: KP Governor urges politicians to form 'Charter of Economy'

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Tuesday suggested the formation of 'Charter of Economy' to be signed by all the political parties with the objective of strengthening the economic condition of the country.

He said in view of the destruction of public and private properties due to vandalism unleashed by stalwarts of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on May 9 and 10, its time for politicians to form a charter of economy for keeping trade and commercial activities unaffected by such happenings in future.

He expressed these views while speaking with media persons at a function held in Governor House for the presentation of cheque of Rs. 10 million to Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce for

the construction of its office in Peshawar.

A large number of provincial ministers, advisers to Chief Minister KP, leading businessmen, and media men were present at the ceremony.

"Political differences should exist in the country which is the beauty of democracy but this should not be taken to a level of animosity and holding of insane protests, not showing any regard for belongings to public and private," Ghulam Ali remarked.

A strong charter of democracy signed by all the political parties ensuring safety and consistency of economic activities and policies can attract foreign investment in the country, Governor opined.

KP Governor said he had also discussed the issue of the charter of the economy with former President of

Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari.

Ghulam Ali also welcomed approval by the Pakistani government of starting barter trade in the region with Iran, Afghanistan and Russia.

The decision will have very positive impact on the economy of the country and efforts are underway to involve more countries in this old practice of doing business.

Ghulam Ali said in the prevailing circumstances when the country is facing acute shortage of dollars, initiation of business to business barter trade system is very timely and appropriate decision.

In response to a question about payment of dues to Trans Peshawar company for continuation of operation of BRT buses in Peshawar, Haji Ghulam Ali said around 50 percent of payment has been made.

Earlier, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali handed over cheque of Rs. 10 million for business community for construction of office of FPCCI in Peshawar.

He said the FPCCI office will serve as center for promotion of trade and investment in the region and provide good opportunity to business community of the region. The FPCCI office will be constructed with joint efforts of business community of government.

In response to another question about payment of dues of KP government owed by federal government, Governor KP said Federal Minister for Finance, Ishaq Dar has held out assurance of clearing all the dues before June 30, next.

When asked about holding of elections in the country, Haji Ghulam Ali said elections will be held at scheduled time.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Excise and Narcotics Control Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi talking with Sub National Governance team led by Raheel Siddiqui about reforms and legislation in Excise Department.

Action directed against dealers supplying substandard fertilizers

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Agriculture and Livestock, Abdul Haleem Qasuria has directed action against dealers that are supplying substandard fertilizers and pesticides in the markets.

He was presiding over a meeting regarding the ongoing development projects of the Agriculture Extension Department on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by Dr. Jan Muhammad, Director General Agriculture Extension, Dr. Murad Khan, Director General Agriculture Merged districts and project directors of various developments.

The caretaker minister said that officers should keep eyes on substandard seeds and substandard fertilizers and take action against those responsible to ensure food security in the province.

He directed steps to eliminate substandard pesticides in the markets and formulate strategies to develop the agriculture sector on modern lines. He also concerned officials to ensure transparency in projects and make efforts to complete them within stipulated time.

CM's aide reviews performance, achievements

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to Caretaker Chief Minister on Social Welfare, Salma Begum here Tuesday chaired a meeting to review performance and achievements of Lil Sail Wal Mehroom Foundation.

The meeting among others was attended by Director and administrative officers of foundation and concerned officials of social welfare department. The meeting was briefed about performance and activities of the foundation.

It was told that foundation is striving to help destitute, orphans, widows and homeless people besides providing Rs.20,000 to patients admitted in selected hospitals while scholarships have also being provided to deserving students.

CM aide was also briefed about service structure of foundation employees, regularization and endowment fund of foundation.

Addressing the meeting, Salma Begum appreciated performance of the foundation and assured cooperation to problems being faced by employees.

She said that steps would be taken to improve working of foundation and facilitation of people who deserve our attention and help.

JAC calls general body meeting

Kashif Ullah Khalil

PESHAWAR: Joint Action Committee (JAC) University of Peshawar has called an emergency general body meeting on Wednesday against the university administration's non-compliance with the agreement.

According to (JAC), the responsibility of implementation of the agreement the university administration and JAC was Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Chief Secretary of the Provincial Government, Secretary.

The administration didn't fulfilled agreement as per the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa directives. An emergency general body meeting has called on June 8 to decide the future course of action.

KP govt to ensure people-friendly reforms, says Afridi

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Excise and Narcotics Control, Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi has welcomed the reforms and modernization of his department and made it clear that apart from ensuring good governance, the provincial government is also trying its level best to align all its departments with contemporary requirements and make them more people-friendly, wherein the cooperation of the international community has also been commendable.

He was talking to the Sub National Governance (SNG) team of the foreign-funded reform organization from Islamabad that called on the provincial minister with the team leader and former Secretary Excise Raheel Siddiqui at his office, Civil Secretariat Peshawar on Tuesday.

The team apprised him of the progress made so far in the reforms and legislation side.

Haji Manzoor Afridi praised the performance of the team for supporting reforms and drafting valuable legislation in 2020 in four important KP departments including Excise, Local Government, Finance, Revenue and Planning & Development.

He also expressed satisfaction that the team has started working on a public-friendly application called Zama KP through which people can avail services of the Excise Department and pay dues and taxes with a finger tip through their mobile phones.

He was pleased that more than 31,000 vehicles have been registered under the e-payment gateway in Motor Vehicle Registration, while soon the scope of this

pilot project will be extended to all other sectors including property tax, professional tax and tobacco development cess (TDC).

He directed to complete the work on this App quickly so that the public can benefit from this modern information technology facility in time and also help increase the revenue and transparency of the department.

The minister also emphasized on completing the training and awareness essentials of the officers and personnel of the department under this program as soon as possible so that the department can run this app on its own.

The Team Leader of Sub-National Governance assured to implement the directives of Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi on urgent basis and launch the Zama KP app at the earliest.

PCSP completes audit training of 166 CDCs

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Community Support Project (PCSP) has successfully imparted social audit trainings to cover all the 166 Community Development Councils (CDCs) for fostering accountability, transparency, and governance of the project-funded development initiatives.

These trainings were aimed at developing the capacities of the communities based in the project areas, comprising 160 villages in Khyber, Peshawar and Nowshera, to steer a process, where communities will be able to supervise and oversee the utilization of funds for their priority development schemes.

According to Khalid

Abbas, the District Manager for the PCSP in Nowshera and Peshawar, "these training sessions were designed to enhance the community's capacity with the requisite skills and knowledge to practically implement social audits in their respective villages".

The primary objective of the social audit training was multifaceted in order to achieve several key outcomes, including the assessment of gaps between local development needs and available resources, as well as to align the CDC decisions with the interests of the community members, he added.

During the Social Audit trainings, special attention was also given to the promotion of effective communication and collabora-

tion between the CDC officials and community members.

Furthermore, the training focused on facilitating bi-annual public gatherings where CDC members could transparently share pertinent information while allowing the community members to provide feedback and concerns if any.

The trainings also emphasized the importance of assessing the financial accounts and expenditures of the Community Development Councils (CDCs) by examining financial reports, bills, invoices, and other relevant documents.

The participants have also been trained on reporting their findings and providing constructive feedback to the community.



PESHAWAR: Due to a strike by WSSP workers in city, there is a visible accumulation of garbage on main road of Gulbahar.

Health facilities under Sehat card to continue

PESHAWAR (APP): The Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister for Health Riaz Anwar on Tuesday said that despite financial crunch in the province the health facilities under Sehat Card would continue for the people of the province.

Talking to media here after release of a survey report on Sehat Card, he said that payments are being made to the insurance company under the head of different treatments while an inquiry into alleged corruption was also in process.

Earlier, a survey report on Sehat Card released by Agha Khan University revealed that 63 percent people of KP got treatment from private hospitals under the facility while only 37

percent patients went to the government hospitals.

It said that 10 percent of the population of KP was still deprived of the facility due to domicile or other technical issues, adding that an average Rs 31,395 expenses incurred on a patient's treatment, which was 20 to

40 percent more than the treatment expenses of a private hospital. The survey recommended participation of the citizens in the policy board of Sehat Card to address the technical issues and improve the capacity of the hospitals in backward and far flung areas.

Blast outside trader's house, no casualty

PESHAWAR (APP): An improvised explosive device (IED) blast occurred outside the house of a local trader here on Tuesday morning however; fortunately no casualty was reported in the incident. Police said the blast took place outside the house of a trader located in Faqirabad area of Peshawar. Police further informed that an unknown motorcycle rider escaped after planting explosive material outside the house of the businessman. The law enforcement agencies have launched a search operation to find the accused, police added.

KP Cabinet meeting tomorrow

PESHAWAR (APP): The sixth meeting of the caretaker cabinet of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be held tomorrow (Thursday).

Caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan will preside over the meeting which would consider a 12-point agenda said an official letter from the Establishment Department on Tuesday.

The agenda items include framing of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Probation and Parole Rules 2022, appointment as administrative judges of anti-terrorism courts and regularization of contract employees of the Health Department.

The other items to be discussed were providing funds for the repair of Mall Road and Fort Road and the appointment of Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Public Service Commission.

AD&SJ adjourns hearing

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Additional District and Session Judge (AD&SJ) Syed Badshah adjourned hearing of bail petition of former Deputy Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Mahmood Jan till today (Wednesday) in double murder case, on Tuesday.

According to prosecution, PTI leader Mahmood Jan has opened firing on Essakhel tribe procession in which two persons were killed while several others were injured in the premises of Regi police station over land dispute.

Former Deputy Speaker has applied for BBA which was heard at D.I. Khan due to security reasons while court has turndown bail plea and police has arrested him.

Ex-Deputy Speaker has filed bail petition after arrested while court has adjourned further hearing for today (Wednesday) and ordered police to submit record.

PDMA provides relief goods

PESHAWAR (APP): On the instructions of Secretary Relief Abdul Basit, PDMA on Tuesday provided necessary relief goods to five more districts for the monsoon season. These districts include DI Khan, Chitral Lower, Lakki Marwat, Torgarh and District Mohmand, said DG PDMA.

He said that the goods included 300 tents, 800 plastic mats, 250 quilts, 500 kitchen sets, 550 mattresses, 700 mosquito nets, 550 blankets, 150 hygiene kits, 350 tarpaulin sheets and other items.

The relief equipment can be used to deal with untoward incidents during the monsoon season, said the DG PDMA adding that more relief materials will also be provided to the districts from time to time.



PESHAWAR: Representative delegation of KCCI in a group with Caretaker Minister for Industries Muhammad Adnan Jalil.

KCCI team inform minister about import, export problems at border

PESHAWAR (APP): A representative delegation of Khyber Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on Tuesday called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Industries, Muhammad Adnan Jalil and informed him about the problems relating to import and export at Torkham border.

The delegation led by Chamber President Syed Jawad Hussain Kazmi was included Secretary, Ali Faisal, Chairman Gemological Association of Pakistan, Shakeel Waheedullah Khan and Executive Member Muhammad Haroon Sabir.

The delegation also discussed matters related to trade activities in the province and problems being faced by entrepreneurs with the minister.

The delegation also highlighted Pak Afghan trade activities via Torkham border and informed the minister regarding issues of trade in import and export through the same gateway route between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The business community urged minister to support them in extending tax exemption on trading in tribal areas which have already been given by the Federal government under 25th Constitutional

Amendment.

The delegates further asked minister to raise the matter on a relevant forum about forming a joint task force of departments on Torkham border for provision of service delivery through one window operation.

During the meeting, the minister said government was aware of problems being faced by businessmen adding that Pak Afghan trade was promoting economic activities in the area.

Ther provincial caretaker minister also assured them to inform authorities about their problems and issues.

Amendment.

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Relief deptt starts mock exercises to deal with emergencies in monsoon

PESHAWAR (APP): The Department of Relief, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has started mock exercises with the line departments as part of a comprehensive plan chalked out to deal with the possible rains and flood situation in the monsoon season.

The spokesperson of the Relief Department said here on Tuesday that under the supervision of

Secretary Relief Abdul Basit, the two-week exercises are being conducted with the participation of the representatives of PDMA, RESCUE-1122, Civil Defense and District Administrations.

The exercises included evacuation, flood emergency search and rescue, camp management and other flood situations, said the spokesperson, adding that the safety of children and women who are more

vulnerable during disasters was ensured during the exercises while the first aid to the injured persons and their timely shifting hospitals were also performed.

He said as part of the monsoon safety plan public awareness campaigns are already being conducted at community levels across the province to inform the public about safety and precautionary measures in any emergency.



PESHAWAR: Residents of Dir Upper protesting for release of teacher Raees Ahmed. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza



In brief

Special branch inaugurated
F.P. Report

KHAR: Security Forces and district administrations are continuously focused to increase police capacity in tribal districts. According to details, the establishment of a modern complex for police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in Bajaur district is in progress. Recently newly constructed complexes/ buildings for Police, Special Branch and CTD were inaugurated in Bajaur District. These include CTD Complex Khar, Special Branch Building Khar and Police Station Loe Mamund. The construction of these buildings will increase the capacity of police and CTD. District administration, Frontier Corps North and senior police officials, local elders and a large number of local residents attended the inauguration ceremonies. The locals considered these measures important for the area and said that the law and order situation in the area will improve by increasing the capacity of the police.

Crackdown against POs
F.P. Report

MALAKAND: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Malakand Nasir Mehmood Satti has directed all District Police Officers (DPOs) to launch a massive crackdown to arrest proclaimed offenders (POs) across the region. He issued these directives while presiding over a monthly performance review meeting at Saidu Sharif, Swat on Tuesday. DPOs of Shangla, Buner, Dir Upper, Dir Lower, Chitral Lower, Chitral Upper and Bajaur and other concerned police officers attended the meeting. The RPO Malakand directed the District Police Officers to utilize all available scientific means to collect all details within a period of 15 days to launch crackdown against them. He described the overall security and law and order situation of the region as satisfactory and directed the DPOs to be prepared the police force for all kinds of situations to prevail the present peace sustainable for the future as well. The RPO directed the appointment of the Station House Officers (SHOs) with the best reputation in the police stations and said that the police personnel should adopt good behavior with the general public and applicants and provide all possible support to them. In the meeting, the regional police officer was given a detailed briefing regarding the security situation at the district level, police operations against crimes, anti-narcotics, police administrative and financial matters, efficiency and other issues.

Two bread sellers arrested
F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Two bakers (bread sellers) were apprehended and put behind the bars for charging additional price of bread here in Landi Kotal Bazaar. It is to be mentioned here that on the last day Deputy Commissioner (DC), Khyber notified revised price for bread sellers i.e. 120 gram per bread (roti) to be sold at 20 rupee in Khyber with immediate implementation. The decision was made due to a decrease in flour rates across the country, the DC office said. Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC) Landi Kotal Rameez Ali Shah along with lower staff of local administration unexpectedly raided various shops of bread sellers and checked their weight and price and quality of the commodity.

Militant leader with Rs2m bounty, killed in an encounter

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The counter terrorism department (CTD) Malakand region II on Tuesday claimed to have killed a wanted militant commander identified as Subhan alias Usman s/o Atta Muhammad, a resident of Sheenkot Bajaur and recovered arms and ammunition from his possession. Briefing local journalists at Timergara the CTD Malakand region II SP Amjad Khan said the Counter Terrorism Department, local police and security forces conducted a search and strike operation on a tip-off at Mandal Khwar area of Bajaur.

He said that during the operation a militant commander Subhan alias Usman belonging to the Daesh group, was killed in an encounter. The CTD also recovered a

Kalashnikov, 3 hand grenades, 25 cartridges and one bundle wire from the site. The SP said that they received information regarding the presence of the militant commander who along with his accomplices was preparing a plan to accomplish a sabotage task.

He said the militants opened fire on the raiding team at Mandal Khwar in Bajaur Sheikhmino area during a search and strike operation. The SP said that the militant had Rs 2 million bounty on his head, and was wanted by police and security forces in a number of cases as he was involved in target killings and attacks on security forces. The official said the killed militant had masterminded several attacks and the KP government had fixed Rs 2 million bounty on his head.

Meanwhile the newly

posted district police officer Lower Dir Ziaud Din Ahmad who recently replaced Tariq Iqbal took over the charge of his duties at Timergara. The outgoing DPO Tariq Iqbal was given a farewell party at the Timergara police lines which was attended by deputy commissioner Iftikhar Ahmad, ADC Abdul Wali Khan, SP investigation Zahoor Ahmad, DSP headquarters Fakhr e Alam Khan, SHOs and line staff.

Also on Tuesday the district administration fined several 'nanbais' for selling low-weight bread and overcharging commuters. The assistant commissioner Shehzad Khan checked the rates and weights of breads at different markets in the Timergara city and imposed fines upon several bakers for overcharging customers.

Admn blamed for ignoring locals from bidding process

Syed Watiullah Shah

NOWSHERA: The residents of Nazimpur area of Nowshera blamed administration for favoring mining mafia while demanding to stop bidding processing for gold extraction from River Indus and Kabul and declared it depriving public from their resources.

The claimed that administration has planned to deprive poor workers from the process by setting Rs65 corers for as initial bid while deposit rate stands at Rs13 million as well as Rs10 thousand should be submitted as form fee.

The residents claimed that if bidding didn't stop

as well as their demands didn't fulfilled then they will be compelled to knock every forum for obtaining fundamental right otherwise they will also took to the roads and streets.

These views were expressed by former Nazim Kahi Shad Khan, Amin Akbar, Nazim Khairabad Malik Zahir, Haji Amin Zada, Eslahi committee president Abdul Qadir, Malik Saif-ur-Rehman, Haji Niaz Gul, Malik Raz Gul, Sobadier Chinar Gul, Muhammad Hayat and Luqman along with elders of five union councils of Nazimpur while addressing a press conference at Nowshera press club.

The speakers claimed that as many as 35 square

kilometers of River Indus and Kabul flowing in the premises of Nazimpur while initial bidding rate fixed at Rs65 corers and its deposit money at 10% stands at Rs13 million but administration has increase up to Rs100 million to deprive local traders and grant contract to blue-eyed person for ten years.

The speakers requested Chief Justice of Pakistan, Chief Justice Peshawar High Court and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa along with other competent authorities to address the grievances of local populace otherwise they will be compelled to arrange protests in larger scale in favor of their demands.

50,000 more families registered with BISP

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: As many as 50,000 more families from Dera Ismail Khan have been registered with the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) during the last year.

According to a press release issued here, the number of beneficiary families in Dera Ismail Khan has increased from 135,000 to 185,000 due to the special efforts of the Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi.

Meanwhile, the number of beneficiary students under the Wasela-e-Taleem program, with an increase of 37,000, has reached to around 150,000 in the district. Minister of State for Poverty

Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi, while talking to different public delegations, said that most of the BISP cards of deserving women have been restored which were blocked in past. The stipend of BISP beneficiaries has been increased from 8,000 to 9,000.

The BISP beneficiary women were not only getting financial assistance but the facilities were being provided to them under the Nashonuma program in case of pregnancy and the Wasela-e-Taleem program for their children's education. Under the Wasela-e-Taleem Program, the children of each deserving family were given a stipend of Rs 3,500 which has also been increased to Rs 4,000. Similarly, under the

Nashonuma program, the additional assistance of Rs 2,000 and a special food package as per international health standards is given to each deserving woman during pregnancy and two years after the birth of the child. The centres of the Nashonuma program have been established at the Tehsil level where the facilities of registration, Health facility, stipend payment, and delivery of food packages were being provided under one roof.

Moreover, he said that each cardholder received Rs 25,000 in financial assistance after last year's floods. He said, "I am doing public service according to the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) party manifesto by setting aside any political motives."

PPP active to make Bilawal's rally a success

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Pakistan Peoples' Party provincial president and minister of state for water resources Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha has said the PPP is emerging as a strong party in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and it will form the next government in the province. He was addressing a workers' convention at the Chakdara Fishing hut as chief guest here the other day.

The gathering was also addressed by the PPP former provincial presidents Najmud Din Khan, Humayun Khan, former provincial minister Mehmood Zeb Khan, former MNA Dr Haidar Ali Khan, PPP Swat secretary Shahi Khan, president information Amjad Afridi, former senator Ahmad Hassan Khan, former minister of state Malik Azmat Khan, Akhunzada Chhattar, former provincial minister Muzafar Syed and others.

The PPP leaders said the federal government would extend the date of tax imposition in Malakand division and the people should not worry about it. They said the party had planned a massive gathering at Khwazakhela Swat on June 17 which

would be addressed by party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. They said that all arrangements had been finalized for that public rally. The speakers said the PTI leadership had targeted the opposition but now it was running away and hiding from what it had done on May 9 and 10. They said the PTI leaders feared jails and they were on the run to avoid arrest. They asked the participants to reach out to each worker in the region and make the Swat rally a success.

Property dispute resolved through jirga in Talash: A property and monetary dispute between two parties was peacefully resolved by a local jirga of elders led by a member of the dispute resolution council (DRC) advocate Syed Hassan Khan at Talash here the other day. The parties including Masood Ahmad Khan, Rashid Ahmad Jan, residents of Kalo Manai Talash (1st party) and Nasir Khan Wardak and Wali Khan Wardak, residents of Kharkanai Ouch (2nd party) had registered cross FIRs against each other at the Talash police station.

A local jirga including advocate Syed Hassan Khan, former tehsil nazim advocate

Riaz Muhammad, advocate Azad Bakht, Haji Ali Khan, advocate Abdur Rehman, Sahibzada Liaquat Ali Jan and others succeeded to resolve the matter. A function in this regard was held at Talash wherein the parties embraced each other and promised to live like brothers in future.

Govt employees' protest: The All Government Employees' Grand Alliance (AGEGA) on Monday announced that hundreds of its workers would participate in the proposed protest sit-in at Islamabad on June 8. The announcement was made during a meeting of the alliance held at Timergara with its chairman Akhunzada Ubaidullah in the chair.

The All Pakistan Clerks' Association provincial president Muhammad salim, Agega general secretary Muslim Khan, School Officers' Association district president Salahud Din, Professors' Association divisional general secretary Naseeb Bacha, All Primary Teachers' Association former district president Ali Rehman, Wahdat e Asateza general secretary Shahid Mehmood and others spoke on the occasion.



SHANGLA: Resident holding a protest in front of Deputy Commissioner office for acceptance of their demands. — F.P. photo

Body orders demolition of JI's leader residence

F.P. Report

WANA: Zalikhel Committee has announced its decision to demolish the house of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leader, Taj Muhammad. According to reliable sources, the demolition is scheduled to take place at four o'clock, on Tuesday.

Additionally, sources have confirmed that Taj Muhammad has been slapped with a hefty fine of Rs 10 lakh. The Zalikhel Committee, led by Sardar Ali, has justified its decision by labeling Taj Muhammad a "so-called political leader" who allegedly disrespected their committee's leader, Malik Salik Gul.

Taking a firm stand, Sardar Ali asserted that Taj Muhammad's entire family will be evicted from the house and deported to another district, rather than resorting to burning or demolishing the property. He further criticized the failing police system and emphasized the committee's adherence to regional customs.

Reacting to the news, Taj Muhammad, the leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, expressed his dismay. He highlighted that the Zalikhel Committee had previously targeted political representatives by deciding to demolish the house of Awami National Party (ANP) leader Ayaz Wazir and subsequently imposing a fine.

JI leader added, "This time, they have decided to demolish my house and dishonor me." He revealed that he has lodged an application with the Deputy Commissioner of Waziristan in response to the committee's decision.

Arrest of culprits demanded

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: The teachers and students of different schools in Parachinar protested against the killing of teachers and demanded the immediate arrest and severe punishment of those involved in the killing of seven people including four teachers in the school on May 4.

Students of public and private educational institutions from remote areas of Kurram district reached the headquarters in Parachinar in the form of processions where Principal Ali Turi, Principal Syed Shaban Hussain and other speakers said that on May 4, an unknown person was killed.

Four teachers and three laborers were brutally martyred after the armed men tortured them in the presence of students and staff. But despite the passage of a month, no action has been taken against the killers, which is causing great anxiety among students, teachers and citizens, therefore we have been forced to protest.

The speakers said that if the murderers were not exposed and punished severely, the students would have carried the pictures of martyred teachers and placards based on their demands.

Imran leaves party workers alone: ANP

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Leader of Awami National Party (ANP) and Mayor of Tehsil Mardan, Himayatullah Mayar has said that Imran Khan attacked the police and army to hide the theft of 60 billion.

Police stations and military cantonments are symbols of peace and order Imran Khan cheated the nation with the false statement of the American cipher, Tehreek-e-Insaf did nothing for the Pakhtuns and the province during the ten-year rule, the current poor situation of the country, excessive inflation and the destruction of the province.

Due to the wrong policies of Imran Khan, the country had become isolated on the external front. May 9 rioters and vandals should be severely punished and innocent workers should be released. He expressed these views while addressing the workers convention of ANP in Union Council Gujarat Hujra Shabab Ahsan. Former provincial forest minister Sher Khan, Muhammad Sohail Bacha, Ahmed Khan, Nishitar Ali Babu and others also spoke on the occasion. Speaking at the event, Himayatullah Mayar said that despite ten years of Tehreek-e-Insaf's rule in the province ANP could not prove the corruption of one rupee on the leadership, PTI people have committed record corruption in Billion Tree sunami, BRT and Malam Jabba.

Mayor said that ANP has always conducted peaceful political movements against those who destroy democracy while remaining within the constitution and law. He has made a practical struggle for the supremacy of democracy, provincial autonomy, the development of the province, and the establishment of peace and order, following the philosophy of non-violence. Those who are involved should be punished and the workers who are arrested innocently should be released.

Dacoit robbed barber: Four unidentified armed robbers suddenly entered Ashfaq Ali Hairdresser's shop in College Colony, an urban area of Takhtbhai last night, his student and four customers were robbed at gunpoint and took away Rs 1 lakh 80 thousand, a pistol and 6 valuable mobile phones.

According to details, four armed robbers entered the shop of Ashfaq S/O Mohib Gul resident of Kamran Kaley a Barber Shop opposite to Government Degree College Takhtbhai at 10 o'clock last night and stole 24 thousand rupees, pistol and Samsung mobile and also from his helper Aftab S/O Nawabzada resident of Hamish Kaley Oppo 17 mobile while present on the spot Four customers Amjad S/O Jan Mohammad resident of Sheikhan

kaly 40 thousand rupees and Techno mobile, Abbas S/O Gulab resident from Mazdoorabad 30 thousand rupees in cash and mobile iPhone 8 non pta, Arshad Ali S/O Ismail resident of from Mazdoorabad 30 thousand rupees and vivo mobile and Reza Khan S/O Sayeda Jan stole 16,000 rupees from resident of College Colony. The unknown accused managed to escape on motorcycles at the spot.

BISEM appoints two Deputy superintendents in one hall: Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Mardan (BISEM) appointed two different Deputy Superintendents for one examination hall in Govt Girls Higher Secondary School Kot road Takht Bhai Mardan. The sources said that for the duty charge the both Deputy Superintendents quarrel each other in the examination hall and turned the examination hall into a battlefield.

Students complained that both have disturbed the exam hall with their shouts and fight to disrupted the attention of the students. Students said that the allotted time that have been given to the students for the paper attempt was affected a lot and the students couldn't performed well to solve the question paper nicely.

According to the details, during the intermediate examination organized by BISEM in Govt Girls Higher Secondary School, Kot Road, due to the error of BISEM authorities, two orders for different candidates were issued for the post of a Deputy Superintendent, while taking the charge, the dual order have create big issue between the two officers, in result both started fight and chanted bad words for each other in the examination hall. Sources said that the fight turned the exam hall into battlefield and badly disturbed the exam situation in the hall. Sources confirmed that the students who were suffered a lot of trouble and fight of both officers have wasted the given exam timing.

While talking to students, they said that after fight, both officers started putting all the pressure on the students and after every five minutes the students were subjected to severe body search for cheating materials and were being abused too. They said that such attitude had badly affect the exam timing and students were unable to solve the paper easily and nicely.

On the other hand, the parents of the students have demanded Assistant Commissioner Takhtbhai and the BISEM administration to urgently adjust the deputy superintendent dispute, otherwise the students and their parents will come out on the road for strike. The parents warned if something bad happened, the BISEM administration and the respective Deputy Superintendents will be responsible.

Dilapidated roads of AJK needs attention

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): Travelling on the dilapidated roads of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has become a nightmare for travelers as the current poor condition of the most the area roads has badly exposed the poor performance of authorities concerned.

In a survey conducted by this News agency revealed that the ratio of accidents on Neelum Valley road on rise due to the negligence, carelessness and incompetence of the AJK government. The main reason of raising road mishaps was the absence of road safety or fence walls along side of main road as this main lack causing a wave of concern among tourists.

It revealed that the main Road from Cairn to Kel was under construction for past many months and recently contractor has left construction work which makes the journey on this road from minutes to hours. On the other hand the base of road from Dawarian to Sharda has been completed, however the road carpeting work not started yet along

with this the hilly parts of the road was also lacking safety fence wall that was the point of concern for travelers.

While talking to this news agency area residents have viewed that number of accidents had been happened on this historic road due to the lack of protective wall along side of the road. They disclosed that earlier, a tourist jeep fell into the Neelum River as jeep travelling between Kiel and Tao Butt in which twelve precious lives were lost and even most of the dead bodies were still missing.

Most of the tourists and even local residents viewed that roads safety walls work should be started as soon as possible for the safety to them. They suggested that until the construction of a safety, iron safety shields should be installed immediately so that tourists can travel without any fear. "Not having a safety wall at Neelum river hundreds of feet deep and landslides was tantamount to suicide" they viewed.

They further stated that

due to the sudden increase in horrific road accidents the tourists traveling ration was decreasing in each passing day as it was alarming for the high-ups. "Neelum valley was the most beautiful valley of Pakistan but it has become the most dangerous valley in terms of roads condition as sitting government has become completely clueless of the horrific situation, they reiterated.

The journey from Sharda to Kel total 19km was being completed in two and a half hours and the public is forced to travel with their lives on their hands. The government has completely neglected tourism in the Neelum Valley. Local residents and most of the area tourists have demanded to the high-ups of AJK including Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, President Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry, and even Army Chief to take notice of current tragic situation of above mentioned specific road and suggested to handover the road work to Pak Army instead of civil contractors.



Russia to face Ukraine at UN court over downing of flight MH17

THE HAGUE (Agencies): Ukraine and Russia are scheduled to face off at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) - the top United Nations court - over Moscow's support for pro-Russian forces blamed for "insurrection" against the Ukrainian state and armed violence that included the shooting down of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 in 2014, killing all 298 passengers and crew.

Judges at the ICJ in The Hague will hear Ukraine's claim on Tuesday that Moscow violated a UN anti-terrorism treaty by equipping and funding pro-Russian separatists, who international investigators concluded had used a Russian missile to shoot down the Malaysian jetliner over eastern Ukraine almost 10 years ago. Lawyers for Ukraine will speak on Tuesday from 10am local time (08:00 GMT), while Russia's will address the court with a response, the ICJ said in a statement. Ukraine will then reply on June 12, and Russia on June 14.

Kyiv accuses Russia of supporting pro-Moscow forces in Ukraine's Donbas with weapons and money and thereby violating the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism adopted by the UN. Ukraine is seeking damages for the fighting,

which began in 2014 and lead to approximately 13,000 people killed in the eight years that led up to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Ukraine claims that Russia "instigated and sustained an armed insurrection against the authority of the Ukrainian State in eastern Ukraine" and "created a climate of violence and intimidation against non-Russian ethnic groups", the ICJ said in the statement. Established in the aftermath of World War II, the ICJ deals with disputes between UN member states and though its rulings are legally binding, the court has no enforcement mechanism.

Tuesday's hearing will be the first time lawyers for Ukraine and Russia meet at the ICJ, also known as the World Court, since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion. Moscow has tried to get the ICJ case thrown out, arguing the court has no jurisdiction.

Last November, a Dutch court convicted two Russian men and a Ukrainian national in absentia of murder for their roles in the shooting down of MH17 and sentenced them to life in prison. The three - former Russian intelligence agents Igor Girkin and Sergey Dubinsky as well as Ukrainian Leonid Kharchenko, a Ukrainian separatist leader - were

sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment. The three remain at large. The court also found that Russia had "overall control" over forces in the so-called Donetsk People's Republic in eastern Ukraine since mid-May 2014. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said at the time the ruling was an important decision and the masterminds of the attack also needed to be prosecuted. "Holding to account masterminds is crucial too, as the feeling of impunity leads to new crimes," Zelenskyy wrote in a tweet.

A finding by the ICJ that Russia equipped and funded fighters in eastern Ukraine responsible for the MH17 disaster would be a defeat for Moscow, which has repeatedly denied sending troops or military equipment to eastern Ukraine in 2014. Such a ruling could boost legal claims for damages or reparations from not only Ukraine but also individual victims of the conflict. It is not yet known when an ICJ verdict will be reached. Russian President Vladimir Putin is also the subject of an arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court, also based in The Hague, on charges of war crimes over the deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia. The Kremlin denies those charges.

Mike Pence enters 2024 presidential race

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Former United States Vice President Mike Pence has formally announced he will campaign for the Republican nomination for the 2024 presidential race. The announcement sets him up against former President Donald Trump, the current frontrunner and Pence's former boss.

Pence's campaign filed a declaration of candidacy with the Federal Election Commission and the 63-year-old is expected to launch his campaign in the early nominating state of Iowa. A staunch social conservative and evangelical Christian, the former governor of Indiana has increasingly distanced himself from Trump after rejecting the former president's demands that he overturn the 2020 election in his role as president of the Senate. Pence joins a crowded and still-growing field of Republican candidates, which includes Trump, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, Senator Tim Scott and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley. North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum is also planning to enter the race, according to a person familiar with Burgum's plans, while former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie is jumping into the race on Tuesday, bringing the total number of Republican candidates into double digits. The number of candidates vying for the nomination concerns many Trump opponents inside the Republican Party who fear the anti-Trump vote could be split, handing the party's nomination to the former president.

Pence has spent much of the last two years touring early-nominating states such as Iowa and New Hampshire to reinforce his political vision as a "Christian, conservative, Republican - in that order." He is framing himself as a traditional Republican, concerned with fiscal responsibility and family values, who can deliver Trump's economic policies without the drama. He has also allied himself strongly with Ukraine and refused to rule out cuts to welfare payments. While his politics are popular among Republicans, critics question whether Pence has a constituency in a party that is more focused now on populism and cultural politics than traditional conservatism.

Wagner boss tears into Moscow success claims

MOSCOW (Agencies): Yevgeny Prigozhin, the boss of the mercenary Wagner Group, has poured scorn on Russia's defence ministry after it claimed it thwarted a "large-scale" offensive by Ukraine inflicting heavy losses. Prigozhin, whose forces spent months fighting in the eastern Ukrainian town of Bakhmut and who is a frequent critic of Russia's military top brass, dismissed their latest claims as "wild fantasies" on his Telegram channel on Tuesday morning.

Russia's defence ministry said that its forces had repelled a major Ukraine offensive in the southern part of the Donetsk region, destroying military equipment and killing some 1,500 Ukrainian troops. There was no immediate comment from Kyiv about Russia's assertions and it was not possible to verify the claims. Both countries have often made claims of inflicting heavy human losses on each other that could not be independently verified. "To destroy one and a half thousand people, it must be such a massacre, within one day, over 150 kilometres [90 miles], one hell of a massacre," Prigozhin said in response to the claims. "Therefore, I think that these are just some wild fantasies."

Adding up the figures provided by the ministry would imply "we have already destroyed the entire planet five times over", he added sarcastically. Prigozhin has been embroiled in an increasingly public spat with Russia's regular army, unleashing often foul-mouthed video tirades in which he has vehemently criticised Moscow's military leadership.

Zelenskyy lauds Ukraine advance amid counteroffensive speculation

KYIV (Agencies): Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has praised his troops after Ukrainian forces pressed forward in several sections of the front line with Russia amid speculation the increased combat activities may signal that Kyiv's long-expected counteroffensive is getting under way.

In his nightly video address, Zelenskyy mocked what he described as Russia's hysterical reaction to every operation undertaken by Ukrainian forces and singled out two Ukrainian units who "skillfully, decisively and effectively defend our positions, destroy the occupiers and, most importantly, move forward". "I am grateful to each of our warriors, to all our defenders who gave us the news we expect. Bakhmut direction - well done, warriors!" Zelenskyy said in his address, which did not directly address whether the long-awaited counteroffensive had started.

"We see how hysterically Russia perceives every step we take there, every position we take," he said. "The enemy knows that Ukraine will win. They see it. They feel it thanks to your strikes, soldiers and in particular in Donetsk region. Thank you for that." The commander of Ukraine's ground forces, Oleksandr Syrskiy, said that his troops continued "moving forward" near Bakhmut. Russian fighters and officials said the situation there was "very difficult", despite Moscow claiming to have captured the city late last month following what had become the war's longest and bloodiest battle. Ukraine had insisted its forces retained a small foothold in the eastern city. Ukraine's Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar also said Ukraine was "shifting to offensive actions" along parts of the front but dismissed suggestions this was part of a major operation. Countering those claims, Russia's military said it thwarted two large-scale Ukrainian offensives against its forces in eastern Ukraine and had inflicted major losses on Ukrainian forces in what appeared to be Moscow's attempt to portray the military activity as the start of Ukraine's counteroffensive that was failing early.

"The enemy launched a large-scale offensive in five sectors of the front in the South Donetsk direction," the Russian defence ministry said in a statement. "The enemy did not achieve its tasks, it had no success," it said. Russia's defence ministry claimed early on Tuesday that eight of Ukraine's Germany-made Leopard battle tanks were among 28 tanks destroyed in the fighting along with 109 armoured vehicles and hundreds of Ukrainian troops killed. But some pro-Kremlin military bloggers painted a different picture of the fighting, acknowledging that Kyiv's troops had made some quick gains. The boss of Russia's Wagner mercenary group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, also said that Ukraine's troops had made gains near Bakhmut. Russian troops, he said, were "slowly" leaving the village of



Berkhivka near Bakhmut, which he said was a "disgrace".

The Wagner boss again challenged Valery Gerasimov, chief of Russia's General Staff, and Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu to come to the front line and force Russian troops to stand and fight. Kyiv is officially keeping silent regarding the start of any counteroffensive despite speculation by analysts that an offensive campaign against Russian forces has started. A video Ukraine released over the weekend shows several of its soldiers in full combat gear raising a finger to their lips. "Plans love silence. There will be no start announcement," say the words flashing on the screen afterwards, followed by warplanes in flight.

Al Jazeera's Charles Stratford, reporting from Kyiv, said there was "increasing evidence of an intensification of fighting at various locations along the front line". "Whether this represents the beginning of the long-awaited Ukrainian counteroffensive and efforts by Ukrainian forces to find weak spots in Russian defence or, indeed, these are small probing attacks ahead of a larger full-scale operation, well that will become clear in the coming days," he said. The Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a Washington, DC-based think tank, said on Tuesday that it too had observed increased fighting in different sectors of the front line amid signals from Russian and Ukrainian officials that the counteroffensive has started. "Ukrainian forces are making territorial gains despite Russian claims to the contrary", the ISW said, noting that Moscow had a history of claiming Ukrainian battlefield defeats which later turned out to be successes for Kyiv. "Russian officials have historically immediately claimed that Ukrainian counter-offensives failed even when the counter-offensives ultimately succeed," the ISW said. "A successful counteroffensive operation may take days, weeks, or even months before its outcome becomes fully clear, during which time Russian sources may falsely claim to have defeated it," the institute said.

Military analysts say Ukraine has tried to hide its strategic intentions by launching multiple attacks on several

sectors of the front line over recent weeks to force Russia to scatter its resources and distract them from where the main strike would be launched. "Kyiv is looking for Russia's weak spots and trying to spread the front" as wide "as possible", Ukrainian military analyst Roman Svitan said. For months, tens of thousands of Russian troops have been digging in along a front line that stretches for approximately 1,000km (600 miles), bracing for a Ukrainian attack expected to try to cut Russia's so-called land bridge to the Crimean Peninsula. Many military experts expect Ukraine to try to ram through Russian defences towards the Sea of Azov coast to break the land corridor to Russian-held Crimea. The Washington Post reported that some officials in Washington thought the counteroffensive was under way but the US White House's national security spokesperson, John Kirby, declined to say whether he thought this was the case.

"I'm not going to be talking for the Ukrainian military. That's for them to speak to," he told a regular briefing, although he stressed the work the United States had done to ensure the Ukrainians were ready. "So whether it's starting now, or starting soon, or whenever they decide to step up and whatever they decide to do, the president is confident that we did everything we could over the last six, eight months or more to make sure that they had all the equipment, the training, the capabilities to be successful." Sir Richard Barrons, former Commander of the UK Joint Forces Command, said a counteroffensive would not unfold on a set time scale. "We need to understand that what we're calling the Ukraine counteroffensive is not like a football match," he said. "It's not going to be done and dusted in 90 minutes with a halftime on an appointed day. It's been nine months at least in the preparation in the sense that they've had to gather weapons and ammunition from NATO. Not enough, I think, so far," he said. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba told Reuters that Ukraine now had enough weapons for a counteroffensive but declined to comment when asked whether it had begun.

Scientists say world's oldest-known burial site found in South Africa

LONDON (Agencies): Palaeontologists in South Africa said they have found the oldest-known burial site in the world, containing remains of a small-brained distant relative of humans previously thought incapable of complex behaviour. Led by renowned palaeoanthropologist Lee Berger, researchers said that they discovered several specimens of Homo naledi - a tree-climbing, Stone Age hominid - buried about 30 metres (100 feet) underground in a cave system within the Cradle of Humankind, a UNESCO World Heritage Site near Johannesburg.

"These are the most ancient interments yet recorded in the hominin record, earlier than evidence of Homo sapiens interments by at least 100,000 years," the scientists wrote in a series of yet-

to-be-peer-reviewed preprint papers to be published in eLife. The findings challenge the current understanding of human evolution, as it is normally held that the development of bigger brains allowed for the performing of complex, "meaning-making" activities such as burying the dead. The oldest burials previously unearthed, found in the Middle East and Africa, contained the remains of Homo sapiens - and were around 100,000 years old. Those found in South Africa by the research team led by Berger, whose previous announcements have been controversial, date back to at least 200,000 BC.

"Homo naledi tells us we're not that special," Berger, a United States-born explorer, told AFP news agency. "We ain't gonna get over that." Homo

naledi, a primitive species at the crossroads between apes and modern humans, had brains about the size of oranges and stood about 1.5m (5 feet) tall. With curved fingers and toes, tool-wielding hands and feet made for walking, Homo naledi was discovered in 2013 by Berger, helping upend the notion that our evolutionary path was a straight line. The species is named after the "Rising Star" cave system where the first bones were found in 2013.

The oval-shaped interments at the centre of the new studies were also found there during excavations started in 2018. The holes, which researchers say evidence suggest were deliberately dug and then filled in to cover the bodies, contain at least five individuals. "These discoveries show that mortuary

practices were not limited to H. sapiens or other hominins with large brain sizes," the researchers said. The burial site is not the only sign that Homo naledi was capable of complex emotional and cognitive behaviour, they added. Berger's earlier discoveries won the interest of National Geographic, which named him "explorer in residence" and featured his work in television shows and documentaries. The latest research has not been peer-reviewed yet and some outside scientists think more evidence is needed to challenge what we know about how humans evolved their complex thinking. "There's still a lot to uncover," said Rick Potts, director of the Smithsonian's Human Origins Program, who was not involved in the research.

Honduran president set to visit China after establishing ties

BEIJING (Agencies): The administration of Honduran President Xiomara Castro has announced that she will travel to China later this week as the Latin American country seeks stronger ties with Beijing. "At the invitation of President Xi Jinping, I will visit on a special mission with [Foreign Minister Enrique Reina] the People's Republic of China between June 9 and 13," Castro said in a Twitter post. "The refoundation of Honduras demands new political, scientific, technical, commercial and cultural horizons."

The trip signifies China's growing influence in Central America, where countries such as Honduras have sought to balance relations with the United States against their desire for heightened economic engagement with Beijing. Castro's visit also comes several months after

Honduras established diplomatic ties with China, thereby ending its formal relationship with Taiwan. China does not allow countries to maintain formal relations with both Taiwan and Beijing, and China's economic heft has induced a number of Central American countries to move away from the island in pursuit of stronger ties with China. Costa Rica formalised relations with Beijing in 2007. Panama, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic have since 2017 done the same. The growing number of countries making the switch has left Taiwan increasingly isolated: It maintains official relations with just 13 countries. The United States has expressed concern over China's increasing sway over Central America, where the US has historically exerted influence as the region's

sole superpower.

Central American nations, however, have shown little interest in choosing sides between the US and China, the world's first and second largest economies. Reina has said that coffee would be the first Honduran export to the Chinese market. He added that a number of "cooperation agreements" would be signed during Castro's trip. The decision to sever ties with Taiwan reportedly came after the island rebuffed a request from Honduras for a \$2.5bn loan to help address debt issues. Following the establishment of formal ties with Honduras in March, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Mao Ning denied that any pre-conditions, such as economic assistance, were attached to the move, stating that diplomatic relations "are not something for trade".

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Saudi-Israel ties and Palestine question

THE US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken has said that the United States is committed to brokering formal diplomatic relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, while the Biden administration will continue an Israel normalization push. During his speech at a meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), an influential pro-Israel Jewish lobby in the US, Blinken informed the audience that Washington has a real national security interest in promoting normalization between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

The United States of America and its unlawful sellty tout had long established their monopoly in the greater Middle East and North African region by tactful exploitation of regional issues and the implementation of divide and rule policy. During the early sixties, Washington abandoned an unbiased policy of a global power/ mediator and became a party in Middle Eastern affairs by creating nexus with Tel Aviv and allotting a policeman role to the Jewish state. Until then, Israeli leaders are used to implementing their regional plans through the White House and the State Department, meanwhile, American leaders have played the role of Israeli pawns in the Middle East. Thus, Camp David, the Oslo Agreement, and the so-called Abraham Accord, all mechanisms were aimed at protecting Jew's core interests, complicated the Palestine issue, and frustrated Arab nations in the region.

Historically, Washington continued support for Israel had caused great concerns in the Arab countries who gradually ceased their hopes in the US and forged deep political and economic links with Russia and China. Over the past years, the geopolitical environment in the great MENA regions has changed significantly as Washington lost its stakes in the Middle East while Beijing and Moscow increased their economic and political influence in the region. Interestingly, Biden and his aides did not reassess their policies after Biden's failed visit to Saudi Arabia last year, and recently the Chinese facilitated a Saudi-Iran rapprochement that entirely collapsed US strategies in the Middle East.

During his address to the powerful Jewish lobby, Secretary Blenkin termed the cultivation of Saudi-Israel diplomatic relations an important foreign policy interest of the United States and vowed to take up this issue with Riyadh during his upcoming visit to Saudi Arabia. The statement of the top US diplomat ahead of his crucial visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia comes after the regional nations realigned recently after Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to re-establish their diplomatic and trade ties in recent weeks. The Biden administration did not disavow the idea of an Arab-Israel alliance against Iran and also actively pursued its campaign against the Iranian nuclear program through the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the UN Security Council as well as colluding with Israel regarding potential military action against Iranian nuclear installations.

At the same time, the Israeli and American Strategists intend to realize a normalization deal with multiple Arab nations, particularly with Saudi Arabia which is the most powerful Arab nation and could help break the country's regional isolation, independent from its conflict with the Palestinians. For their part, Saudis are of the view that Riyadh is strongly stuck by the Arab Peace Initiative, which conditions normalization with Israel on its withdrawal from Arab territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state, as well as finding a fair solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees. Otherwise, conceiving any peace deal without just a resolution of the Palestinian dispute would be a betrayal to the Palestinians as well as the entire Muslim Ummah.

Factually, America under the Biden administration badly failed on its foreign policy front, particularly in the Middle East, and the war in Ukraine, Afghanistan and has lost political and moral grounds at the global level through its reckless support for Israeli war crimes in Palestine and all-times high support for fascist Modi regime in India. Interestingly, President Biden himself stepped back from his so-called legacy for the promotion of democracy and the preservation of human rights in the world. Narendra Modi, the butcher of Gujrat once who was banned from entering the United States due to his heinous role in the 2002 riots, is now posing alongside the US President and scheduled to address the joint session of the US Congress.

Biden administration is persistently pursuing its Middle East agenda aims at normalizing Saudi-Israel ties by putting the Palestine issue on the back burner. However, the time would illustrates the wisdom of Saudi rulers along with their commitment toward Palestine cause, Arab nationalism, and Muslim brotherhood.

Can China compensate Russia's losses on the European gas market?

BEFORE its invasion of Ukraine, Russia sold over 150 billion cubic meters of gas to the West per year, earning on average \$20-30 billion in resource rent on top of the normal rate of return from gas production. Gazprom wasn't just an important source of budget revenue; it also provided the Kremlin with leverage over the EU. Since the start of the war, however, exports to Europe have dwindled to virtually nothing, and Russia needs to find a venue for monetization of the huge production-ready gas reserves in its Yamalo-Nenets region.

The only alternative to the European market is China. Negotiations with Beijing on building a gas pipeline from the Yamal Peninsula to the Chinese market have been under way for two decades, but now that Russia is at war, those talks may well accelerate and even culminate in the signing of an agreement. It was Russia that made the first move in the gas war: after sending troops into Ukraine, it began to drastically reduce gas supplies to Europe on a number of thinly veiled technical and commercial pretenses in an attempt to force EU countries to withdraw their support for Kyiv. But the EU had already been preparing to reduce its dependence on gas: in the summer of 2021, Brussels unveiled its Fit for 55 plan, which envisaged a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and, accordingly, a decrease in the use of fossil fuels, including Russian gas.

Even before Russian troops entered Ukraine, therefore, it was clear that new markets had to be found for Yamal gas, and China was the obvious candidate. A memorandum on the construction of a pipeline from Yamal to China was signed back in 2006 during Putin's visit to China, but little progress was made on agreeing the project's parameters until 2022, when it went from being an opportunity for business expansion to a necessity. Even if Power of Siberia 2 is successfully implemented, it will not be able to compensate fully for the loss of the European market. In 2019, Russia sold 165 billion cubic meters (bcm) of pipeline gas to Europe and Turkey. Power of Siberia 2's potential capacity is far smaller, at just 50 bcm.

In terms of profitability, too, the project will lag far behind the former gas trade with Europe. The profitability of gas supplies to Europe depended on the country, but in 2015-2019, Germany - the key market - paid an average of \$220 per 1,000 cubic meters for its gas imports. Gas prices correlate in general with oil prices, historically through explicit formulas, and more recently through market mechanisms, so it's worth noting that the average price of Brent in that same

period was \$57 per barrel. There were three routes used to deliver gas from Yamal to Germany. One of them - through Belarus and Poland - was not representative: the tariffs on that route were artificially low for a number of reasons. The second route was to Vyborg near the Finnish border, and then under the Baltic Sea via the Nord Stream pipeline. The third was through Ukraine, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.

The cost of supplying gas via Nord Stream was \$65 per 1,000 cubic meters, compared with \$85 through Ukraine. Since Germany was paying \$220, the netback (i.e., gas revenues minus transportation costs) was \$155 or \$135, respectively, per 1,000 cubic meters of gas before the deduction of the mineral extraction tax (MET) and export duty. The same cal-

Sergei Vakulenko

Siberia 2 can be calculated by taking the cost of the original pipeline and scaling it to the longer length and higher capacity of its successor. The relationship between the unit tariff and the unit cost on the two European pipelines is then used to estimate the transportation cost for Power of Siberia. In practice, this cost may be slightly lower due to the lower cost of fuel gas used to power the pumping stations. But, again, for these calculations, that factor is unimportant. As an additional check, bottom-up calculations using a cashflow model of the pipeline confirm that these tariffs provide a rate of return of about 12% on the capital, which is in the upper range of returns required for a midstream (transportation) project.

deposits ranges from \$15 to \$25 per 1,000 cubic meters, excluding MET and duties. The regulated sale price for industrial consumers in gas-producing regions is about \$40, all taxes included. Combining these calculations with the parameters of Power of Siberia 2 shows that the gas pipeline could bring in rent of \$2.5 billion to \$4.3 billion per year. That's a far cry from the \$20 billion per annum in rent lost from the gas trade with Europe, but still a significant amount.

If MET and export duty are levied on these sales at the standard rate (15% and 30%, respectively), then the state would get \$76.50 per 1,000 cubic meters exported, which might leave Gazprom in the red after transportation costs, but the government generally issues tax breaks for such

natives to maintain previous levels, the cost of such services and materials should not be valued at market prices (since there effectively is no market), but at short-term marginal costs.

Russia has plenty of capacity for the construction of pipelines and the manufacturing of corresponding materials. Judging from the construction of Power of Siberia 1, the second project could well be implemented in five to six years (and possibly even faster if work proceeds on multiple sections at the same time). Power of Siberia 2 will be able to operate at full capacity almost as soon as construction is completed, since all the production capacity previously oriented to Europe and now standing idle already significantly exceeds the pipeline's estimated capacity. Everything

tively expensive LNG into account. It also buys gas from Turkmenistan, and there is ample room to significantly increase those purchases. The only factor that may deter the Chinese leadership from doing so is the desire to diversify its supply sources. In any case, China can afford to simply wait until 2025-2026, when significant new volumes of LNG from the United States and Qatar are due to enter the market. As well as lowering gas prices, that might make Turkmenistan and Russia even more accommodating than they are now.

The other major risk is that of future instability in demand for gas. The project's biggest expense is construction costs, which will have to be recouped over two subsequent decades of operating at full capacity. China's energy development forecasts are based on demand for gas increasing through at least 2040 and then remaining stable for at least another decade. Many are also predicting the accelerated development of alternative energy, but growth in that sector is expected to come at the expense of coal. These forecasts may not come true, however. If Chinese economic development beats expectations, that will accelerate the transition to renewable energy sources (RES) and gas consumption will decrease. If it performs worse than expected, cheaper coal will continue to account for a significant proportion of the energy balance. On the other hand, the overland delivery of gas from Russia - which is increasingly dependent on Beijing - could comprise an additional element of China's energy security. It will come in useful in the event of a trade war with the West or a situation in which shipping routes for the delivery of LNG are jeopardized for any reason.

The fundamental difference between now and the 1960s-1980s, when the Soviet Union successfully monetized the vast gas reserves of Yamal by building a pipeline to Czechoslovakia, then Austria, and then West Germany, recouping construction costs several times over, is that back then the prospects for the development of the European gas market seemed unlimited. There was no hint that demand for gas would ever start to decline, and indeed, the Russian-European gas trade exceeded all Soviet-era calculations. Now, however, the gas trade between Russia and China is likely to end by about 2060 or even earlier as a result of the global energy transition. Any hopes of developing this cooperation further (by increasing supply volumes, extending contracts, and so on) amounts to a risky bet that the transition to renewable energy will not happen as planned. In all likelihood, within a few decades, Power of Siberia 2 will become obsolete.

The Moscow Times

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culations for China are based on the price of Brent oil at \$60 per barrel, and the price formula used in the contract with China for the original Power of Siberia pipeline, which delivers gas to China from eastern Siberia. This results in estimated average revenue of \$170 per 1,000 cubic meters.

As for the cost of delivery to China, the planned length of Power of Siberia 2 is 2,600 kilometers through Russia and another 950 kilometers through Mongolia. For the purposes of these calculations, we will assume that both sections will be built by Gazprom and its contractors, with a similar tariff structure (in reality, it may be lower in the Russian part of the pipeline, but that makes little difference to the given calculations). Nord Stream, as a project with foreign shareholders, and Balkan Stream - an extension of TurkStream that was built and operated in Bulgaria by BulgarTransGaz - serve as reasonable benchmarks for determining the tariff. The estimated cost of Power of

So, the average revenue for gas delivered to the border with China through the Power of Siberia 2 pipeline would be \$170 per 1,000 cubic meters. Knowing the estimated length of the new pipeline and calculating the tariff, the cost of transportation can be calculated at \$97 per 1,000 cubic meters, meaning that the netback would be \$73 per 1,000 cubic meters. Of course, that's a lot less than the \$135-155 netback from sales to Germany, but \$73 isn't bad either, and it could increase to \$100 if Gazprom manages to keep the capital expenditure of building a new onshore pipeline from exceeding that of building Nord Stream across the seabed, which sounds entirely feasible.

Natural resources rent is calculated as the excess left after total spending on production and transportation and a reasonable rate of return (i.e., one that corresponds to competitive industries with similar economic risks) have been factored in. The expert consensus on the total cost of gas production at the Yamal

projects, including Power of Siberia 1. Even a relatively modest break would make the project reasonably profitable. It also compares favorably to LNG projects, since the cost of liquefaction at Yamal LNG is close to the median for such projects, and more expensive than US and Qatari projects, for example, without taking into account the cost of transporting LNG, the pipeline is close in cost to the LNG option.

Power of Siberia 2 may cost less to build than its original namesake. For a start, the first 1,500 kilometers of Power of Siberia 2 could go along the existing pipeline route to Tomsk and Kuzbass, and then along the Trans-Siberian Railway to the Mongolian border followed by the railroad to Beijing. Secondly, the pipeline will be built by Russian companies in Russian factories using steel made in Russian mills from Russian deposits of iron ore and coal. All of these industries lost their export markets in 2022. Since there are far too few commercially viable alter-

rests solely on the availability of pumping stations. Russian capacity for manufacturing gas turbines (which serve as power sources for pumping stations) is limited, and may be required by the aviation industry, which, due to sanctions, is having to drastically accelerate the process of import substitution for plane engines.

There are, however, two major risks involved. Gazprom has no reasonable alternatives to the oil-pegged formula it agreed to for the first Power of Siberia back in relatively prosperous 2014. That formula guarantees a certain level of profit for Gazprom, but no more. Realistically, there is very little chance of convincing Beijing that this time the price should be higher. It will also make Gazprom dangerously dependent on one buyer, which will be able to not only dictate the terms of the contract, but also demand changes to those terms in future.

This is a market with many suppliers, and China has plenty of alternatives, even without taking rela-

‘No safety nets’ - China, Israel and Palestine in the new global Cold War

Ramzy Baroud

REMARKS by UN Ambassador Geng Shuang on the situation in Occupied Palestine on May 24 were impeccable, in terms of their consistency with international law. Compared to the US position, which perceives the UN, and particularly the Security Council, as a battleground to defend Israeli interests, the Chinese political discourse reflects a legal stance based on a deep understanding of the realities on the ground.

Articulating the Chinese thinking during a UNSC "Briefing on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine Question," Geng did not mince his words. He spoke forcefully about the "irreplaceable" need for a "comprehensive and just solution," based on ending Israel's "provocations" in Jerusalem and respect for the right of "Muslim worshippers" as well as the "custodianship of Jordan" in the city's holy sites. Widening the context of the reasons behind the latest violence in Palestine, and the May 9 Israeli war on Gaza, Geng went on to state a position that both Tel Aviv and Washington find utterly objectionable. He unapologetically con-

demned the "illegal expansion of (Israeli Jewish) settlements" in Occupied Palestine and Israel's "unilateral action," urging Tel Aviv to "immediately halt" all its illegal activities. Geng proceeded to discuss issues that have been relatively ignored, including "the plight of the Palestinian refugees."

In doing so, Geng has enunciated his country's political vision regarding a just solution in Palestine, one that is predicated on ending the Israeli occupation, halting Tel Aviv's expansionist policies, and respecting the rights of the Palestinian people. But is this position new? While it is true that China's policies on Palestine and Israel have historically been consistent with international law, China, in recent years, has attempted to tailor a more "balanced" position, one that does not impede growing Israeli-Chinese trade, particularly in the area of advanced microchips technology. However, the China-Israel affinity was motivated by more than mere trade. Since its official launch, China's Belt and Road Initiative has served as the cornerstone of Beijing's global outlook. The massive project involves nearly 150 coun-

tries and aims to connect Asia with Europe and Africa via land and maritime networks.

Due to its location on the Mediterranean Sea, Israel's strategic importance to China - which for years has been keen on gaining access to Israeli seaports - has doubled. Such ambitions have been of great concern to Washington, whose naval vessels often dock at the Haifa Port. Washington has repeatedly cautioned Tel Aviv against its growing proximity to Beijing. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo went as far as warning Israel in March 2019 that until Tel Aviv re-evaluated its cooperation with China, the US could reduce "intelligence sharing and co-location of security facilities." Fully appreciating the current, but also the potential global power of China, Israel labored to find a balance that would allow it to maintain its "special relationship" with the US, while financially and strategically benefiting from its closeness to China. Israel's balancing act encouraged China to translate its growing economic prowess in the Middle East into a political and diplomatic investment as well. For example,

in 2017, China put into motion a peace plan - initially formulated in 2013 - called the Four-Point Proposal. The plan offered Chinese mediation as a substitution for US bias and, ultimately, failed "peace process." The Palestinian leadership welcomed China's involvement, while Israel refused to engage, causing an embarrassment to a government that insists on respect and recognition of its rising importance in every arena.

If balancing acts in geopolitics were possible back then, the Russia-Ukraine war brought it all to a sudden end. The new geopolitical reality can be expressed in the words of a former Italian diplomat, Stefano Stefanini. Italy's former ambassador to NATO wrote in an article in La Stampa that the "international balancing act is over" and "there are no safety nets." Ironically, Stefanini made this reference to Italy's need to choose between the West and China. The same logic can also be applied to Israel and China. Soon after China succeeded in striking a landmark deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran on April 6, it again floated the

idea of brokering peace between Palestine and Israel. China's new Foreign Minister Qin Gang reportedly consulted with both sides on "steps to resume peace talks." Again, the Palestinians accepted while Israel ignored the subject.

This partly explains China's frustration with Israel, and also with the US. As China's former ambassador to Washington (2021-23), Qin must be familiar with the inherent US bias toward Israel. This knowledge was expressed by Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hua Chunying, during the latest Israeli war on Gaza. "The United States should realize that the lives of Palestinian Muslims are equally precious," Hua said on May 14. A simple discourse analysis of the Chinese language regarding the situation in Palestine clarifies that Beijing sees a direct link between the US and the continued conflict, or the failure to find a just solution. This assertion can also be gleaned from ambassador Geng's most recent UNSC remarks, where he criticized "piecemeal crisis management," a direct reference to US diplomacy in the region, offering a Chinese alternative that is based on a "comprehensive and just solu-

tion." Equally important is that the Chinese position seems to be intrinsically linked to that of Arab countries. The more Palestine takes center stage in Arab political discourse, the greater emphasis the issue receives in China's foreign policy agenda. In the recent Arab Summit held in Jeddah, Arab governments agreed to prioritize Palestine as the central Arab cause. Allies, such as China, with great and growing economic interests in the region, immediately took notice.

All of this must not suggest that China will be severing its ties with Israel, but it certainly indicates that China remains committed to its principled stance on Palestine, as it has over the decades. Soon, the relationship between China and Israel will face the litmus test of US pressures and ultimatums. Considering Washington's unparalleled importance to Israel, on the one hand, and the Arab-Muslim world's significance to China on the other, the future is easy to foresee. Judging by China's political discourse on Palestine - situated within international and humanitarian laws - it seems that China has already made its choice.

Britain is sleepwalking into becoming a soft totalitarian state

Sherelle Jacobs

WHEN it comes to freedom, Britain has reached a tipping point. Our country likes to pride itself on being a champion of liberty - the country that bequeathed private property norms, natural rights philosophy and representative government to the United States, leader of the free world. But after a golden age for liberty that stretches back to the Enlightenment, we are going backwards. Britain's ranking across all manner of global freedom indexes, from academic liberty to online and media freedom, are in freefall. In a spectacular reversal of history, peacetime freedom is now consistently shrinking rather than expanding. Put bluntly, we are sleepwalking into becoming a "soft authoritarian" outlier in the West.

Some might be tempted to dismiss our draconian response to Covid as a mortifying aberration to never be repeated. In fact, it was merely the tip of the iceberg, the culmination of at least two decades of freedom's unrelenting decline. The monitoring of lockdown critics - including eminent scientists - by Whitehall disinformation units merely built on a well-ensconced tradition of managerial groupthink and slavish devotion to scientism (rather than science). We would not have been treated to the dystopian spectacle of drones taunting people for walking their dogs had Britain not already established itself as one of the most invasive surveillance states in the democratic West. Local authorities would not have had the audacity to dream up all manner of imbecilic Covid rules

had they not spent the past two decades accruing massive new powers of enforcement. One might also speculate about whether the middle classes would have been so prone to conformist compliance had the past 15 years of stagnation not seen the accumulation of virtue usurp the accumulation of capital as the primary marker of bourgeois status. Moreover, upon closer examination, it seems that one of the great lessons of the 21st century is that liberty first rots at the margins of a society, before spreading to its very core. Before we had Covid marshals barking at people, Asbos were used to persecute an under-class for offences as bizarre as loud singing and feeding the birds.

Unfortunately, all the signs are that things are getting worse. The Tories are busily forcing through "the biggest accidental curtailment" of freedom in history, in the form of the Online Safety Bill. The country is carving itself out as a world leader in terrifying surveillance technology. Meanwhile, it is truly shameful to see Poundland "conservatives" behave little better than anti-democratic Remainers, riding roughshod over rule of law. The question is how on Earth did we get to this point? The Northern Ireland Troubles go some way in explaining the rise of a surveillance industrial complex that has steadily grown to take on a life of its own, with state and corporations feeding off each other. One also wonders whether the country is forever waging liberty-destroying wars because of a certain latent martial spirit. Another fatal British quirk is

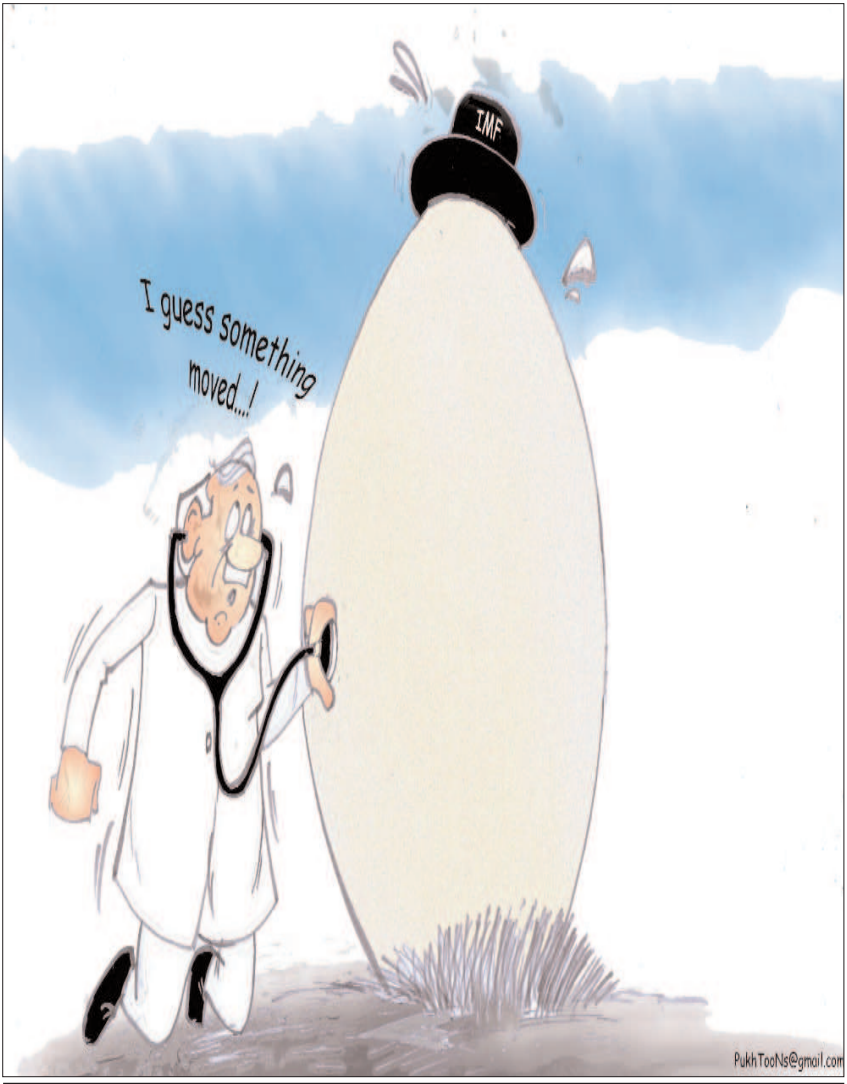
that the 1980s managerial revolution - the single greatest disaster of the post-war period - has proved far more resounding and far-reaching in the UK than anywhere else in Europe. It is hard to overstate how destructive this development has been to freedom of thought; managerialism is the principal vehicle by which cultish false rationalism has come to colonise the mindsets of the British ruling class. As an ideology founded on an elite's purported possession of objective, mathematically-derived knowledge that is beyond question and applicable to all situations, it has institutionalised groupthink. In the process, it has annihilated Britain's long-standing traditions of empiricism and nuance.

When it comes to the crushing of dissent and the smoking out of non-conformists across politics, the Civil Service, universities and the workplace, managerialism has arguably proved far more decisive than the rise of vapid wokeism. Critics of the Right argue that since the rise of Brexit, a new deceitful and demagogic populism also threatens freedom. But this is a hopelessly one-sided perspective, given that they are just as much to blame for the imperilling of the country's liberal democratic structures and norms. After all, it is the attempt of some MPs to thwart Brexit along with widespread denial over festering democratic crises - from the politically unsustainable levels of mass migration to Left-wing bias in neutral institutions - that has ultimately plunged liberal democracy into a legitimacy crisis. Regrettably, amid this

swirling chaos a Tory Government has pursued sloppy short-cuts and dangerous quick fixes that shore up risky levels of executive power and undermine our unwritten constitution. The question now is how can we reverse the country's frightening trajectory? Above all, we need a new vision of freedom that will unite all sides. Given the country's shift Leftwards - in contrast to the Thatcher era - a liberal economic agenda is unlikely to do the trick. Rather, a new emphasis on freedom of thought and the protection of what Jürgen Habermas has called the "lifeworld" from a totalitarian system might prove more potent.

The colonial origins of the surveillance state and the way state powers are being used to curtail protests could, with a bit of clever persuasion, encourage the Left to join the Right in a popular campaign against technocratic Big Brother. Liberals may also be more receptive to a collective fight for liberty against the scourge of managerialism rather than the woke. Arguably, the West is in sore need of such a new "freedom story". It may well be the key to ending stagnation, because the stupendous rise of our countries did not historically originate in market freedom per se, but rather a relative respect for free intellectual inquiry and individual flourishing that first began to germinate from the Middle Ages. Yet if Britain does not somehow find the resolve to fight for freedom, further backsliding is inevitable. The country may find itself helping to bring into existence China's preferred world order of soft totalitarian states. It would be an astonishing fall from grace.

The Telegraph



Kim Jong-un's new border wall

Timothy Cho

WHEN I was a kid, I had a friend who was a smuggler. "You tell anyone about this - our lives are over," he threatened, and suddenly grinned, delightedly revealing his prize: the latest 007 movie, Die Another Day. Two decades ago, viewing foreign material in North Korea was highly dangerous - and it is the same today. The news that a two-year-old toddler has been sentenced to life imprisonment - because his parents were caught with a Bible - does not surprise anyone who observes the state's cruelty to those who prefer not to worship the Kim family.

And yet the "hermit kingdom" idea really is something of a myth - finding illicit smuggled material in North Korea is surprisingly easy. Today's "reactionary" content is K-pop, South Korean soap operas, text files of western novels or, if you're a Christian like me, the New Testament. A recent study of escapers revealed that 98% had viewed such "alien" material. But it's clear that Kim Jong-un is quietly pushing back. Extraordinary satellite images published by Reuters last week have revealed Kim's secret pandemic project: a 489km (304 miles) reinforced security blockade along the country's northern frontier with China, complete with watchtowers, concrete walls, double fencing and barbed wire.

Many years ago, I used the intricate web of mountain passes in this area to make my escape - now it is sealed off. For North Koreans, these are vital lifelines to western medicine and pharmaceuticals, to news from outside and to precious "Chinese phones" - meaning any foreign phone with a sim card smuggled in from outside. Kim's giant wall is a step in a larger grand project: to create a "clean" digital environment. In this project, control of smartphone technology is key. About 3 million North Koreans do own smartphones - brands like the Pyongyang and the Arirang, which are developed by the state. They cannot make international calls, or connect to the internet. Their software - cunningly - disables foreign files: clips, sound files, text files or apps not created within North Korea's Red Star operating system. It is a "closed" environment, in which you see and hear only what Kim wants you to. And the phones have one fiendishly clever feature: the automatic capture of the user's activity history with continual random screenshots of messages, which the user cannot delete. Official inspections of the phone are mandatory, and the Group 109 police squad - a specialist squad cracking down on the viewing of foreign media - conducts regular raids on private homes. By creating his own hardware and software,

and the Red Star operating system, Kim has invented a closed "digital state". But "Chinese phones" are a challenge for Kim - and, for the sharp broker, a great business. North Koreans save up astonishing sums to meet a broker and make a call. It's the only way of knowing whether your family who have escaped are dead or alive; perhaps your only chance to hear your child's voice again. Families go to great lengths to make these calls; the government goes to great lengths to place signal jammers near the borders. So even as he seals off the northern frontier, Kim is fighting on a communications frontier. Many people suggest that Kim's border clampdown may be a mark of fragility - born out of alarm, or an attempt to balance power

his health. In 2020, he disappeared entirely from view amid rumours of heart surgery. In March, the North Korean state newspaper Rodong Sinmun began insisting that Kim regularly works until 5am - an apparent explanation for his puffy appearance and the dark circles under his eyes. Meanwhile Kim's sister, Kim Yo-jong, who had been considered his chosen successor, has been lately eclipsed by high-profile appearances from his 10-year-old daughter, Ju-ae. In a paranoid environment, Ju-ae's appearance is giving rise to a flurry of speculation.

Shifts are also visible in how the party treats its followers. Recent years have seen restructuring of the "Party Life" social credit rating for Workers' party members. For millions of party members and govern-

Many are intimately involved with the elite - the same elite Kim is relying on for support. Squeezing the black market will squeeze them. Is Kim nervous of an elite with strong financial backing? Is this an attempt to bring the donju to heel? Kim also looks uncertain in his health. In 2020, he disappeared entirely from view amid rumours of heart surgery. In March, the North Korean state newspaper Rodong Sinmun began insisting that Kim regularly works until 5am - an apparent explanation for his puffy appearance and the dark circles under his eyes. Meanwhile Kim's sister, Kim Yo-jong, who had been considered his chosen successor, has been lately eclipsed by high-profile appearances from his 10-year-old daughter, Ju-ae.

blocs, or a need to safeguard his position. Choking the black market is a sharp blow to those making a living from it, and they are more visible and more powerful than you might think.

Those most affected are the donju - the "money-lords" or "money-masters" - a tiny entrepreneurial class who were deliberately allowed to flourish at the start of Kim's premiership. This coterie of families - perhaps 50 in all - took advantage of the easing of economic restrictions after the famine of the 1990s and founded businesses, which were often linked to the supply of black market goods or foreign content. Today the donju are wealthy; they exert influence over many sectors of the economy. Many are intimately involved with the elite - the same elite Kim is relying on for support. Squeezing the black market will squeeze them. Is Kim nervous of an elite with strong financial backing? Is this an attempt to bring the donju to heel? Kim also looks uncertain in

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Only US, not China, keen on moon race

Yang Yuguang

THE moon is the only natural satellite of Earth. It is also the nearest celestial body to our planet, and selenology, or the study of the moon, is very important for scientists, as it can give them insights into other celestial bodies and advance planetary science. If we want to know the history of Earth, together with the history of our solar system, studying the moon is essential.

The exploration of the moon started in the 1950s. In those days, however, lunar missions were driven by politics, because the Soviet Union and the United States tried to achieve "the first" in every sphere of selenology. While the first moon flyby, the first impact, the first soft landing and the first orbiter of the moon were achieved by the Soviet Union, the US became the first country to land man on the lunar surface, which in a way ended the "moon race". Since the lunar explorations by the Soviet Union and the US were politics-driven, they were not sustainable. So the US cancelled its Apollo program, and for more than half a century, no astronaut has landed on the moon.

The second tide of lunar explorations began in the 1990s. Apart from the US, countries like Japan, European states, China and India have sent probes to the Moon. Unlike the moon race in during the Cold War days, this time the purpose of lunar explorations is to achieve scientific and engineering goals. Nowadays, countries capable of space exploration pay more

attention to efficiency. Due to such explorations, water has been found in permanent shadow areas of the moon. And scientists are hopeful that on-site resource utilization technologies will help reduce the cost of lunar exploration, as the available water on the moon will not only sustain astronauts' life; it can also be used to produce propellant.

In regions near the "south pole" of the moon, scientists expect to find a large amount of water ice in permanent shadow areas. There are also long-duration sunlight areas near the "south pole", and scientists say human beings can set up permanent bases there, which will transform the exploration of the moon to exploitation of the moon. Since the gravity on the moon is only one-sixth of that on Earth, propellant produced on the lunar surface will be much cheaper than that brought from the Earth. We hope the moon can be an outpost of human beings in the future, and help scientists travel deeper into the solar system. However, the US has said its Artemis program will use Orion spaceship and the space-launch system to carry astronauts to cislunar space. They will also build a cislunar space station called the "gateway". The US National Aeronautical and Space Administration has chosen SpaceX's starship for the manned human landing system with Blue Origin solution as a backup measure.

During the Moon race in the

1960s, the Apollo program adopted a very risky method to send astronauts to the moon. The Artemis program, however, is paying greater attention to reliability and safety. But the program seems starved of funds, and that's the reason why it is challenging for the US to return the moon. During the news conference to mark the launch of the Shenzhou-16 manned flight mission, China Manned Space Agency formally announced that it will send the first Chinese astronaut to the moon before 2030. This is an exciting piece of news for the Chinese people. In 2003, space hero Yang Liwei fulfilled Chinese people's dream to travel to outer space. A Chinese national walking on the Moon will be the realization of an equally big dream. Although only seven years are left to achieve this goal, China has made all the preparations. The launch vehicle to be used for China's manned lunar program is called "Long March-10", which is a new generation human-rated launch vehicle. It uses many proven technologies. For instance, the diameter of the core stage and the two boosters of Long March-10 is 5 meters, the same as that used in the Long March-5 series. This means a lot of infrastructure facilities of Long March-5 can also be used for this new rocket. The YF-100K rocket engine used in the new rocket is also a derivative of the very practical YF-100 series.

China will use the new genera-

tion manned spaceship to send astronauts into lunar orbit. While this new spacecraft has already been tested on the maiden flight of Long March-5B rocket, the docking mechanism and other related technologies were used in the Tiangong Space Station. To make it possible for a Chinese national to walk on the moon, China will develop a new spacecraft called the "Lunar Lander", which will be propelled into lunar orbit by Long March-10, and dock with the new spaceship in lunar orbit. The soft-landing technologies demonstrated in Chang'e-3, 4 and 5 robotic lunar missions can also be used in the manned Lunar Lander. Learning from the Chang'e-5 sample return mission, China has also mastered the lunar orbit rendezvous and docking technology, which is possibly the most difficult and risky part of the lunar mission. But despite deciding to send astronauts to the Moon, China will not join any moon race. The manned lunar program is to advance China's space technology and high-tech industry. Rather than competing with any other country, China is open to engage in cooperation with other countries, because it knows such cooperation is important for becoming a leading country in the field of space science. China has already engaged in high-level international cooperation on its robotic lunar and space station programs. And we are confident it will engage in cooperation with more countries on its manned lunar program.

The China Daily

The biggest obstacle facing Nikki Haley's campaign

Patrick T. Brown

NIKKI Haley won election as Governor as South Carolina in both 2010 and 2014. If the Republican Party, whose presidential nomination she's seeking, was still the GOP of 2010 or even 2014, she might have a strong justification for her candidacy - and a stronger chance to win. But the past and current candidacy of Donald Trump seems to have indelibly shifted the axis of the Republican Party. And the issues that energized Haley in Sunday night's CNN town hall showcased how much daylight there is between the era of the Tea Party and today's populist GOP.

Many Republicans are galvanized by critical race theory, parents' rights and LGBTQ-related controversies. Yet Haley's professional and polished performance emphasized a message of old favorites like entitlement reform, a hawkish foreign policy and tort reform. For the median Republican voter of a decade ago, perhaps it was everything they could want. But today's Republican party is noticeably cool on Haley's campaign to date - possibly because they are looking for a politician who can show she has answers for the problems of today. Haley has been on all sides of the party's complex relationship with former President Donald Trump - opposing him in the 2016 primary before working for his administration as US Ambassador to the United Nations, criticizing the then-President's actions on January 6 before saying she'd defer to him rather than run for president, and then, finally, doing so anyway.

Even when offered a chance to directly criticize her former boss Sunday night, Haley largely held

her fire, offering terse disagreement on January 6 before pivoting to talk about election reform, or focusing her rhetoric on the Taliban and Kim Jong Un rather than on how Trump engaged with them as president. Instead, she tried to offer an indirect, though far from subtle, message that her candidacy offered Republicans a chance to turn the page on the Trump years. "It's time for a new generational leader," she stressed, telling voters that "we deserve better, you deserve better than what we have right now, and I'm determined to make that happen." She blamed not just President Joe Biden, but also Republicans in Washington, DC, (and, implicitly, Trump) for racking up trillions of federal spending, mentioning her support of a balanced budget and opposition to earmarks in phrases that could have been straight from Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan's handbook.

In disagreeing with another rival, Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, Haley sought to position herself as offering a less polarizing style of politics. She said she "totally agree(d) with" the Florida bill dubbed "Don't Say Gay" by its critics and even "thought that it needed to go further," but she opposed DeSantis' ongoing fight with the Disney corporation. "All this vendetta stuff, we've been down that road," she said, trying to ding both men currently leading most polls in the race to the Republican nomination. She also foreshadowed some attacks on her primary opponents on the issue of entitlements, embracing the need to raise the retirement age and alleging that her oppo-

nents were "not being honest with the American people." It is politically brave to lead with the uncomfortable fiscal picture for Social Security and Medicare. But bravery rarely translates into votes, especially in a state in which approximately 22% of residents are over the age of 62. And amid the calls for "serious conversations" and "needing to be honest," there was a sense that Haley's actual policy positions were still coalescing. Calling for mental health to be our "number one priority" in response to gun violence, for example, works best when you have a concrete plan to ensure coverage. It would have been fascinating to hear Haley call for legislation to make mental health coverage mandatory for insurers or propose a specific program to increase funding for community mental health care. Even on the issue of abortion, which she has grabbed by the horns more bravely than most national Republicans, she was content to let her true preferences hide behind some realpolitik. She noted, correctly, that it is vanishingly unlikely for Republicans to have a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate - "We haven't had 60 pro-life senators in over 100 years," Haley said. In lieu of that, she offered a focus on banning late-term abortions, encouraging adoptions, conscience protections for health care providers, access to contraception and not punishing women who get abortions to "save as many babies as we can...and support as many mothers as we can." It wasn't until one of last answers of the night, when she talked about being a mom to a

recently married daughter struggling to afford a home, and a college student who feels the need to espouse "woke" pieties to get good grades, that a more interesting version of Haley's campaign could be glimpsed. What would her vision of governing do for couples saving for a down payment, or parents concerned about schools forcing students to think a certain way?

That went unanswered; a 2010-esque approach to politics doesn't have ready answers. But as the campaign progresses, more details on how her vision could respond to what's on voters' minds might do a better job of translating between principle and politics. Haley held the stage well. She showed how adeptly she can lean into a minority woman in Republican politics without being seen as playing the identity card. The most moving minutes of the evening were her personal recollections of the moment that has become her national calling card, the removal of the Confederate flag from the State House grounds in Columbia, South Carolina, following the 2015 mass shooting at a Charleston church that claimed the lives of nine African Americans. Unfortunately for Haley's chances of winning the nomination, the political winds that she rode to gubernatorial reelection have shifted. Her performance Sunday night offered a view of an alternate universe in which the ideals that drove the Tea Party movement were still the driving force behind GOP politics. But - barring an unexpected shift - it seems unlikely to resonate with the voters who will make up the Republican primary electorate of 2024.

CNN



PAJCCI terms Barter Trade approval as dream come true

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zubair Motiwala while welcoming Pakistan's government decision of initiating Barter Trade with Afghanistan, Iran and Russia has termed the development as 'dream come true'.

In a press statement issued here on Tuesday, Chairman PAJCCI stated that fruitful consequence of a series of meetings, since 2021 by PAJCCI has started bearing fruits.

PAJCCI had been recommending several measures to facilitate economic activity with Afghanistan including waiver of E-Form

& EIF requirement for extended period till finalization of alternate mechanism, opening up of new border crossings, increase in timings at existing border crossings, reducing multiple and manual checks, adding items to PKR trading category, barter trade mechanism implementation, exploring new items for trade, cross-stuffing.

Finally, dreams come true as PAJCCI welcomes Barter Trade mechanism approval between Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Russia, Zubair reiterated.

It merits a mention here that Ministry of Commerce issued an its order to approve Business to

Business Barter Trade Mechanism 2023 to facilitate trade between Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Russia.

The decision has been taken in view of current macroeconomic situation in the country and lack of formal banking sector and sanctions in Afghanistan.

According to notification Pakistan can export 26 items to Iran, Afghanistan and Russia and in return can import different items including gas, petroleum products and coal from these countries without payment in dollars.

President PAJCCI, Qazi Zahid stated that the organization has made a long struggle in highlighting the

importance of barter trade and held several meetings with concerned officials both in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Former President, Executive Director Junaid Makda also stated that "The decision is timely and in right direction while keeping in view the problems being faced by business community dealing in trade with Afghanistan."

The decision of allowing barter trade will prove as win-win situation for all the stakeholders and usher in a new era of prosperity and development through promotion of commerce and trade in the whole region, they added.

USAID-ERDA in collaboration with WCCI organized two-day training



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The United States Agency for International Development's Economic Recovery and Development Activity (USAID-ERDA), in collaboration with the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI) Peshawar, conducted a two-day long training workshop on business registration and regulatory compliances. The objective of the training was to enhance the understanding and knowledge of women entrepreneurs and start-ups regarding business registration, documentation, and compliance with relevant regulations.

The training workshop brought together partici-

pants from various organizations, including the Women Chamber of Commerce, business entrepreneurs, and government officials and senior management of USAID-ERDA also attended the workshop.

The training workshop featured detailed presentations delivered by experts in the field, including representatives from Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, Pakistan Customs, Industries and Commerce Department, the President of the Women Chamber of Commerce, Inland Revenue Service, KP Revenue Authority, the Bank of Khyber, and the Excise and Taxation department. These presentations aimed to educate and

inform women business entrepreneurs about the process of business registration and regulatory compliance, offering on-the-spot support for their business endeavors.

Furthermore, a dedicated help desk was established to assist women entrepreneurs in understanding the requirements and procedures for opening business bank accounts, further facilitating their business endeavors.

"We are grateful to USAID-ERDA for their collaboration and support in organizing this training workshop. By equipping women entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge and resources, we can empower them to overcome

hurdles and create a thriving business environment," said Ms. Azra Jamsheed, President, WCCI.

"We have gained valuable insights into the regulatory processes and documentation required for businesses. We are now better equipped to navigate the system and ensure compliance with regulations," said Afshan Khan, Managing Director of FastMove Packages.

"We hope that through this initiative, we can enhance the understanding of business registration, regulatory compliances, and provide women entrepreneurs with the necessary tools to thrive in their respective industries," said Shad Muhammad, Chief of Party at USAID-ERDA.

USAID-ERDA is a five-year (2022-2027) activity designed to expand environmentally sustainable, socially equitable and climate resilient economic opportunities in the Newly Merged Districts of KP province by strengthening and modernizing the agriculture sector and promoting on and off farm Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Pakistan Stock Exchange stays bullish, gains 255 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 255.52 points, a positive change of 0.61 per cent, closing at 41,923.46 points against 41,667.94 points the previous day.

A total of 240,829,334 shares were traded during the day as compared to 145,177,892 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs.7,152 billion against Rs.4,682 billion on the last trading day. As many as 331 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 198 of them recorded gains and 114 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 19 companies remained unchanged.

Three top-trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 24,434,530 shares

at Rs.1.15 per share; Pak Refinery with 20,519,216 shares at Rs.15.06 per share and Cnergyco PK with 15,518,079 shares at Rs.3.33 per share. Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.950.00 per share price, closing at Rs.23,000.00, whereas the runner-up was Bata (Pak) with an Rs.33.50 rise in its per share price to Rs.317.00.

Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.34.97 per share closing at Rs.1,225.01; followed by ZIL Limited with Rs.22.00 decline to close at Rs.317.00.

Rupee sheds 37 paises against US Dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday witnessed 37 paises devaluation against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading as it closed at Rs 286.56 against

the previous day's closing of Rs 286.19.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market stood at Rs 303 and Rs 306 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by 49 paises to close at Rs 306.59 against the last day's closing of Rs 306.10, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen went up by 01 paise and closed at Rs 2.05, whereas an increase of 82 paises was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 355.92 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 355.10.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 10 paises and 11 paises to close at Rs 78.01 and Rs 76.41 respectively.

Gold prices decline by Rs.2,300 to Rs228,100

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs2,300 and was sold at Rs228,100 on Tuesday against its sale at Rs230,400 the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs1,972 to Rs195,559 from Rs197,531 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs179,262 from Rs181,070. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs100 to close at Rs2,650 and tengram silver also decreased by Rs85.74 to close at Rs2,271.94 respectively.

However, the price of gold in the international market increased by US\$24 to \$1964 against its sale at \$1940, association reported.

Pak-Iran trade is on growth trajectory: Consul General Iran

FAISALABAD (APP): Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. Mehran Movahhedfar on Tuesday said that Pak-Iran trade was on a growth trajectory despite restrictions and lack of banking channels etc.

"We must exploiting the full potential of the two countries by encouraging direct contacts between the business communities of the two countries," he added.

Addressing the business community of Faisalabad in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, he said that Faisalabad was the first city, he was visiting during his posting and it was not by chance but it was conscious efforts as he fully understood the agriculture and textile potential of this city.

He said that Iran could export raw material for the textile sector at comparatively cheaper rates. He said that Iran had justifications to ban import of rice

from India and as a result of this step, Pakistan had captured 50% of the rice market of Iran. He quoted his meeting with the Pakistani ambassador in Tehran and said that he had disclosed that Pakistan had exported rice to the tune of \$750million to Iran during last year. He said, "We should fully exploit our joint potential."

He welcomed the new initiative of Pakistan to legalize barter trade and try their optimum best to give it quantum jump. He mentioned the inauguration of a new border market jointly by Iranian President and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He said that Pakistan was also importing electricity from Iran while it was exporting rice and now new opportunities were visible for the export of meat to Iran.

Responding to a question, he said that there was no security issue in the bordering areas and trade was going on uninterrupted.

He said that the women empowerment conference organized by the OIC had been postponed, however, Pakistani women entrepreneurs must participate in it in accordance with the new schedule.

He welcomed the new SRO for barter trade and said that Punjab based businessmen should also avail from it. He said that through this SRO Pakistan had officially legalized the barter trade and its next step may be the issuance of joint currency.

Earlier President FCCI Dr. Khurram Tariq welcomed Iranian Consul General and said that his visit was very timely in the backdrop of SRO on barter trade. He introduced FCCI and said that it had 8500 members who belonged to 118 sectors and sub-sectors of trade, industry and commerce. He said that Faisalabad was a centrally located and well-connected city of Pakistan from where

goods could be dispatched to any part of the country within hours. He said that FCCI had an international airport which handled 60 flights per week. Dr. Khurram Tariq said that this city was contributing significantly towards the national GDP. He stressed the need to maintain strategic balance in import and export between the two countries.

Vice President Haji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli, Mian Abdul Waheed, Ms. Nighat Shahid, Muhammad Akif of Lahore Chamber, Azhar Chaudhry, Salahuddin, M. Qasim and M. Asghar Qadri participated in the question answer session while Senior Vice President Dr. Sajjad Arshad offered vote of thanks.

Later Dr. Khurram Tariq presented FCCI memento to the Iranian Consul General Mehran Movahhedfar.

Iranian Consul General also recorded his impressions in the victor's book of the FCCI.



LARKANA: A vendor displaying potatoes to attract customers at Sabzi Mandi.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, MSC Rida, MSC Makalu-III, RSG, Haj Mohammed, Valiant and Chemroad Zenith scheduled to load/offload Containers, Bitumen, Cement, Coal and Chemicals, berthed at Container Terminal, Multipurpose Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Maersk Chicago, Yun-Ding-19, Galassos and Milaha-Ras-Laffan with Containers, Palm oil, Mogas and LNG also arrived at the outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hours.

A total of 09 ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them six ships, MSC Rida, MSC Makalu-III, BBG-He-Zhou, Chem-Leona, Kari-mata and Valiant are expected to sail on Tuesday.

Cargo Throughput during last 24 hours stood at 140,556tonnes, comprising 109,259 tonnes import Cargo and 30,666 tonnes of export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 2,720 Containers (1,170 TEUs Imports and 1,550 TEUs export) was handled at the port.

There are 11 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, MilahaRas Laffan, JIU-LI-669, Ullswater and Maersk Chicago & two more ships, MSC Adnis and LNG Ogun carrying Palm oil, LPG, Container and LNG are expected to take berths at EETL, LCT, SSGC, QICT and PGPCl respectively on Tuesday & three more container ships, MSC Tianping, MSC Pegasus and Maersk Pelepas are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Wednesday.

Tokyo shares close higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks shrugged off early losses and closed higher Tuesday after falls on Wall Street, where profit-taking prevailed.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index climbed 0.90 percent, or 289.35 points, to end at 32,506.78, while the broader Topix index rose 0.74 percent, or 16.49 points, to 2,236.28. The dollar fetched 139.34 yen against 139.54 yen in New York on Monday.

Overnight, Wall Street stocks receded from multi-month highs reached last week after a congressional agreement allowed the United States to avoid a catastrophic debt default.

"Following the trend in the US market where the major indexes fell, selling was dominant in Tokyo" in early trade, IwaiCosmo Securities said.

But share prices were later buoyed by "futures buying by foreign investors on the back of expectations of a better market outlook", the brokerage said.

Shortly before the opening bell, a government survey showed that real-term wages for workers in Japan declined three percent in April from a year earlier.

A separate government report also found household spending in April dipped 4.4% in real terms from the previous year.

Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing jumped 1.72 percent to 34,750 yen, while SoftBank Group firmed 0.97 percent to 6,081 yen.

Toyota rose 1.05 percent to 2,050 yen, while Nintendo added 0.60 percent to 6,120 yen.

NPO to assist industries' ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Industries and Production has launched a development project to improve the productivity of the industrial, manufacturing, services and education sectors through the assistance of the National Productivity Organization (NPO), its, Chief Executive Officer, Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry said on Tuesday.

The NPO will train the stakeholders to increase productivity and make them productivity specialists in their sectors concerned as it had been accredited the status of certification body by the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Japan first time for the period of four years, the NAP CEO told a press conference.

After getting training from NPO, quality, competitiveness and sustainable social economic development, he added.

He said the productivity movement was the first-ever developmental initiative funded by a public sector development programme (PSDP) to improve competitiveness through sustainable national productivity, said a press release.

He said that two curricula (productivity modules) had also been developed and shared with NCC and NAVTTC for inclusion in their curricula, training and certification programs.

In order to promote a culture of productivity, productivity weeks were marked in major cities including Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, Faisalabad and Multan by conducting walks coupled with holding awareness sessions addressed by renowned national productivity experts, the CEO informed.

He said that different productivity competitions including painting posters, conducting debates and article writing were arranged at NED University, UET Lahore, IBA Sukkar, University of Swabi and MNS University of Agriculture, Multan to create awareness about productivity.

NPO is working under the Ministry of Industries and Production as the liaison office of APO, Japan.

Meezan Bank, Fauree to develop digital platform



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic bank has recently established a partnership with Fauree Tech Pvt Limited, a Fintech company specializing in supply chain solutions. The partnership shall serve to establish a digital platform for financing suppliers involved in well-organized logistical supply chains associated with reputable corporations. The signing ceremony took place with the participation of senior management from both organizations including Syed Tanveer Hussain - General Manager, Meezan Bank and Mr. Azhar Tasadduq - CEO, Fauree along with their respective teams. Notably, Dr Saleh AlAmr from Saudi Arabia, - Founder and Group CEO, Jawa Investment also graced the occasion with his virtual presence.

Through this collaboration, both parties will help empower small & medium sized businesses by providing them access to Islamic finance facilities in a fully Shariah-compliant manner. This will enable SMEs to sustain their operations by securing critical working capital in the current challenging economic climate. Under the agreement, Meezan Bank will be offering Islamic digital supply chain financing and Fauree will provide the digital platform, that offers real-time Islamic financing along with complete digitization throughout the entire life-cycle of the financing process.

On this occasion, Syed Tanveer Hussain - General Manager, Meezan Bank remarked, "Meezan Bank is fully committed to creating innovative Shariah-compliant financing solutions and is pleased to collaborate

with Fauree for developing a digital financing platform that reaches small & medium sized suppliers, and their anchor corporates. We are hopeful, that this partnership will act as a precursor to grow the country's most important segment."

Mr. Azhar Tasadduq - CEO, Fauree further added, "Fauree was born with the vision of supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and filling an existing gap in the market. While there are thousands of small and medium sized suppliers who are engaged in business with large anchor buyers, unfortunately they are unable to get the right funding solutions. SMEs are playing an enormous role in the development and financial welfare of our country. We are thankful to Meezan Bank for giving us an opportunity and for placing trust in our capabilities."

Trade deficit narrows by 40.59 per cent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The trade deficit witnessed a decline of 40.59 percent during the first eleven months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reported.

The trade deficit during July-May (2022-23) was recorded at \$25,791 billion against the deficit of \$43,409 billion in July-May (2021-22), a decline of 40.59 percent.

The exports during the period were recorded at \$25,366 billion against \$28,871 billion last year, showing a decline of 12.14 percent. On the other hand,

the imports witnessed a sharp decline of 29.22 percent by falling from \$72,280 billion last year to \$51,157 billion during the current fiscal year.

On a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country witnessed a decline of 16.69 percent and were recorded at \$2,186 billion in May 2023 against the exports of \$2,624 billion in May 2022. The imports also decreased to \$4,275 billion in May 2023 from \$6,760 billion in May 2022, showing negative growth of 36.76 percent.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports during May 2023 however incre-

ased by 2.29 percent when compared to the exports of \$2,137 billion in April 2023. The imports into the country also increased by 42.64 percent in May 2023 when compared to the imports of \$2,997 billion in April 2023, according to the data.

Ghee price decreases across the country:USC

USC has reduced the prices of subsidized ghee provided under the Prime Minister's Relief Package by Rs 80 per kg across the country. The subsidized ghee, which was earlier being sold at Rs 490 per kg, would now be available at Rs 410 per kg.



In brief

FIH Mini-tournament starts from June 7

ISLAMABAD (APP): A new mini-tournament in both men's and women's competitions of the FIH Hockey Pro League 2022/23 was all set to begin in Eindhoven, Netherlands from June 7 to 12. Hosts Netherlands would be joined by Argentina and Australia in both men's and women's competition with China (women) and India (men) completing the list of participating teams, said a press release. Schedule: June 7- Netherlands v China (W), Netherlands v India (M); June 8- Argentina v India (M), Netherlands v Australia (W); June 9- Argentina v Australia (W), Netherlands v Australia (M); June 10- Netherlands v China (W), Netherlands v India (M); June 11- Netherlands v Australia (W), Argentina v India (M); June 12- China v Argentina (W), Netherlands v Australia (M).

Moeen considering test return

LONDON (Reuters): England all-rounder Moeen Ali is considering a comeback to test cricket ahead of the Ashes against Australia after spinner Jack Leach was ruled out with a lower back stress fracture, British media reported. The 35-year-old, who announced his retirement from the longest format of the game in September 2021, is said to have been contacted by England skipper Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum over a potential return to test cricket. British media said Moeen, who was part of Chennai Super Kings' squad that went on to win the 2021 and 2023 Indian Premier League, has been given some time to make a decision. Moeen made his test debut in 2014 and scored 2,914 runs in 64 tests at an average of 28.29, picking up 195 wickets with his off-spin. England are seeking a replacement for Leach, whose injury was the latest setback to their bowling department in the build-up to the series, with fast bowler Jofra Archer also ruled out due to an elbow injury. The Ashes gets underway at Edgbaston on June 16.

PBCC to announce team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Blind Cricket team for participation in the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) World Games, at Birmingham, UK, would be announced in the last week of June. "Pakistan will send a strong outfit in the Games, scheduled to be held in Birmingham, UK from August 18 to 27. PBCC will announce the national team in the last week of this month," Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC) Chairman Syed Sultan Shah told APP on Tuesday. He said 23 players were shortlisted who performed brilliantly at the domestic level in preparation for the event. "A 17-member team will be sent for the prestigious event for the first time. We have highly talented players and our focus will be to select the best of the best for the event." Besides Pakistan, so far, Australia, England and India had consented to send their teams for the Games. "We are expecting a final showdown with India as they too are a very strong side," Shah said. "The women's blind cricket has also been included in the games but I don't think we'll be able to send our (women) team as we don't have sufficient funds for that," he informed. Shah said he was grateful to the IBSA administration for including blind cricket in the World Games for the first time.



PARIS: Aryna Sabalenka celebrates victory during the Women's Singles Quarter Final Round Match against Elina Svitolina of Ukraine of Belgium during Day 10 of the French Open at Roland Garros.

Babar among ICC Player of the Month for May

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Skipper and prolific batter Babar Azam have been nominated in the International Cricket Council (ICC) candidates for the Men's and Women's Player of the Month Awards for May.

A competitive month of men's international matches saw the conclusion of fixtures in the ICC Super League, thus confirming the full lineup of teams set to battle it out in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe later this month, said a press release issued here.

In women's international, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh went head-to-head in May, along with a host of bilateral fixtures and the Southeast Asian Games in Cambodia which

was won by Thailand.

The Men's shortlist comprises three names that starred in the ODI format. Pakistan skipper and holder of the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy, Babar Azam was nominated for his performances at the latter end of his side's series victory over New Zealand.

Bangladesh batter Najmul Hossain Shanto is shortlisted for the first time following a prolific spell of run-scoring as his side triumphed over Ireland. The final candidate in line for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award is Ireland's Harry Tector, who continued his fine international form against Bangladesh, albeit in a losing cause.

Sri Lanka can boast two nominees for the ICC Women's Player of the Month award for May.

Captain Chamari

Athapaththu led the line in a series of victories over Bangladesh in ODI and T20Is, scoring well in both formats. Her compatriot Harshitha Madavi also enjoyed decisive contributions in both series, starting as the Player of the Series in the T20I round of matches.

The lineup was completed by Thailand's Thipoatcha Putthawong, who aims to emulate teammate Naruemol Chaiwai's Player of the Month prize in April, and whose bowling prowess helped her side claim gold in the Southeast Asian Games in Phnom Penh.

An independent ICC Voting Academy and fans around the world would be invited to cast their votes to decide the winners, which will be announced next week.

French star Benzema bids farewell to Real Madrid

MADRID (Agencies): Real Madrid forward, Karim Benzema, said goodbye to the Spanish football powerhouse on Tuesday.

"It is so hard for me to speak. I would like to express my gratitude to Real Madrid and my teammates. It was a beautiful journey. I was lucky enough to make my dream come true," French star Benzema said at a farewell ceremony at Real Madrid City, the Whites' sports facility.

"...This is the best club in the world. I think that the time has come for me to move on," the 35-year-old said. Benzema said that he is "proud" to have played for the Whites, and described his stint at Real Madrid as "the most important journey" of his life.

He added that it is a "sad" day for him as leaving Real Madrid "hurts" him. "It is not easy... I really wanted to retire here at Real Madrid but this new opportunity has come along and I would like to take it. I will always be watching Real Madrid games," he added.

The Madrid club's President Florentino Perez and the French star's teammates and head coach Carlo Ancelotti attended the ceremony. Benzema thanked Perez, Ancelotti, Real Madrid fans, and his teammates for their support. After Benzema's speech, Perez gifted him a diamond badge.

Benzema joined Real Madrid in 2009 after leaving his boyhood club Olympique Lyon, where he won four French Ligue 1 titles.

The former French international helped Real Madrid win five UEFA Champions League titles, five FIFA Club World Cups, four Spanish La Liga titles, four UEFA Super Cups, four Spanish Super Cups, and three Spanish Cups.

As an individual, Benzema won the 2022 men's Ballon d'Or, a prestigious award, after a scintillating 2021-22 season for both club and country.

Djokovic into French Open semi-finals for 12th time

PARIS (Agencies): Novak Djokovic closed in on a potential blockbuster French Open semi-final against Carlos Alcaraz after beating Karen Khachanov 4-6, 7-6 (7/0), 6-2, 6-4 on Tuesday to reach the last four.

Djokovic, chasing a third French Open crown and record 23rd men's Grand Slam singles title, advanced to a 45th major semi-final and his 12th at Roland Garros.

He will take on world number one Alcaraz or Stefanos Tsitsipas, the player he beat from two sets down in the 2021 final, for a place in Sunday's championship match. Djokovic dropped his first set of the tournament but dominated the second-set tie-break against Khachanov before putting his foot down to secure a ninth win in 10 meetings with the Russian 11th seed.

"I think he was a better player for most of the first two sets," said Djokovic.

"I was struggling to find my rhythm. I came into the match quite slow but played a perfect tie-break and from that moment onwards played

a couple levels higher.

"It's a big fight, something you expect in the quarter-finals. You're not going to have your victories handed to you, you have to earn them." Djokovic improved his record at Roland Garros to 90-16 after denying Khachanov his spot in a third successive Grand Slam semi-final. He will return to number one if he wins the title in Paris.

Muchova, Sabalenka reach first French Open semifinals:

Aryna Sabalenka and Karolina Muchova are in a place in Sunday's championship match. The second-seeded Sabalenka overpowered Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-4 on Tuesday to set up a semifinal against the unseeded Muchova. The Czech beat 2021 runner-up Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia 7-5, 6-2. Muchova and Sabalenka had never progressed beyond the third round in Paris.

Svitolina was booed by some sections of the crowd because she snubbed the Australian Open champion

after the final point, instead of shaking her hand at the net. Sabalenka walked up to the net, and leaned on the top of it with both hands, looking at Svitolina as she walked. Svitolina did not look in her direction and went straight to the sideline.

Sabalenka is from Belarus, and Svitolina — playing in her first major since becoming a mother — is from Ukraine. Belarus aided Russia in its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and the war continues. Like other players from Ukraine, including Sabalenka's first-round opponent last week, Svitolina has not been shaking hands with players from Belarus or Russia after matches.

Sabalenka's all-risk tennis paid dividends despite 37 unforced errors. Her aggressive returns and deep groundstrokes put Svitolina on the backfoot from the start. Under pressure at the beginning of the second set and 2-0 down, Sabalenka raised her game to win four games in a row and sealed the match with a forehand winner.

WTC final: India worried about form and fitness before facing Australia

LONDON (Agencies): India will be concerned about injuries to some of their leading players and their lack of preparation time going into the World Test Championship final against Australia on Wednesday.

The squad of 15, plus three reserves, left for London in three batches.

Five of them, including Ravindra Jadeja, were part of the Indian Premier League (IPL) final in Ahmedabad which, because of rain, went into a third day and only finished at 01:35 local time on Tuesday - just eight days before the WTC final.

Without any warm-up matches, India will be hoping their players can quickly acclimatise as they transition from T20 cricket in India to Test cricket in England. One man who has had plenty of time to acclimatise is batter Cheteshwar Pujara, who is one of the few top Indian cricketers who does not play in the IPL.

Instead, he has been captaining Sussex in the County Championship and has scored three centuries against the red ball at an average of 68. The man of the moment, though, is undoubtedly Shubman Gill.

The 23-year-old, who watched Saturday's FA Cup final in London alongside team-mate Virat Kohli, was named player of the tournament in the IPL for his three centuries for Gujarat Titans.

For India, he has scored centuries in all three formats in the last six months. India, however, will be without both their leading fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah and iconic wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant because of injury. They were further hit by the back injury suffered by stylish batter Shreyas Iyer earlier this year and then to opener KL Rahul, who suffered a leg injury in the IPL.

Rahul has been replaced in the squad by uncapped wicketkeeper Ishan Kishan. Kishan will compete with Srikanth Bharat to take

the gloves. Bharat, who has played four Tests, is regarded as a better keeper.

"The selectors, captain [Rohit Sharma] and coach (Rahul Dravid) believe in tried and tested players," said ex-India wicketkeeper and BCCI general manager Saba Karim. "This is a one-off so they would not like to risk playing someone with no Test experience. I had backed Kishan for the recent home series against Australia but Bharat was chosen."

"In England where the ball wobbles after crossing the stumps, it is experience that counts. "After Rahul's injury I felt they should have chosen Wriddhiman Saha as technically he is the best in India with the gloves. "But now that the choice is between Bharat and Kishan, the team management will surely go for Bharat."

Bumrah has been plagued with back issues and had surgery in New Zealand in March. He has not played a Test match since July 2022.

HEC Wins 118 Medals in National Games 2023

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan has won as many as 118 medals, including eight gold, 17 silver, and 93 bronze medals, in the National Games Quetta 2023. President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi conferred HEC with the 'Best Turnout Trophy' for being an extraordinary contingent of the National Games.

HEC players competed in individual as well as team events participated by 14 units hailing from Pakistan Army, WAPDA, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Railways, Balochistan, Police, Islamabad, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

In his address, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said this remarkable achieve-

ment of aspiring young players is a testament of hard work, dedication, and commitment to compete with professional departmental players. "We are proud of our athletes' accomplishments and are committed to supporting them in their future endeavors," said Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed.

He maintained that HEC is committed to promoting sports among students and to providing them with an opportunity to excel in academia as well as in co-curricular activities.

"Alongside managing academic activities and patronizing regulations of universities, HEC regularly carries out extracurricular activities to promote healthy activities among youth to project the soft image of Pakistan," he added.

Director/In-charge Sports HEC Mr. Javed Ali Memon

said that HEC is acting as a nurturing institution for rising stars on the horizon of sports as our players are ready to replace experienced professional players. He informed that HEC acquired gold medals in Athletics, Taekwondo, Wushu and Judo events. He further said that HEC Women Volleyball and Basketball teams thwarted experienced departmental teams with their rigor and mettle.

Ms. Amtul Rehman bagged two gold medals in long jump and triple jump and Manisha Ali won double gold in Taekwondo and Wushu; Ms. Uzma Azam won a gold medal in Hammer Throw; Ms. Maliha Ali and Ms. Fiza clinched gold medals in Wushu and Ms. Kainat managed to secure gold in Judo along-with other outperforming players.

Pak teenage tennis sensation eager to contend on Grand Slam court

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's rising tennis star Huzaifa Abdul Rehman has underlined that his ultimate goal is to contend on a Grand Slam court, expressing hopes to reach to that level in the next three to four years.

The promising teenager has already started his journey to the higher echelons with his recent impressive outings at ITF Futures in Orange Park Florida, USA.

Early last month, he made to the semifinals of the men's doubles along with his partner Timothy Phung (USA). The twosome dispatched 4th seeds Elijah Srode and Tennyson Whiting (USA) in the 1st round. In the quarter-final, they defeated Alexander Del Corral and Jake Van Emburgh (USA).

However, in the semi-finals, they fell to 2nd seeds Vasil Kirkov (USA) and Roy Stepanov (Canada). However, Huzaifa earned four coveted officials ATP points to break into doubles rankings, obtaining 1853 ATP slot. Currently, he is the second Pakistani player, who is present in ATP doubles rankings. The other Pakistan player in the prestigious list is veteran Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, whose current standing is 102.

In ITF Singles Futures Tour, Huzaifa overpowered Kaylan Bigun (USA), currently No. 23 in ITF Juniors in the 1st round. However, he lost in the pre-quarter to Nanda Govind (USA), a top 400 ATP player.

Currently, Huzaifa with three points is the only Pakistan player, who is present in ATP Men's Singles Rankings, where he sits at 1397.

Huzaifa is ecstatic with his performance and believes he is well on course to move up on the ATP Tour.

"If everything goes according to the plan, I hope I will be playing in one of the Grand Slams in the next three to four years. That is my target as well as dream and I hope it will come true," the 20-year-old, who is training at Next Generation Tennis Academy (NGTA) Sarasota, Florida said while sharing his sentiments with APP on phone. "I know there are no shortcuts and I will have to move step by step to reach to my ultimate ambition. Hence, I have set a target for myself. Initially, I am aiming to appear in the ATP Challenger Tour to move into 1,000 rankings in a year. Then I will be trying to join the list of top 500 players in next two years. Finally, of course I will be trying to break into top 200 to be able to contest in Grand Slam tournaments," he added.

The burgeoning talent of Huzaifa is also evident from the fact that in the recently-held tennis event of the 34th National Games, he earned one gold and two silver medals. Unseeded Huzaifa advanced to Men's Singles final after topping the 5th seed Mohammad Abid in the quarterfinal and 2nd seed Mohammad Shoaib in the semifinal. In the final, he made

Pakistan No. 1 Aqeel Khan toil hard to win. After the epic battle that continued for two hours and 15 minutes, Aqeel admitted that he played the best tennis of his career to overcome the young gun.

However, Huzaifa feels that his upward journey in tennis will not be a smooth sailing as where on the hand he will have to beat the best of the best, on the other he will have to search for the ways to meet his expenses. "Tennis is a very competitive as well expensive sport. I believe I can excel in the game provided I have the required financial resources."

"It is true the game's elite players earn millions each year but for players, who are at the outset of their professional career, the situation is quite different. We have to bear expenses on training equipments, apparel, travelling and accommodation."

"My parents have been backing me and investing in me. But it is not easier for them anymore now. According to Huzaifa's father, Muhammad Faisal, BARD Foundation sponsored Huzaifa from March 2022 to March 2023 to help him pursue his dream. "It helped him a lot to gain his ATP points and progress as a professional tennis player. "He has the potential to shine at the top level. But you know for reaching to the summit one requires all the necessary tools," he said while referring to the scarcity of sponsorships.



LE COTEAU: Patrick Gamper of Austria and Team BORA - hansgrohe leads the peloton during the 75th Critérium du Dauphine 2023, Stage 3 a 194.1km stage.



In brief

IRSA releases 165,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 165,000 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 173,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the 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 59,800 cusecs and 60,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1133.40 feet, 83.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 48,800 cusecs and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 79,500, 80,900, 63,100 and 22,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 35,800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera while 10,300 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF foils drug smuggling bid

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) on Tuesday foiled an attempt to smuggle 26.5 kg Ice drug, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman. He informed that ANF in an operation at Karachi International Containers Terminal succeeded to foil a bid to smuggle 26.5 kg Ice drug, being sent to Malaysia. Ice drug was tactfully concealed in secret cavities of a container being used for sending salt shipment. The container was booked for Malaysia by a private Karachi-based company, he added. He informed that ANF has registered a case against the accused while further investigation is under process.

NHMP reunites two missing boys

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) on Tuesday reunited two children who were separated from their families in different incidents. According to an NHMP spokesperson, while patrolling near Swabi, the Motorway Police saw a 9-year-old boy. On inquiry, it was found that the child was a resident of Hazro and had left the house but lost his way. He did not know his home address or any contact number. The child was immediately taken into protective custody and his home was traced using various means. Later, the boy was safely handed over to his family. In another incident, the Motorway Police staff stopped a passenger van for inspection on E-35 Hazara Expressway near Mansehra and observed a child trying to hide in the vehicle. On inquiry, it was found that the boy, a resident of Mansehra, had run away from home in a fit of rage. Moreover, he had not provided any information about his family.

07 liquor suppliers held

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested 07 liquor suppliers and seized 75 liters of liquor from their possession during crackdown here on Tuesday. According to police spokesman, Banni police recovered 20 liters of liquor from Nadeem. Similarly, New Town police held Ihsan and recovered 05 liters of liquor from his custody. While, Sadiqabad police recovered 09 liters of liquor from Irfan. Following operation, Naseerabad police recovered 10 liters of liquor from Pervaiz, and same police recovered 06 liters of liquor from Adnan.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada address as keynote speaker the consultations sessions arranged by Justice Project Pakistan.

Pakistan issues visas to India's 215 Sikh pilgrims to attend Guru Arjan Dev meet

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi has issued 215 visas to Sikh pilgrims from India to participate in the annual event scheduled on the eve of the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev Jee, being held in Pakistan from June 8-17.

The issuance of visas is in line with the government of Pakistan's commitment

to fully implement the Bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines of 1974. Every year, a large number of Indian pilgrims visit Pakistan to observe various religious festivals and occasions.

Chargé d'Affaires Salman Sharif wished the pilgrims a rewarding and fulfilling journey to Pakistan, according to Pakistan High Commission

in New Delhi. He said Pakistan remains committed to preserving sacred religious places as well as providing necessary facilitation to the visiting pilgrims. During their stay in Pakistan, the pilgrims will visit a number of holy sites including Gurdwara Panja Sahib, Gurdwara Nankana Sahib, and Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib.

440 persons hired in FESCO during 2018-21

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as 440 persons have been recruited by Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) since 2018-2021.

Out of a total of 440, 409 persons were recruited on contract and 31 on a regular basis during the said period, official sources told APP here Tuesday.

The recruitment was made in various cadres and scales from BPS 2-17, they said. Sharing the breakup, they said a total of 102 persons were recruited on contract and 10 on a regular basis during 2018, 98 contracts and four regulars in 2019, 105 contracts and four regulars in 2020 while 104 contracts and 31 regulars in 2021.

However, they said that no one was recruited on a regular basis in grade 17 and above. Maximum recruitment was made till grade 16, they said.

The people were recruited for posts of commercial assistant, account assistant, assistant, date coders, LS-II, SSO-II Junior Clerk, Sub Engineer, UDC, Store Clerk, receptionist, meter reader, assistant linemen, bill distributor, helpers, mali, naib qasid, sanitary worker etc.

Around 27 Sub Divisional Officers (SDOs) and three Relationship Officers (ROs) were also recruited on contract during the said period, they said.

DC chairs meeting of PM Youth Talent Hunt Program

RAWALPINDI (APP): The first meeting of Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt program was organized here on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema. Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters, Marzia Saleem, District Coordinator Youth Wing, Hasan Aurangzeb, Tehsil Coordinator Youth Wing, Muhammad Osama, CO Education, Yasin Baloch, Focal Person School Education, Raja Tahir Mehmood, District Sports Officer, Shams Toheed, DD Colleges and other officers from different departments concerned attended the meeting. The DC informed that on the instructions of the prime minister, the football talent hunt youth program would start here this week.

Council of Islamic Ideology convenes two-day meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Council of Islamic Ideology on Tuesday commenced a crucial two-day meeting to deliberate on a wide range of topics, encompassing the May 9 incidents of mob violence, and the recent verdict of the Federal Shariat Court regarding the Transgender Act.

Led by Chairman Dr. Qibla Ayaz, the council aims to address these pressing matters and devise potential solutions. During the meeting, a comprehensive 26-point agenda will be thoroughly discussed, reflecting the council's commitment to addressing critical issues affecting society.

The session commenced with a solemn moment of prayer to honor the martyrs who have sacrificed their lives.

Prominent figures attending the meeting include Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Syed Ziaullah Shah Bukhari, Justice Zafar Iqbal, Justice Altaf, Dr. Umair Mahmood Siddiqui, Allama Hussain Akbar, Pir Syed Muhammad Habib Irfani, Dr. Abul Hasan Shah, Sahibzada Hasan Haseebur Rehman, and Advocate

Muhammad Jalaluddin.

These individuals, renowned in their respective fields, bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the council's discussions. On the concluding day of the meeting, Chairman Dr. Qibla Ayaz will deliver a comprehensive briefing, summarizing the key outcomes and decisions made during the two-day deliberations.

This briefing will serve as a pivotal moment to share the council's insights and proposed actions with the public.

As the Council of Islamic Ideology convenes, expectations run high for impactful discussions and the formulation of effective strategies to address the prevailing challenges faced by society.

The council's commitment to fostering an inclusive and harmonious environment remains paramount as they work towards promoting peace and understanding within the community.

The meeting's outcomes and decisions are eagerly awaited, as they hold the potential to shape future policies and create a positive impact on the lives of citizens across the nation.

Country's most areas to witness rain in upcoming monsoon: PMD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has indicated chances of normal to slightly below-normal rainfall in most areas of the country during the upcoming monsoon season (July-August-September, JAS-2023).

During the upcoming monsoon season, it is anticipated that El Niño conditions will prevail, while the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) will remain in a positive phase.

Taking into account these global and regional circulation patterns, the weather outlook and

given climate conditions suggest that most areas may have normal to slightly below-normal rainfall.

Northern regions may experience slightly above-normal rainfall, while western parts of Balochistan can expect near-normal rainfall.

"Seasonal temperatures are expected to remain within normal to higher-than-normal ranges across the country," the PMD said. About the impacts, the PMD revealed, "The possibility of occasional extreme hydro-meteorological events over catchment areas cannot be

ruled out, which may generate riverine floods in the major rivers."

"Likelihood of urban flooding, hill torrents, and flash floods may also exist due to isolated heavy downpours."

Soaring temperatures in Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) could accelerate snow melt, resulting in an increased flow of water into rivers.

"Farmers are advised to stay vigilant and plan water conservation for the upcoming Kharif season cultivation," it added.

Govt to set up learning centres for transgenders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education & Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain has directed Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) for setting up of learning centers for Transgender community by utilizing ICT Schools as 2nd shifts.

He directed FDE to also upgrade of Boys School (SSC) to Intermediate College and Girls Intermediate College to the level of Degree College at Shah Allah Ditta. According to a notification, he made these directions during his visit at Union Council Shah Allah Ditta few

days back to monitor the campaign for bringing Out of School Children back to Schools.

The notification further said that the Minister also asked FDE for Installation of Water Filtration Plants in Schools (Rural areas). However, the establishment of schools at designated / earmarked plots in Sector D-12 was also among his directions. Above directives are conveyed to quarter(s) concerned for necessary action and be included in Secretary's Task Management System for periodic review, it added.

CDA pursues upgradation of urban amenities, infrastructure

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is taking concrete steps for ensuring the provision of urban facilities to the city dwellers and maintenance of infrastructure including the installation of street lights, road carpeting and resolving water-related issues, neglected in the past.

"Special attention is being given to the completion of the remaining development works in the sectors I, G, H and D series, provision of civic facilities, and facilitating the home builders in these sectors in pursuance of the directives

of Chairman CDA Noor ul Amin Mengal," an official told APP.

"The work of installation of streetlights in the main roads and within the sectors to ensure proper lighting management in Sector I-11, I-10, I-14 and Sector I-16, D-12 and other sectors is in full swing," he added.

To a question, the official said, "After a few months of delay due to legal complications, the authority has started work to install street lights in Sector D-12."

He said that the work on this project was initially halted when a contractor,

who failed to secure the contract, filed a case in court. "As a result, the project was put on hold indefinitely. However, the legal issues have now been resolved, including concerns regarding price escalation." Now, the official said, "The contractor of the project has assured the CDA that the project will be completed within the next three months."

He said, "The lack of street lights in Sector D-12 has contributed to a recent increase in street crimes, prompting residents to raise the issue with the relevant authorities."

Traffic Police Unit imposes fine to 10,000 vehicles during last two weeks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Traffic Inter-Section Unit has taken effective steps against those involved in violation of rules and issued more than 10,000 fine tickets to law breakers during last two weeks.

Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Wing) has constituted Traffic Inter-Section Unit following the directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan in order to improve the flow of traffic in the federal capital and provide best travelling facilities to road users.

The police spokesman said this unit consisting of 188 personnel in ten teams had been given motorcycles and vehicles equipped with modern technology.

It has been authorized to take measures for road discipline in the city and ensure prompt action against those breaching traffic laws. During the last two weeks, this unit issued 10,000 fine tickets to those involved in violating traffic rules including use of mobile phone and not fastening seat belt during drive, one way violation, zebra crossing violation, red signal and lane violation.

Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer said that Traffic Wing was utilizing all resources to provide the best travelling facilities to the citizens.

He said that Islamabad Capital Police

were being equipped with modern technology to control violations of traffic rules in the capital. Under the supervision of Chief Traffic Officer Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, this unit was initially performing duties at various points of the city including Secretariat Chowk, Damane-e- Koh Chowk, Jatoi Chowk, Faisal Chowk, Khayaban Chowk, Express Chowk, Shaheen Chowk, F-8 Exchange Chowk, PRC Chowk, F- Ten Roundabout, F-10/1 Corner and G-10/3 Corner. Moreover, the police were also taking action against illegal parking on footpaths, no parking or double parking outside the big markets and commercial centers of the city including Super Market F-6, Jinnah Super Market F-7, F-8 Markaz, F-10 Markaz, G-8 Markaz, G-9 Markaz, G-11 Markaz and F-11 Markaz.

An officer of Sub-Inspector rank is in charge of major team of this unit while small teams are headed by the officer of Assistant Sub-Inspector.

Traffic Inter-Section Unit is actively working to improve and maintain traffic flow during rush hours in addition to handling any emergent situation. Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad said that the Islamabad Capital Police would ensure safe road environment in the city through preventing violation of traffic rules.



ISLAMABAD: A female vendor selling various religious items on the side of the I-10 Markaz Road.

Drug lab destroyed
WARDAK (Agencies): A drug lab was discovered and destroyed in Sayed Abad District of Maidan-Wardak province, Yousef Asrar police spokesman said. The factory was discovered and destroyed in the Haft Asyab area of Sayed Abad district. Tools and equipment used in drug production were destroyed by police of the province, the source said. This must be noted that a month back, 908kgs of drugs were discovered by officers of counter-narcotics of the province.

Commission held meeting
KABUL (Agencies): The Book Evaluation Commission held a meeting with the Deputy Publication Minister of Information and Culture Hayatullah Muhajer Farahi as the chair. The meeting was attended by the commission's members and representatives from the Ministry of Education, Higher Education, and Academy of Sciences. Deputy Minister Farahi positively evaluated the work of the said commission and praised the commission's activities.

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

Hibatullah meets with provincial edu leaders

KABUL (TOLONews): The leader of the Islamic Emirate, Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhundzada, held a meeting with heads of the provincial education departments, said the Islamic Emirate's spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid.

According to Mujahid, Mawlawi Akhundzada stressed the need for the extension of education to remote areas as well as the improvement of educational quality.

"In the meeting, (the Islamic Emirate leader) had some instructions for all heads of the provincial education departments aimed at promoting better teaching, and for education be extended to areas where there is no access to education yet," he said.

The head of education in Parwan, who was one of the participants at the meeting, said that he stressed the need to finalize curriculum for primary schools.

"The curriculum of the school and seminary should be the same, so that the distance between the schools and seminaries is eliminated," said Mohammad Hassan Haqqani, head of the Parwan education department.

Mujahid said that the

reopening of schools for girls in grade 7-12 was not discussed in this meeting.

"This issue is, I think, not related to the directors. That issue belongs to the religious clerics, to make decisions about it," he said.

Female students beyond grade six have been deprived of school since the Islamic Emirate came to power. "I cannot study anymore but I should be allowed to," said Bahara, a student. The closing of schools for female students above grade 6 has faced widespread reactions at the national and international level.

Working for development responsibility of all: Minister

KANDAHAR (Agencies): Acting Information and Culture Minister, Mullah Khairullah Khairkhan, at the opening ceremony of the Snow Pharma pharmaceutical factory in Kandahar, said that working for the country's economic development is the responsibility of all mainly the investors.

Building factories can able us to restore of the country's economy and will push the situation toward self-sufficiency, Khairkhan said in his speech.

He asked all the national investors and businessmen to invest in the country and reminded saying that now security is maintained in the country and people are safe.

Khairkhan termed working for the development of the country's economy the common responsibility of all, mainly the investors.

Funding to industrial parks discussed

KABUL (Agencies): The Acting Finance Minister, Mullah Mohammad Nasser Akhund, and Nooruddin Azizi, Acting Industry and Commerce Minister, in a meeting, discussed funding the development of industrial parks, Finance Ministry said.

The two sides discussed and exchanged views on the employment of contractual professionals, the cooperation of provincial authorities with the directorates of Industry and Commerce, the implementation of remittances, and the activation of the Directorate of Industrial Parks.

Meanwhile, they talked about the development program and funding, mainly in the industrial parks sector, and emphasized its development.

Badakhshan Acting Governor killed in blast



BADAKHSHAN (TOLONews): The acting governor of Badakhshan province, whose formal position was deputy governor, Mawlawi Nisar Ahmad Ahmadi, was killed in a vehicle bomb blast that occurred on Tuesday morning in Faizabad, the provincial capital, an official said.

Mauzuddin Ahmadi, head of Badakhshan's department of information and culture said that a vehicle bomb targeted the convoy of the deputy governor in Mahkama square of Faizabad.

The attack left one other person killed and six people wounded, according to Ahmadi. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

In December 2022, a blast targeted a vehicle in the city of Faizabad, Badakhshan province, killing the head of the provincial security department. The attack was claimed by Daesh.

UN hails IEA efforts fighting against drug



KABUL (Agencies): The Acting Prime Minister's office, Mawlawi Zakir, met with Scott Smith, a top UNAMA official, and the representative of the World Bank for Afghanistan here in Kabul.

The mission of UNAMA and the World Bank in Afghanistan and other mutual interested issues were the main focus of the discussions, according to Arg's statement.

"UNAMA strives to cooperate with the Islamic Emirate to end poverty in Afghanistan and provide basic services to Afghans,"

Said Smith.

He said, two meetings will be held in New York and Brussels on Afghanistan adding that UNAMA will inspire the participants of the meetings to provide more assistance to Afghanistan.

UNAMA hails the Islamic Emirate's stable efforts fighting drugs in Afghanistan, he added.

Meanwhile, the representative of the World Bank said that the Bank continues engaging with Afghans in the humanitarian and health sectors.

For his part, Maulvi

Zakir thanked UNAMA and the World Bank for their assistance and said that many Afghans are facing economic problems and there is a need for more humanitarian assistance.

Mawlawi Zakir urged UNAMA to share with the international community the real image of Afghanistan in terms of security, economic growth, reduction of corruption, fight against drugs, and other issues.

He said the removal of restrictions on the banking sector is an important element for the economic development of Afghanistan.

Unknown gunmen kill local singer Muslim Nuristani and his brother

NURISTAN (Khaama Press): Unknown gunmen killed Muslim Nuristani, a local singer, and his brother in the Mandol district of eastern Nuristan province, according to sources.

According to provincial officials, Nuristani continued to live a normal life in his village after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021, and imposed restrictions on the music and entertainment industry.

Relatives of Nuristani say that the local singer had no hostility with anyone, and his death motives and that of his brother are still not clear.

Taliban authorities have not yet commented about the incident as investigations are underway into the targeted killing of the two brothers. Prior to the Taliban's return to power, Muslim Nuristani used to appear on TV channels and perform local songs. It is said that Nuristani was a popular local singer of his time in Nuristan and other parts of the country.

Since the group's return to power, the Taliban have imposed strict restrictions on the music and entertainment industry, which lead to a complete closure of music and entertainment programs on TV channels and radio stations.



Afghans needing humanitarian aid rises to 28.8m, says OCHA

KABUL (TOLONews): A new OCHA report said that the estimated number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan has increased to "28.8 million (up from 28.3 million at the beginning of 2023)."

"Between June to December 2023, humanitarian partners require \$2.26 billion to deliver prioritized multi-sectoral assistance to 20 million people," the report said.

Afghanistan is facing a severe humanitarian crisis and economic hardship as billions of dollars of Afghanistan's foreign assets remain frozen.

"I come to work on the street, God willing, I earn 50 to 100 Afs or sometimes I even cannot make any money," said Mohammad Hossien, a resident of Kabul. "We call on the government to help us," said Mohammad Musa, a resident of Kabul.

Economists said that there is a need for economic assistance to prevent a humanitarian crisis in the country.

"Within the past two years, most of the aid was for humanitarian purposes and humanitarian crises. Unfortunately, in the meantime, there has been no economic aid that can alleviate the humanitarian crisis and also create job opportunities," said Seyar Qureshi, an economist.

The Islamic Emirate meanwhile said that the interim government is planning to launch development projects to alleviate poverty and humanitarian crisis in the country.

"The Islamic Emirate's plan for reduction of poverty, improvement of exports and strengthening of national economic projects as well as strengthening transit locations is steadfast," said Abdul Latif Nazari, deputy minister of the Economy.

Meanwhile, Reuters reported that the United Nations and humanitarian agencies have revised the budget for Afghanistan's aid plan for 2023 to \$3.2 billion, down from \$4.6 billion earlier in the year.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a statement that a "changing operating context" in the wake of Taliban administration restrictions on female aid workers had contributed to the revised plan, according to Reuters.

UN, aid agencies revise down Afghanistan aid plan



KABUL (Khaama Press): The UN humanitarian office said that the United Nations and humanitarian agencies had revised the budget for Afghanistan's aid plan for 2023 to \$3.2 billion, down from \$4.6 billion earlier in the year.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a statement that the revised plan resulted from a "changing operating context" brought on by the Taliban administration's restrictions on female humanitarian workers, Reuters reported.

Many Afghan women who work for NGOs and the UN were barred from working by multiple decrees issued by the Taliban, which aid organizations have warned will seriously hinder delivery in the conservative nation.

"The recent bans on Afghan women working for... NGOs and the UN have added yet another layer of complexity to what is already an incredibly challenging protection environment and further constrained the operational capacity of partners," the UN statement said.

The restrictions on female workers working with UN and aid agencies have been the cause of the reduction of the aid budget in the country.

This comes amid a humanitarian crisis in the country, with more than two-thirds of the population needing urgent life-saving assistance.

Global humanitarian pleas frequently fall short of the total amount requested. The humanitarian response plan had a \$4.4 billion budget and only collected about \$3.2 billion in 2022.

According to the UN, more people are in need now than a year ago.

In April, the UN Agency for Development predicted that a 30% reduction in aid would cause Afghanistan's economy to shrink and inflation to increase.

Government schools teachers demand increment

KABUL (Pajhwok): Some school teachers in capital Kabul said their current salary was not enough for their monthly expensive and asked the government for the increment.

They said government often assured them increase in their salaries but these assurances never turned reality.

Pajhwok Afghan News launched a new program titled "Voice of People" amid at conveying the demands and suggestion of people to the country's leadership.

Of the hundreds of demands sent to Pajhwok Afghan News was increased in the salaries of government schools teachers on which a detail report had been written.

Natasha Afzali, one of the teachers in Kabul, said she got 7,000 afs salary monthly and this salary was not enough for her to pay house rent, electricity and water charges.

"We pay rent for the house, my husband has no work and this salary is not enough for our house rent and electricity charges," she said.

"We want serious attention to be paid to the problems faced by teachers, the doors of schools should be opened so that teachers are able to resolve some of their problems," she said.

Mujeeba Sarwari, one of the teachers in the Chahal Dokhtar High School, said in current circumstances the salary she got was not enough for her expenses.

She said food prices had increased and with this

salary she could not support her family.

She added monthly she got 9,000 afs salary and it was given to her on the bases of her qualification.

She asked the acting government to consider increase in the teachers' salaries besides focusing on uniform, its color and other issues.

Another teacher who wished not to be named said that she is graduate and took monthly 8,500 afs salary.

She demanded increase in the salary of teacher and stressed school and university teachers should get the same salary.

Nadia Raoufi, another school teacher from the Sar-i-Kotal area of Khirkhana, told Pajhwok Afghan News due to low salary they were facing

problems in their life.

Referring to the classes in her school said the classes depended on the number of available teachers in a school.

She said the amount of salary was linked with the qualification and there was need for government to take step for the increase of teachers salaries.

Education ministry declined to comment about the problems faced by teachers due to their economic problems.

But Finance Ministry Spokesperson Ahmad Wali Haqmal told Pajhwok Afghan News a commission was functional that deal with the salary increase and new recruitment related issues.

He said representatives from ministries and other institutions were present in

the Commission and it would decide about the increase or decreased in the civil servants salaries.

He said if the salaries hike issue was brought to the table then there would be discussion about it.

Education Activist Sorya Yousufi said that teachers were an essential segment of society but they are considered to be the low income persons.

She said low salary, increase in the classes and the lack of promotion created anxiety among teachers and it would have a negative impact on them.

This comes that in March the Ministry of Higher Education announced up to 56 percent increase in the salaries of university teachers keeping in mind their educational qualification.

Executive must not interfere with SC's matters: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Tuesday warned the executive against interfering with the Supreme Court's affairs. Coming down hard on the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Uman Awan, the top judge asked: "How can you say that two judges, including the chief justice, are involved in the matter?"

The CJP's remarks came during the apex court's hearing on a set of petitions filed against the constitution of a high-powered judicial commission tasked to inquire into the various audio leaks of members of the judiciary. The SC bench — which also comprises Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, and Justice Shahid Waheed — has taken up four separate petitions filed by Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Abid Shahid Zuberi, SCBA Secretary Muqtedir Akhtar Shabbir, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and Advocate Riaz Hanif Rahi.

All petitions requested the apex court to declare the commission's formation illegal. It is pertinent to note that during the hearing of the petitions on May 28, the same bench suspended the notification that formed the bench and stayed the commission's working. Ahead of the hearing today, Zuberi, submitted to the bench a number of orders of different high courts, requesting that these documents be considered for "proper adjudication" of the present case. These orders included previous rulings from the apex court itself, the Islamabad High Court, and the Lahore High Court.

At the outset of the hearing, AGP Usman opened his arguments with discussions on the "conflict of interest" of judges hearing the petition. The CJP, taking issue with the "allegation" said that the apex court is a constitutional office that has its own powers. "A judge cannot be made a party to a contempt petition," he said, adding that a chief justice cannot be asked to leave a bench upon allegations.

"The powers of the chief justice or judge cannot be reduced as per requirement," he said. When the AGP said that the government had raised objections against the formation of the bench hearing the appeals, the top judge asked: "How can there be a discussion on the assumption that two judges, including the chief justice, had personal benefits in the case?" He warned the executive to refrain from interfering in the powers of the court. "We were not even consulted before the commission was formed," he said. He then told the AGP to first prove that his petition could be adjudicated and said: "Objections cannot be raised against judges on mere allegations."

Justice Akhtar raised questions over the government's right to publicise the audio leaks. He directed the AGP to discuss the commission's Terms of Reference (TORs), and asked: "Is the government asserting

that the audios are original?" He then asked the AGP if it were true that the hacker leaked the audio and the minister made it public by holding a press conference.

"The interior minister held a press conference regarding the audio leaks, was the matter related to him?" he asked wondering if the audios should have been made public without thorough investigation. "According to the law, can a government official accuse a judge before confirming the facts?" he asked.

When the AGP defended the government saying that ministers' statements could not be attributed to the government, Justice Akhtar asked: "Are the government's policy and ministers' statements not the same?" He added that if a minister speaks of his own will, it will be a statement of the cabinet. "After everything that has been said in the ministerial press conferences, what is the status of the application?" he asked.

The CJP then asked if the government had used its resources to find out where and how the audios are being recorded. AGP Usman responded that the government has formed a commission for a complete investigation of the audio, including who recorded them and how. At this, CJP Bandial asked: "Did you find out anything about Indibell?" "Check out Indibell's Twitter handle, is he operating from outside the country or from within?" he asked. He then expressed concerns that anyone could spread false news against judges using Indibell. Justice Akhtar then observed that there are negative aspects of social media.

After the AGP, Zuberi's counsel Shoaib Shaheen presented his arguments and said that the government did not include an investigation into the source of the audio leaks in the TORs. Furthermore, he said, the audios were assumed to be true and it was presumed that the judiciary's independence had been compromised.

"All the audios started coming after the suo moto notices [taken by the supreme court] concerning the Punjab elections," Shaheen pointed out. Shaheen further alleged that the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) is not keeping a check on what is being broadcast.

"[IHC Judge] Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani banned the broadcasting of audio-video leaks," he said, "however, despite the ban, the leaked audios was broadcast, and the Pemra did not take any notice". He said an attempt had been made to discredit the judiciary. "Parliament passed a resolution, suspending the Supreme Court's decision and the Constitution," he said. The petitioner's lawyer said the top court is the "last hope" for justice. Drawing the bench's attention to the PTI political workers who had been arrested and were being tried in courts, he said: "The worst violation of fundamental rights is happening in the country. People are looking towards the Supreme Court."

PTI Vice-Chairman Qureshi released from jail

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who was arrested in the light of the May 9 violent protests, has been released from Rawalpindi jail.

The jail officials confirmed the development saying that the former foreign minister was released on the court's order. "I want to tell PTI workers that the 'flag of justice' is in my hands and I am still part of this movement," he said while addressing the media outside the Adiala Jail soon after being released on Tuesday.

Qureshi, the former foreign minister, also said he would meet PTI Chairman Imran Khan tomorrow (Wednesday) at his Zaman Park residence in Lahore to discuss the prevailing political situation. Apparently referring to the crackdown

on party workers and leaders in the wake of the May 9 riots, the PTI senior leader said the party is facing "tough and testing times".

"But don't lose hope, 'sun of justice' will rise again," he added. Qureshi said he would brief the media on PTI's future course of action after holding the meeting Khan — the former prime minister who was ousted from power through a vote of no confidence in April last year. Earlier today, Lahore High Court (LHC) Rawalpindi Bench ordered that Qureshi should not be arrested under the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance (MPO) anymore.

Justice Chaudhry Abdul Aziz presided over the hearing. The court also declared Rawalpindi deputy commissioner's MPO orders illegal and

directed authorities to immediately release the PTI vice chairman without asking him to submit surety bonds. It may be noted that several senior PTI leaders had been arrested after the protests erupted in response to Khan's arrest on May 9 in Al-Qadir Trust case.

At least eight people were killed and dozens others injured during the violent protests that saw attack on public and military installations. Apart from Qureshi, Asad Umar, Shireen Mazari, Fawad Chaudhry and Yasmeen Rashid were among the prominent PTI names who had been taken into custody. However, some of the leaders including Umar, Mazari and Chaudhry were released. Many of them have also quit the party and parted ways with the former prime minister in condemnation of the violent protests.

Bushra Bibi moves LHC to avoid possible arrest

LAHORE (Agencies): Bushra Bibi, the wife of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan — on Tuesday filed a petition in the Lahore High Court — seeking a blanket cover in all cases registered against her across the country.

The move came amid the ongoing crackdown against the party leadership following May 9 attacks on civil and military installations, a day the army dubbed as "Black Day". In her petition, the former first lady feared she could be arrested in any case and sought details of all the disclosed and undisclosed cases registered against her in the country.

The ex-prime minister's wife pleaded with the court to issue an order restraining the police and law enforcers from arresting her in any undisclosed case. She made federal and provincial governments, IGs, FIA and other bodies parties in her case.

It is pertinent to mention here that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Rawalpindi, had summoned the ex-first lady on Wednesday (tomorrow) to record her statement as a trustee of the Al-Qadir University Trust in the £190 million National Crime Agency (NCA) UK settlement case. According to sources, Bushra Bibi's statement would be recorded as a witness. NAB, under the new law, is bound to tell a person whether he is being summoned as an accused or a witness to record the statement. Following the procedure, the NAB's CIT has already recorded the statements of ministers of the previous government. NAB also asked for the records of all the donations received from Al-Qadir University and those who donated to the trust.

Court issues Gill's arrest warrant

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): A local court in the federal capital on Tuesday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shahbaz Gill in a sedition case registered against him.

Gill, who is currently in the United States, is facing charges of sedition for inciting mutiny within the Pakistan Army through his remarks during a private TV channel show. A sedition and arms recovery case had been registered against Gill last year in August. He was arrested and stayed in detention for over a month but got released on bail from the Islamabad High Court, which restricted the authorities to arrest him.

In March, the former special assistant to the prime minister flew to the US after his name was removed from the Exit Control List (ECL) as per the orders of the Lahore High Court (LHC). He was allowed to travel abroad for one month but he later filed a new plea seeking an extension in his stay in the US.

Gill's lawyer, Murtaza Toori, appeared before the trial court for a plea seeking the PTI leader's exemption from the hearing. Toori filed a request to become a party in the case, before the additional sessions judge, Tahir Abbas Supra, who was presiding over the hearing.

At the outset of the hearing, the prosecution represented by Prosecutor General Raja Rizwan Abbasi's junior lawyer moved the court to cancel Gill's bail. The defence lawyer maintained that the duty magistrate had ordered that a relevant judge will announce the verdict on the plea for Gill's exemption from the hearing.

FP raises

(Continued from Page 1)

of Pakistan at that time was too afraid to stand up for its citizens and especially for those citizens who even had the slightest sympathies for terrorists organizations like Al Qaeda.

When asked about Dr Shakil Afridi, who spied for the US government and is languishing in jail in Pakistan, Mr Patel replied by saying that US makes sure that councilor access is available to its citizens who are in jail in any part of the world. It is important to mention here that Dr Shakil Afridi is not a US citizen.



LAHORE: Senior leader of Pakistan Peoples' Party Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan addressing a press conference at Zaman Park.

Govt decides to shut markets across country by 8pm

NEC approves Rs 2.709 trillion ADP for FY 2023-24

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Economic Council (NEC) on Tuesday proposed the Annual Development Plan (ADP) for the upcoming fiscal year (2023-24) with a total outlay of Rs2,709 trillion.

"The total national outlay [Rs2,709 billion] contains the development budget of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for only four months [due to caretaker set up in the province], but if their full budget is included in the ADP, it will exceed the figure of Rs 3 trillion," Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal said in the post-NEC meeting media talk. The NEC meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Under the ADP, the minister said the federal government would spend Rs1,150 billion under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2023-24) and the provinces would allocate Rs1,559 billion to execute different development projects. He said Rs1,150 billion under the PSDP were the highest-ever allocation made in the history of the country, terming it a 'milestone achievement' of the incumbent government despite severe financial challenges.

Ahsan Iqbal said the highest-ever development budget was allocated for the Higher Education Commission (HEC) as around Rs60 billion had been proposed in the next fiscal plan in the NEC meeting, which was also attended among others by chief ministers of Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa besides Balochistan's Planning Minister.

He said it would help expand academic facilities, modernize laboratories for research, adding Pakistan needed to double the number of its universities and classrooms at par with regional countries. He said the water sector was also prioritized and its allocation had been increased from Rs 97 billion to Rs110 billion. The minister said development fund for merged areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been increased from Rs 53 billion to Rs 57 billion whereas the allocation for Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan had been enhanced from Rs 55 billion to Rs 61 billion.

Initiatives for elimination of hepatitis and fighting diabetes had also been planned for the year 2023-24. For development of the communication network, he said the allocation of National Highways Authority had

been enhanced from Rs101 billion to Rs161 billion with special focus on completing the ongoing projects that were stopped because of lack of funds.

Ahsan Iqbal said the incumbent government had prepared a comprehensive 5-E framework, that would not only resolve the immediate economic issues but would also lay foundation for the long-term growth. The 5-Es include Exports, E-Pakistan, Environment, Energy & Infrastructure and Equity & Empowerment.

Exports: The minister said strategy had been evolved to channelize exports through the PSDP and policy initiatives and getting access for industry, agriculture, information technology, mining and manpower in the global market.

This could help earn huge foreign exchange, he said, adding under the annual plan for upcoming fiscal year, all five sources would be developed and promoted to increase the export potential manifold.

E-Pakistan: The minister said E-Pakistan or digital Pakistan was one of our main preferences of the government at a time when the world had been witnessing digital revolution. He said the government would try to set new foundation for productivity as no economy could succeed unless it was established on sound digital base.

He said the government would promote a project titled 'Internet-for-All' and launch Digital Literacy for Youth besides promoting digitization in the education sectors. He said the government also aimed to establish national centres for technology, automation centres, National Center for Quantum Computing while National Centre for Nano-technology would be reviewed and National Center for Manufacturing would be set up to make industry competitive.

Environment: The minister said Pakistan was one of the countries that were most affected by the climate change in the world, hence the government was focusing on water and food security. He said the national flood protection programme would be revived this year, initially in Sindh and Balochistan where floods played havoc, with an aim to improve water channels and infrastructure and reduce the flood losses.

On food security, he said, new initiatives would be launched in addition to PM's special initiatives of solar tube-wells, and Green Revolution 2.0 to ensure food security.

ty by switching over the modern techniques and technology. He said initiatives had also been planned to link agriculture with technology, adding there was need of 'fresh green revolution' through bio-technology, digital technology and drone technology.

Under 'Green revolution 2.0', new interventions would be made and cooperative farming would be introduced on new lines. He said the federal government was initiating a new project regarding climate change for which Rs 400 million for Balochistan flood rehabilitation and reconstruction has been proposed. The total cost of the project would be Rs1 billion for rehabilitation of the flood-affected homes, infrastructure and fields.

Energy and Infrastructure: Ahsan Iqbal said energy had become a big challenge for Pakistan and the government would reduce dependence on fossil fuels and imported oil, and give due focus on energy conservation. He said it had been proposed that commercial areas and shops would be closed at 8 pm and replace old bulbs with LED lights. This initiative could save around \$1 billion annually, he added.

He said representatives of provincial governments were present in the NEC meeting and they had been advised to get it implemented to save precious resources. Likewise, the government would promote green energy, solar, hydel and wind energy and no imported fuel-based project would be introduced.

Equity and Empowerment: The minister said the government was aimed at eliminating inequality by especially focusing on uplifting of youth and women by providing them opportunities to prosper and progress. "No One Left Behind" would be the tag-line to promote equality. He said, in addition, 20 poorest districts would be selected wherein investments for accelerated development would be made to bring them at par with national average.

The minister said over Rs100 billion schemes would be initiated for youth including technical training, education, IT skills, laptops, sports facilities, start-ups, women entrepreneurs and other projects. He said youth would be given positive incentives to make them members of economy instead of polarizing them to burn the Jinnah House, a tragic incident that took place on May 9 following the arrest of PTI chairman. "We will make them digital workers and create future Bill Gates," he said adding a programme of awarding around 60,000 internships had already been launched.

PTI's tehsil nazim obtains bail, 58 activists released

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Musart Hilali stopped police from arresting Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) worker as elected tehsil Nazim Takhti Nasrati Sajjad Ahmad and adjourned further hearing till 20th June, on Tuesday.

The petition stated that cases are registered for political victimization while imposed baseless allegation regarding his involvement in vandalism. Tehsil Nazim claimed that PTI workers had arranged peaceful protest in Karak district and added that nothing was vandalized as a minor as a brick didn't turned around while talking to media personnel after appearance before PHC.

Nazim Takhti Nasrati blamed that he has nominated in cases of vandalism for political victimization because is an elected representative of PTI.

Moreover, Additional Session Judge Atta Ullah Khan has ordered release of 56 PTI activists on bail for alleged their involvement in 9th& 10th May vandalism following arrest of

Imran Khan by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on corruption charges.

According to prosecution, Anwar Zeb and Irfan along with 56 others had committed vandalism in Communication and Works Department Office while also damaged ATM machines of several banks on Charsadda road.

Police has arrested the alleged culprits during several raids while PTI activists approached session court for bail, however, last ASJ granted bail to 58 political workers allegedly involved in vandalism. However, Special Anti-terrorism court sent four PTI activists including village council chairman and culprit involved in vandalism at Radio Pakistan Peshawar Shahzad to jail on 14 days judicial remand.

Following completion of physical remand Investigation Officer informed court hat Shahzad has looted microphone, ancient tape recorder, three mikes and other equipment during vandalism at Radio Pakistan, Peshawar center. He added that accused had arrested from Charsadda

district while court ordered to send him to jail on judicial.

Moreover, former neighborhood council Nazim Zahid Shinwari along with a friend named Atta Ullah has also sent behind the bars on judicial remand for 9th& 10th May vandalism by Anti-terrorism court. Investigation Officer informed that PTI workers had vandalized several public and private buildings in the premises of Hayatabad police station and requested for further physical remand which was turnaround.

Special Anti-terrorism court has also sent Shahryar a PTI activist arrested for using abusive rhetoric against state's institutions to jail on 14 days judicial remand. During hearing court was informed that accused abusive language was got viral on social media platforms while Shahryar has change face structure by shaving mustache which has created hurdles in his identification while requested for further remand. Special Anti-terrorism court turnaround plea for further physical remand and sent him behind bars on judicial reman.

Farhat, husband summoned

LAHORE (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has summoned Farhat Shehzadi, aka Farah Gogi and her husband Ahsan Jameel Gujjar in a money laundering case.

According to details, former first lady Bushra Bibi's close friend Farhat Shehzadi and her husband are directed to appear before NAB on June 8. According to the NAB, 117 bank accounts including four foreign accounts of the accused were also found during the investigation of money laundering and assets beyond known sources of income.

"Huge turnover amounting to Rs847 million has been found in Farah's account during last three years, which does not commensurate with her stated account profile," the anti-corruption body said in a press release.

Both the accused are owners of properties worth Rs1.5 billion and 'suspected' bank transactions worth Rs4 billion were traced in the accounts of the accused during former Punjab CM Usman Buzdar's tenure.