



Kundi urges Imran to face cases

State Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi, while reacting to Imran Khan's arrest on Tuesday, said that Pakistan People's Party believed in the equality of all before the law. Talking to a private news channel, he said that if Imran Khan believed that he was innocent, he should pursue legal ways to prove it.



Muqam strongly condemns ransacking of properties on arrest of Imran Khan

Adviser to the Prime Minister, Engr Amir Muqam here on Tuesday strongly condemned the ransacking of properties on the arrest of Imran Khan, adding support of Imran Niazi was tantamount to supporting corruption. In a statement here, Engr Amir Muqam said that Imran himself said that he should be arrested for theft. He asked Imran Khan's supporters to pay respect to the orders of Islam and law.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Protest against Imran Khan's arrest

KARACHI: Supporters of former prime minister Imran Khan throwing stones on police personnel during protest against Khan's arrest, at Shahrah-e-Faisal, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

People won't take to streets if Imran arrested: Marriyum

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that the masses would not come out in support of Imran Khan if he was arrested.

Giving her reaction on Imran Khan's statement through her twitter handle, she said Imran would be arrested in connection with prohibited foreign funding case, Toshakhana gifts theft case and for not revealing his daughter.

Many cases against Imran Khan were registered and he was guilty in all of them, she maintained.

The minister remarked that the person who launched a dirty campaign against the



martyrs of the Armed Forces, could not call it "my army".

Similarly she said the person who conspired against the country and made the people hungry and unemployed could not term them as "my people".

Marriyum Aurangzeb reminded Imran Khan that FIR in Wazirabad firing case was not registered by the then Punjab government of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, the investigation was not done by his own party president and the then chief minister.

Sherry Rehman slams IK for concocted accusations against senior military officers

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday berated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan for levelling concocted accusations against senior military and intelligence officers.

In a series of tweets, the federal minister said that Imran Khan's accusations against serving military and intelligence agency officials were regrettable and condemnable.

Senator Rehman said, "Imran Khan is repeatedly making accusations against

sensitive institutions which is very dangerous. With such baseless and outrageous allegations, he is inciting his workers. He is making allegations without evidence."

She took exceptions to Imran Khan's narrative saying, "On the one hand, he is accusing the institutions and on the other hand requesting meetings with them."

Imran Khan was attacked on 3rd November last year which we all condemned, she said, adding, by January 12th, his government was established in Punjab. "What did his provincial government investigate regarding this attack?" she queried.



Imran Khan's arrest termed legal by court

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has termed the arrest of former premier and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan 'legal'.

As per details, Islamabad High Court announced the reserved verdict and issued contempt court notices to Interior Secretary and IG Islamabad.

Chief Justice of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Aamer Farooq heard the petition challenging Imran Khan's arrest. Director General (DG) National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the prosecutor general appeared before the high court.

The NAB officials said that they wrote a letter to the interior ministry for the PTI chief's arrest. The IHC CJ remarked that nobody is above the law. He added lawyers sustained wounds due to the chaos in the high court.

The IHC CJ further remarked that the court is ascertaining the legality of Imran Khan's arrest whether it is legal or illegal. "What law allows the authorities to arrest someone from the high court's premises?"

The IHC CJ reserved the verdict which will be announced in a while.

Earlier, the Islamabad High Court summoned the Director General and Prosecutor of the National Accountability Bureau after the former prime minister's arrest from the high court premises.

Justice Farooq directed the govt to inform the court immediately who was behind the arrest and in what case has Imran been arrested in.

It is pertinent to mention here that Imran Khan was arrested by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the Al-Qadir Trust case. The PTI chief was taken into

custody by Rangers personnel, who were acting on the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) warrant, from the premises of Islamabad High Court where the former premier had gone to seek bail in multiple cases registered against him.

According to the NAB notice, Khan's warrants were issued on May 1 by NAB chairman Lt Gen (ret'd) Nazir Ahmad Butt.

Taking to Twitter, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said that Imran had failed to appear before the court despite being issued several notices to him in the inquiry.

"The arrest has been conducted by the National Accountability Bureau for causing losses to the national treasury," he said.

According to initial reports, the PTI chairman has been taken to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) office in Rawalpindi.

PM calls out Imran Khan for maligning state institutions, using religion for politics

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday called out the politics of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan, saying his blatant lies were all about maligning the army without proof, running a media campaign against martyred troops and using religion for political gains.

"I have no doubt that your [Imran Khan's] politics is defined by blatant lies, untruths, U-turns, and vicious attacks on institutions," he said in a detailed tweet where he put counter-questions to Imran Khan against his earlier tweet.

PM Sharif said Imran Khan while on a trial for corruption was claiming legitimacy to overturn the legal and political system.

"Bending the judiciary to your whims and behaving as if rules don't apply to you," he said.

He pointed out that maligning Pakistan Army as an insti-



tution was a recurring pattern in Khan's politics after his ouster from power.

"Did you not resort to constant mud-slinging of the leadership of the army & intelligence agency much before the Wazirabad attack?" he questioned.

The prime minister said the PTI chief refused the offer of cooperation from the federal government and boycotted the legal proceedings.

He said Imran Khan was never

interested in finding the truth about the attack but used the condemnable incident for petty political objectives.

"What legal route did you adopt other than hurling threats & making baseless allegations almost on a daily basis?" he said.

Sharif questioned at whose behest the savaging social media campaign against the martyrs of the armed forces launched after the helicopter crash.

"Which party did the troll

brigade belong to that mocked the martyrs, which was a new low and unimaginable in our politics and culture? With these subversive and treacherous acts on your part, do we need an enemy?" he said.

He said, "Who used religion for political purposes by describing the political agitation in religious terms, a cunning and self-serving attempt at exposing political opponents to violence at the hands of your supporters?"

He recalled that Khan's party leaders condoned, justified, and even celebrated the incident of harassment and intimidation of an official delegation including a female minister in the courtyard of the Prophet's Mosque (Peace be upon Him) by disregarding all norms of reverence and devoutness.

"As for your assertion of Pakistan becoming a 'jungle', I advise you not to go there, for the facts are often bitter and disastrous. Let us keep this for another day," he said.

Imran's arrest is in accordance with law: Rana Sana

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Tuesday that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had taken Imran Khan into custody in relation to the "Al-Qadir Trust" case.

Reacting to the arrest of Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on a private news channel, he said that notices were issued to Imran Khan, but he had continuously denied any facilitation in the investigation.

The minister further clarified the arrest was carried out in accordance with the law, and no violent incidents were reported.

Rana Sanaullah said that Imran Khan was implicated in a case linked to Al-Qadir Trust, resulting in a loss of billions for the national exchequer.

Red Alert Declared In Islamabad after Violent Protests

Naseem Jillani

ISLAMABAD/RAWALPINDI: Authorities have declared red alert in Islamabad district after imposing section 144.

"Paramilitary rangers will be imposed at key government buildings while armed force will be deployed at various intersections and thoroughfares of the city," sources said.

Local authorities have vowed strict action against the people involved in damaging public and private properties. Police said that over 100 people have been arrested so far.

Rawalpindi Police have registered cases after violent protests staged by the PTI workers against arrest of the party's chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan on Tuesday.

According to reports over 1000 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers and leaders have been booked in various cases registered at R.A. Bazaar, Cantt Civil Line, Waris Khan, City and New Town police stations.

Cases have also been registered at Sadiqabad, Rawat, Taxila and Morgah police stations.

Nobody will be allowed to damage public or private property: Azam Tarar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday the law should be let take its course and legal matters should not be settled on roads, warning that nobody would be allowed to damage public or private property.

Talking to the media, he said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan was arrested as per law by executing the arrest warrants issued by the National Accountability Bureau.

He said a seven-member

medical board had examined Imran Khan, who would be produced before the court to seek his remand. It was up to the court to either reject or accept the request for the remand and also to determine the remand period.

As regards the reports of protests by the PTI supporters in various parts of the country, Azam Tarar said holding protests was a fundamental right of citizens, but civilized nations kept the same peaceful. He urged the people to keep their conduct as per law and the Constitution.

Empowerment

Lahore: A woman riding a motorcycle near Model Town wearing a Burqa is a reflection of a woman's independence and courage in modern times:



Photo: APP

Pakistan needs to produce world-class human resource for technological advancement, says Ahsan Iqbal



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday said it was the era of the knowledge economy in which Pakistan needed world-class human resources and creative minds to get solutions to the coming age of the greatest technological disruptions.

"We have not seen anything yet. It is just the tip of the iceberg as ChatGPT is mere-

ly a trailer.

We cannot even imagine what wonders artificial intelligence and quantum computing are going to do in future," he said while addressing an event titled "Crypto Graphic Insight Tomorrow" here at the NUST Auditorium of National Science and Technology Park (NSTP).

He said Pakistan was entering a 'big disruptive age' wherein the minds of 'status quo' would not work but the creative ones only.

"It is an economic and very competitive world today as each country is in a cut-throat competition with another country," he said highlighting the importance of getting familiar with the modern trends to compete in the international market.

He also cited examples from the glorious past of Muslim countries due to knowledge and education which was matching with today's developed nations in the West.

Sharing a tutorial developed

by the University of Calgary on Muslim Spain, the minister said scientific knowledge, architecture, mathematics and philosophy flourished in Spain during the rule of the Umayyads in Spain.

He said the tutorial noted "Throughout the holy Qur'an there is a strong emphasis on the value of knowledge.

Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan suffered a lot during the last 75 years due to political instability and lack of continuity, adding it was unfortunate that the

education projects initiated by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government during its last tenure from 2013-18 were abandoned by the PTI government, which caused billions of rupees loss to the national exchequer.

The PML-N government, he said, had started a number of higher education projects to provide equal opportunities to the youth by setting up more university campuses across the country even in the far-flung localities.

Charge'd Affairs, Embassy of China calls on Finance Minister



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Charge'd Affairs, Embassy of the People's Republic of China Pang Chunxue on Tuesday called on Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and conveyed best wishes and greetings from Qin Gang, the State Councillor and Foreign Minister of China.

The two sides discussed various avenues, especially available for both countries in order to enhance the existing cooperation to unprecedented levels.

The meetings also discussed the progress on China-Pakistan Econom-

ic Corridor projects and programs in Pakistan, said a press release.

Senator Ishaq Dar said that with the support of China, Pakistan would become a growing economy in the region as well as the world soon.

Pang Chunxue reciprocated the sentiments and admired the friendly relations between the two countries. She guaranteed the continuous support of the Chinese government to the people of Pakistan.

She praised the huge potential of Pakistan in agriculture, industry, IT, and services sectors. Chunxue said that China wishes to work together with Pakistan to bring economic prosperity to the region.

Friendly ties boosting bilateral trade between Pakistan, Afghanistan

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Afghan Commerce Minister, Nooruddin Azizi on Tuesday said Pakistan and Afghanistan enjoy friendly relations and this relationship was strengthening the bilateral trade between the two brotherly Muslim countries.

Speaking at a meeting with Members of Pakistan Afghanistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) organized by Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) at a local hotel, he said there were times when bilateral transit trade among the two countries was a compulsion but now the trade from both sides was a passion.

Nooruddin Azizi said the incumbent Afghan government

had multiple challenges when it came into power. The Afghanistan government without taking any loans on interests or any financial assistance from any country was managing its financial affairs successfully within its own budget.

TDAP Chief Executive Zubair Motiwala speaking on the occasion emphasized upon increasing facilities for transit trade from Pakistan.

He said the Afghanistan government should take measures for further facilitation of transit trade. Zubair appreciated the Afghanistan government for elimination of corruption.

On the occasion, President PAJCCI Qazi Zahid and former president PAJCCI Junaid Makda also spoke.

Imran Khan is fighting a decisive battle for the youth of Pakistan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Vice Chairman Tehreek-e-Insaf Shah Mehmood Qureshi said on the illegal arrest of Chairman Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran Khan Great Pakistanis, today you people have to leave your homes For our

great leader Imran Khan who is fighting for your future. No one is sitting at home today If you want true freedom, go out with your children, with your females Express solidarity with Chairman Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran Khan.

Height of Justice

I am not guilty: Every Pakistani needs to prove it 24/7

Amjad Mehmood

ISLAMABAD: In civilized countries, the law of land offers all citizens a life to live with freedom and pride without fear of any unlawful exploitation. Rather, the state's justice system assures citizens' protection from any harm or vendetta of elites. The classic example of rule of law is from the United Kingdom where no one, including the government, is above the law and it is ensured that legal rights of citizens are protected at any cost. Every citizen has easy access to the justice system when their rights are infringed by an individual, group, or state organization.

The case is altogether different in Pakistan and for no reason, you can be accused, tried, and penalized, if a resourceful individual, member of elite class, or government organization intended. The lacunas of the Pakistani justice system provide every opportunity to wrongdoers to ruin the life of humble people. There are hundreds of cases already reported in the media when an innocent person opted to sacrifice his or her life for being unable to protect self-esteem in society after facing false accusations. Our deceitful justice system offers no value to rescue an innocent person from desolation. Surprisingly, most inhuman and illegal cases in Pakistan were executed in

the name of law, and government officials crossed legitimate boundaries by violating the set rules. Law enforcement agencies (LEAs) including police, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Inelegance Bureau (IB), Anti-Corruption, and other allied departments are public servants and duty-bound to follow the constitution while performing a duty or exercising their power.

The Constitution of Pakistan inclusively defines the role and responsibilities of civil servants and binds them to ensure the supremacy of rule of law in any condition. The founder of the Pakistani Nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in his address to civil servants in Peshawar (April 1948) gave precious advice in the following words.

"The first thing that I want to tell you is this, that you should not be influenced by any political pressure, by any political party or individual politician. If you want to raise the prestige and greatness of Pakistan, you must not fall a victim to any pressure, but do your duty as servants to the people and the State, fearlessly and honestly. Service is the backbone of the State. Governments are formed, governments are defeated, Prime Ministers come and go, Ministers come and go, but you stay on, and therefore, there is a very great responsibility placed on your shoulders."

These simple and sound words

were the guidelines for civil servants to follow the rule of business without any pressure, greed, or fear. The notion of 'pressure' changed over the years and it does not merely belong to politicians in the current age. Now other than politicians, use of money as a bribe and influence of elite classes are also added versions to enable civil servants to set aside the law. The continuous violation of law has become a normal chore in Pakistan and the justice system at large remains destitute to protect the rights of ordinary people.

In the good old days about three decades ago, M. Hashmi, a respectable individual, had a general store in Jallilabad, Multan. He was picked up in a police van from his store in daylight on a complaint from a citizen. After several hours of detention and on the guarantee of a few members of the local trader union, he was released. Exactly after three days, he committed suicide feeling helpless to answer the public queries that why police had detained him. On the other hand, he just refused to extend the credit facility on sale to the complainant and he used his influence to fix him on refusal through the police.

About two years before, the Peshawar Police Department issued a document of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure that arrests and

detentions made by police are in line with the relevant laws aiming to avoid human rights violations. The document explicitly defines that an arrest cannot be made on simple assumptions rather there must be a piece of verified evidence on part of police officers that an offense is committed or is about to be committed and the targeted person is duly identified in connection with the offense and arrest is inevitable. The document also explains that illegal arrests and detentions might result in punishment under sections 220, 341 to 348, and 365 of the Pakistan Penal Code and section 119 of the Police Act, 2017 for any police officer found guilty of misusing his powers.

To intact, the supremacy of justice, the legal proceedings, and the constitution are very precisely defined but the practical situation is worse than imagination. In most cases, the violators of the law are the ones who have taken oaths to protect the law. Instead of carrying out a thorough investigation, law enforcement agencies directly raid the house or workplace on a simple complaint launched by an illusory character to gain some ulterior motives. Consequently, the individual under question passes his days and nights to prove himself or herself innocent in public eyes. The false complaint may damage the whole life

and career of a law-abiding citizen but the complainant walks free by using his resources and money.

The country which has witnessed the judicial murder of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at the behest of a military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq never tried to prosper in maintaining the transparency of the judicial system. In 2016, the unlawful executions of two brothers namely Ghulam Qadir and Ghulam Sarwar from district Rahim Yar Khan exposed serious flaws in Pakistan's criminal justice system. On October 6, 2016, while hearing seven-year-old jail petitions, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa, acquitted the two brothers from murder charges while it shockingly revealed that the two brothers had already been executed on October 12, 2015. This is one sample of the paucity of justice in Pakistan while the complete tale is neither assimilable nor reaching an end. Violation of the law is becoming a matter of pride and contemporary fashion while the government, judiciary, and legal system seem completely failed to counter this negative tendency.

A recent victim of such malpractices of our system is Ms. Fouzia Mushrtaq who was recently suspended from the post of Registrar, Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC). The lady possess-

es an upright personality and believes in following organizational rules and regulations. She strictly condemns the practices of favoritism in the workplace and advocates treating everyone without any discrimination. Her principles of transparency and equity in dealing with matters have dragged her into a difficult situation and she is facing charges that she never committed. She was framed with charges of awarding recognition letters to colleges without following the due process and approval of the council while Ms. Fouzia has categorically denied all allegations against her and said everything was processed as per legal provisions. Reportedly, internal rifts at PNC are leading to a chaotic situation and affecting the council functions.

The severity of the situation is obviously horrifying, but the Pakistani constitution provides a solution by safeguarding the freedom, self-respect, and fundamental rights of the average citizen and by defining the roles and duties of the government, judiciary, law enforcement agencies, civil bureaucracy, and other organizations to operate within the bounds of the law. Mass-scale harm has already been done, thus everyone should contribute positively within the law to create a flourishing society where the rights of the average person are guaranteed.

SECP and ICAP hold capacity building session on Sustainability Disclosures and Reporting

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The SECP in partnership with Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) holds an awareness and capacity building session on Sustainability disclosures and reporting in perspective of evolving international framework for corporate sustainability reporting.

The session was a full day event attracting huge interest from diverse stakeholders comprising of representation from companies, multilateral institutions, professional bodies, capital market institutions and business forums.

Ms. Musarat Jabeen, Executive Director (SECP) in her opening remarks stated that SECP has remained strong proponent of robust disclosure-based regime and therefore, a cohesive sustainability reporting framework by International Sustainable Standards Board (ISSB) shall facilitate inclusive economic growth.

IFRS Foundation also participated in the event and provided an overview of the sustainability disclosure standards and various initiatives and plans of IFRS Foundation on the stakeholders capacity building. One of the key areas of interest in the session was fireside chat by high level panel providing their feedback on draft action plan of SECP. The plenary session moderated by Mr. Asad Feroze (ICAP) included panellist namely Mr. Farrukh Rehman (ICAP), Mr. Farrukh Khan (Pakistan Stock Exchange), Mr. Andrew C. McCartney (Asian Development Bank), Mr. Ephyro Luis B. Amatong (Internal Finance Corporation), Mr. Memosh Khawaja (Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance), Ms. Nazish Shekha (Pakistan Business Council), Mr. Shahzad Ashraf (UN Women, Pakistan) and Mr. Muhammad Kamran (UNDP). The panellist discussed the critical role and initiatives of their institutions in promoting sustainable business practices, transition challenges, tangible

timelines and key areas of collaboration emerging from the SECP's draft action plan, giving strategic direction to the ESG roadmap for regulated sectors.

The chief guest for the session, Mr. Amjad Saqib, Founder and Chairman Akhuwat Foundation appreciated SECP and ICAP for holding the awareness and capacity building session on sustainability considerations. He also emphasized the vision of Akhuwat, significance of sustainable development goals and his aspirations for model village of Mustafabad that will be reflective of Islamic principles of inclusive socioeconomic and sustainable development.

Mr. Akif Saeed, Chairman SECP in his concluding remarks appreciated the keen interest of diverse stakeholders in the session. He also reaffirmed SECP's resolve of working as a facilitator for cohesive, inclusive and tangible national ESG action plan. The session was effective in accelerating discussion around sustainability considerations



and engaging with all key stakeholders of ESG ecosystem for sustainable economic development.

Duty

KARACHI: Police personnel are performing duty to clear the road, which is blocked by a handful of protesters, against the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan.



Photo: Online

Lawyers protest against the arrest of PTI Chairman

Mian Abdul Rasheed

FAISALABAD: Lawyers led by former President District Bar Association, Bilal Ashraf Basra protested against the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and closed eight markets. In this rally, the representatives of business organizations and the public also joined the rally. Bilal Ashraf Basra has said in his speech that the protest will remain continuous until the release of Imran Khan.

He said adding that, PTI Chairman's arresting caused complete closure of the Manchester of Pakistan.

Business services of 8-Bazars have changed into inertia even the buyers also participated in the protests demonstrating and chanting against the so called government.



According to the details the Bar Association & other trade organizations in protest against the unlawful arrest of Imran Khan closed the major hub.

Chanters raised voices that instead smoothening the ways, government or the relevant institutions have made a mountain of a mole & slipped

the country into the dark corner which was already on the verge of collapse. This mountain has started to burst out where the destructive steps have initiated suddenly.

They said that, the situation is moving towards the uncontrollable circumstances in the history of Pakistan.

Who wanted and involved in the conspiracy to perish the homeland shall be disclosed and till the doomsday the people of Pakistan will fight against all such forces which lost much to the nation.

They also expressed that, every citizen of Pakistan is recognised as a patriot and patriots know it well how to sacrifice for its security.

This unlawfulness way has proved that there is a rule of Might is Right but totally unacceptable for the whole nation, they further elaborated.

Government could not find any shelter where to escape after this illegal step of Khan's arrest.

They raised voices that a few persons who are themselves under investigation and are fugitives are passing wonder-

ful rules for their own safety.

People further said that the chaos that anti-national coalition parties wanted for a year to push the country that has now started, while Imran Khan repeatedly said that if these elements are not held accountable, then slavery and destruction is the destiny of this country & slavery will become our fate.

Instead of acknowledging this fact, it was given a political colour.

The country where one could not be faithful in controlling the general conditions and now who can control these deteriorating conditions?

Chanters raised voices that, Therefore, it would be better if Imran Khan is released immediately and elections are held responsibly.

Zero tolerance for violating the sanctity of Girls' schools DEO (F) Uzera Bi Bi



Adam Khan Wazir

TANK: District Education Officer female Uzera Bibi has said that she will not tolerate the violation of girls' schools sanctity.

She expressed these views while talking to media representatives in her office.

She said if anyone has a complaint related to girls' schools, the doors of her office are open for everyone, file a complaint here and it will be resolved, DEO said that there has been a lot of improvement in girls' schools compared to earlier and all the schools have been made functional, adding that the presence of teachers in every school was ensured.

She said that yesterday some local people violated the sanctity of Girls Middle School Gomal, against which a written application has been given to DPO Tank. While the school guard has been suspended on charges of allowing media representatives in school boundary wall.

She also demanded that Deputy Commissioner Tank Muhammad Shoaib and District Police Officer Waqar Khan should take notice and action against the people involved in it.

Security forces along with local tribal elders inaugurated the newly constructed block of Neez Narai Public School

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: Neez Narai Public School was established in 2004 till primary classes by Security Forces in Angoor Adda area of District South Waziristan Lower,

The school underwent renovation in 2014/15 with the help of Security Forces.

Over the period of time, the number of students grew and the level was raised from primary to Matric in the same infrastructure. The incumbent principal of Neez Narai Public School (Mr. Sufyan Ahmed) asked Security Forces regarding paucity of classes /furniture and requested for construction and provision of said amenities. Resultantly additional classrooms were constructed & furniture was provided. The land was made by Avalon locals free of cost.

Major expansion work includes: Construction of additional Classrooms, Construction of Restrooms,

Provision of Furniture, Construction of boundary Wall, Roof treatment of an existing building.

Recently Security Forces along with the local Malik/ Elders inaugurated Newly constructed Block of Neez Narai Public School.

Cash prizes and sports items were also distributed among the students.

Al Meezan Investments partners with easypaisa to enable Halal Investments Digitally

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Al Meezan Investment Management Limited, Pakistan's largest fund manager with Assets under Management of over PKR 295 Billion including discretionary portfolios has partnered with easypaisa, Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform, that will enable easypaisa customers to invest in Al Meezan's Shariah Compliant Money Market mutual fund through a seamless one click onboarding process.

The signing ceremony recently took place at Al Meezan's Karachi Head Office, between Mr. Mohammad Shoaib, CFA - CEO Al Meezan Investments and Mr. M. Mudassar Aqil, CEO, Telenor Microfinance Bank/easypaisa. The ceremony was also attended by senior members of both organizations.



On this auspicious occasion, Mr. Mohammad Shoaib stated that "this strategic partnership will pave way for much needed financial inclusion in the country. Through the mini app integration easypaisa customers will be able to

invest and redeem 24/7 in our savings plan. The instant liquidity facility via a mobile phone will be first-of-a-kind in the mutual fund industry of Pakistan.

Our goal is to uplift the socio-economic classes by making halal profita-

ble investment avenues easily accessible to the masses digitally, whilst creating a positive impact on the country's economy."

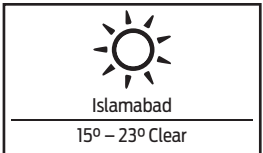
Commenting on the partnership, M. Mudassar Aqil, CEO Telenor Microfinance Bank/ easypaisa, said, "We are thrilled to embark on our collaboration with Al Meezan Investment Management to introduce innovative investment opportunities to millions of Pakistanis. Our commitment to providing seamless digital solutions and fostering financial inclusion has led us to forge this strategic partnership, which will enable users to invest and save for their future with ease and convenience. Through the power of technology and collaboration, we remain steadfast to empower Pakistan's economy and drive sustainable growth for a prosperous, digital Pakistan."

Consultative Workshop on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Multan: Saqib Ali Ateel

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: The Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt.(Retd) Saqib Zafar called on by Laila Rubab Jaskani, the representative of United Nations Resident Coordinator Office in Pakistan. Secretary Agriculture South Punjab Saqib Ali Ateel was also present in the meeting. It was decided in the meeting to hold a consultative workshop on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Multan on May 29. Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt.(Retd) Saqib Zafar, while talking on the occasion, said the participation of women is indispensable for the development of the country and the government working on a road map to empower women.

He said women are being provided with a favorable environment in all sectors, including education and health, and they are being provided with ample opportunities for progress. He said gender policy was an important part of Deep Dive Conference held under the auspices of the South Punjab Secretariat and the Secretariat will continue to play a leadership role for gender equality and women empowerment. On this occasion Laila Rubab Jaskani said that the recommendations of Deep Dive conference are being implemented.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:38 am
Zohr	12:04 pm
Asr	4:56 pm
Maghrib	6:66 pm
Isha	8:31 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHO	9256311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3

Naheed Khan and Safdar Abbasi strongly condemn Imran's arrest

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (Workers) PPPW Co-Chair Person Mrs Naheed Khan and President Safdar Abbasi strongly condemn the arrest of PTI Chairman Mr Imran Khan by the Rangers from the premises of the Islamabad High Court where he had come for his pre-arrest bail during the process of biometric verification. PPPW questions that under what authority the NAB has directed the rangers to arrest the former PM and Chairman PTI.

Seminar on 'Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS): A Regional Perspective'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Arms Control & Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Sustainable Peace and Development Organization (SPADO), organized a seminar on "Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS): A Regional Perspective" today. The Seminar was well attended with the participation of members of the diplomatic community, academia, experts from think tanks, officials from relevant department's representatives of civil society, and university students.

In his welcome remarks, Director General ISSI Amb. Sohail Mahmood said that the transformative potential of new and emerging technologies like robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning was affecting every facet of human civilization. These technologies had now spread to over 100 countries, increasing from 60 a decade ago. States could utilize these emerging technologies for the development of LAWS. The proliferation of these technologies had raised the profile of the phenomenon and required deeper reflection. The dual-use nature of these technologies had also led to massive commercial use and raised

concerns that non-state actors could use these technologies for malicious purposes. In May 2013, Pakistan became the first country to call for a ban on fully autonomous weapons. It had repeatedly advocated for a ban on autonomous weapons and was spearheading the efforts internationally to have a legally binding instrument.

In his introductory remarks, Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC-ISSI, said that increasing weaponisation of AI was generating insecurity and fear and presented complex security challenges for states. The development of these weapons had raised fundamental questions on their regulation, autonomy, accountability and state responsibility and their likely impact on human protection instruments like international human rights and Instrumental Humanitarian Law.

Mr. Raza Shah Khan, Chief Executive, SPADO, noted that the "Global Movement to Ban Killer Robots" has been active for more than a decade and comprised 150 non-governmental organizations from 60 countries working to retain meaningful human control over the use of force by banning the development, production, and use of fully autonomous weapons.

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Perma-



nent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva, in a special video message, stated that Pakistan's UN Mission in Geneva had been working to promote a ban on LAWS for years. Since 2014, there have been conversations at the international level on this issue.

Mr. Ahmer Bilal Soofi, former Minister of Law Justice & Parliamentary Affairs & Human Rights, said that in the case of LAWS, it was a grey area as to when a state could respond and what would constitute an attack on the country, and whether it could respond under Article 51 of the UN Charter.

Ms. Nada Tarbush, Counsellor, UN Mission of State of Palestine in Geneva, shared the "State of Palestine's Position." She appreciated how Pakistan had shaped the international debate on LAWS. She outlined the Palestinian perspective regarding LAWS and said that two categories should be prohibited—one that targets humans, and one that does not have humans in the loop.

Mr. Ousman Noor, Government Relations Manager, Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, Geneva, highlighted the primary issue with LAWS that machines were replacing humans and any decision for the use of force would be made through

data. This was problematic from a moral, legal and security point of view.

Maj. General Ausaf Ali (R), Advisor SPD, said that AI was leading the third revolution in warfare. Major military powers were indulging in AI-led arms racing in the land, air, sea, cyber and space domains. It will have consequences for conventional and nuclear capabilities and implications for strategic stability. He talked about the transformative potential of LAWS on nuclear capabilities. He also dilated on LAWS in the South Asian context, including India acquiring Predator drones as well as S-400 systems that have autonomy built in their system.

Mr. Ahsan Nabeel, Director (ACDIS) & Science Diplomacy, MOFA, gave an overview of Pakistan's position on "Proposal for an International Legal Instrument on LAWS." He said that international consensus on the issue remained elusive. He reiterated that Pakistan's efforts for a legally binding instrument will continue.

A robust Q&A session followed the presentations by the panel of experts. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, BOG ISSI, concluded the seminar with a vote of thanks. He emphasized that while the march of technology could not be stopped, there was an enormous challenge in how to regulate LAWS.

Reaction

ISLAMABAD: A handfull supporters of former prime minister Imran Khan, destroying the public property at Faizabad Interchange during protest against Imran Khan arrest, in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

PTI strongly condemns the arrest of Imran Khan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Senior Vice President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf South Punjab and former member of National and Provincial Assembly Makhdoomzada Zain Hussain Qureshi has said that PTI strongly condemns the arrest of Chairman Imran Khan. No matter how much they condemn the arrest of Imran Khan, they are few. Imran Khan always taught peace. All PTI workers' sentiments are valued. Everyone here is Imran Khan's soldier. Imran Khan is not the name of a person but the name of an ideology and the enthusiasm and protest of the workers is natural. But request PTI workers to remain peaceful. Don't lose patience.

In case of arrest, workers should not lose patience and peace. This country is also ours and these properties are also ours. Do not harm anything. On the occasion of the peaceful protest today, I will request the PTI workers to remain peaceful, be courageous, act with courage. Peaceful protest is the right of workers. Protest peacefully on the leadership's call and continue protesting until the fascist and dictatorial government releases PTI Chairman Imran Khan. He said that Imran Khan is not fighting for himself but for our future. No one should sit at home today. If you want to liberate the country from the rule of fascism, oppression and looters. If you want to lead the country to true freedom, then come out with your children.

These people cannot stop the struggle of Tehreek-e-Insaf by binding Imran Khan. The convoy headed by Imran Khan will surely reach its destination. The coming time belongs to Tehreek-e-Insaf and Imran Khan. Khalid Javed Waraich, Sheikh Tahir, Makhdoom Shoaib Akmal Hashmi and a large number of Tehreek-e-Insaf workers were present on this occasion.

Asian Development Bank assured of support for rehabilitation of schools in rain-affected areas in Sindh

Zainab Hyder

KARACHI: Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah has said that Asian Development Bank assured of support for rehabilitation of schools in rain-affected areas in Sindh.

He said that the Asian Development Bank will provide financial support for the rehabilitation of 1100 rain-affected schools. Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah was presiding over meeting of Sindh Education officials at his office in Karachi.

He said that in this regards, a delegation of Asian Development Bank met with him last day in Karachi.

He said that the three-member delegation was led by Eisuke Tajima, principal education specialist of the Social Sector Division.

Sindh Education Minister Sardar Shah said that the Asian Development Bank is already supporting the education sector under the "Sindh Secondary Education Improvement Project".

Provincial Minister Syed Sardar Shah thanked the ADP for providing funds for the restoration of 1100 rain-affected schools in Sindh.

He said that in the rehabilitation phase of the affected areas, the Sindh government is paying full attention to the education sector. Secretary School Education Sindh Ghulam Akbar Laghari, Project Director Sindh Secondary Education Improvement Hamzo Khan Taggar and relevant officers of the Education Department were also present.

He said that rain affected all schools will be rehabilitated with standard material and techniques that rain can not affect them in future.

He said that Sindh education department was focusing to enrol all out of school children and providing the furniture and free books as well as.

About closed schools, he said that it ensured to open all closed schools with appointments of the teachers on merit at vacancies through tests.

About appointment of the teachers, he education department has appointed the 65000 teachers on merit and it was periority of the PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and PPP Co Chairman Asif Ali Zardari that task was completed.

He said that Sindh education department has followed a system of appointments of teachers in Sindh and it was history mark.



Attock: Folk dances are being performed during a cultural festival organized by the Punjab Arts Council at the Government Post Graduate College.

Google Career Certificates 2.0 Official Launches in Pakistan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Google, in partnership with TechValley and the Institute of Rural Management (IRM), officially launched Google Career Certificates 2.0 in Pakistan at a prestigious event attended by key figures from the government and the IT sector. The event was graced by Federal Minister for IT & Telecom Syed Amin Ul Haque, Mr. Fahd Haroon, Minister of State/Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Public Communication and Digital Platforms, and Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, SAPM on Youth Affairs and Senior Google representatives from the region.

Mr. Fahd Haroon emphasized the need for training and skills development as priority areas, highlighting the significant gap in digital skills within the Pakistani workforce. He underscored the importance of digital skills in



today's economy and called for a collaborative approach between stakeholders, including Google, TechValley, IRM, the government, and educational institutions, to advance Pakistan's digital workforce together.

Mr. Haroon expressed his gratitude to Google for creating 44,500 new scholarships, with a special emphasis on offering 50% of these scholarships to the

female population in the country. He also acknowledged Google's commitment to Pakistan's digital growth by launching three new courses—Business Intelligence, Advanced Data Analytics, and Cyber Security.

Farhan Qureshi, Country Director, Google Pakistan, said, "We are proud to introduce digital skills along with soft skills courses for Pakistani talent to rise into this new world of technology, with a particular focus on women and youth."

Pakistan has a working-age population of approximately 85.75 million, with a significant portion of the population under the age of 30. This young and growing workforce requires access to quality education and training opportunities to realize their potential and contribute to the country's economic development.

The Google Career Certificates 2.0 program is a testament to the impor-

ance of addressing the digital skills gap in Pakistan and empowering the workforce with the right tools and training. With the continued support of key stakeholders and the government, this program aims to create a brighter future for Pakistan's digital workforce and economy.

The Future of Jobs Report 2023 shows that cognitive skills and management skills are the most critical skills required by the workforce, with 25% and 19% of organizations ranking them as essential, respectively. Other critical skills include technical skills, attitudes, and working with others, with 18%, 15%, and 9% of organizations ranking them as essential, respectively. The Report also shows that the skills required for reskilling focus on creative thinking, AI and big data, leadership and social influence, design and user experience, and analytical thinking, among others.

PIDE hosts first-ever Think-Tanks Moot

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Think Tanks and universities of Pakistan had a meeting to discuss common research agenda and agreed to set up a worthy meet-up to develop a conversation on reform and key policy issues. PIDE presented an agenda for change that we hope features in the coming election.

Researchers agreed that they need to lead conversations of change and develop ideas for change in their research. All agreed that there is a huge need for this community to develop an indigenous agenda for change. Our universities think tanks are important stakeholders in policy and must have a seat at the table.

Participants unanimously agreed to conduct a monthly roundtable conference to discuss and promote Ideas of Change and Reforms. HSA, IPS, PIDE, RADS, PRIME, and Arid Agri University will host the next six conferences



respectively.

Earlier PIDE VC Dr. Nadeem ul Haque and Pro VC Dr. Durre Nayab in their opening remarks said that the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) believes that there is a dire need for a knowledge network in Pakistan, to act as a pressure group to push for reforms. The Institute has initiated a multi-pronged approach to strengthen this knowledge network. The Institute has recently organized an EconFest (Economy Festival) – the first time in Pakistan, with more than

a dozen local partners, as well as a wide-ranging outreach program with universities across the country.

It is PIDE's honor who organize the first-ever Think Tank's Moot today in Islamabad. Participants based in cities other than Islamabad/Rawalpindi joined it via Zoom. PIDE expects that the platform would serve for sharing of research agendas of all the partners, as per the relative expertise. The idea is to have a collective intellectual capital and action, instead of working in silos, with minimum to zero influence over poli-

cy-making. This would culminate into a regular meet-up (in-person or virtual) giving the opportunity to each think tank to present its agenda followed by a detailed discussion.

A number of County's Think-Tanks and Universities representatives, including Air University, Bahria University, Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies, Centre for Law and Security (CLAS), COMSATS, CRSS, Federal Urdu University, Health Services Academy, Institute of Policy Studies, International Institute of Islamic Economics Islamabad (IIE-IIUI), IPRI, National Commission on Rural Development (NCRD), National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS), NRSP, NUML, PATTAN, PMAS, Arid Agri Uni., Policy Research Institute for Equitable Development, PPAF, PRIME, QAU, Research and Development Solutions (RADS), and Kashmir Institute of International Relations participated in the historical MOOT.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

Arab League's approach to Syria the only one that makes sense

Osama Al-Sharif

After more than a year of behind-the-scenes diplomacy, emboldened by recent unilateral initiatives, Syria's membership of the Arab League was finally restored on Sunday, when Arab foreign ministers reached consensus on what has been a bitterly divisive issue ever since the eruption of the Syrian crisis 12 years ago. And there is no doubt this was a huge diplomatic victory for the regime of President Bashar Assad, which at one point, before the Russian military intervention of 2015, was on the brink of collapse.

The new Arab approach to resolving the complex Syrian crisis is based on a number of factors. More than a decade of failed attempts to find a political settlement to end this brutal civil war has led to a deadly stalemate, with parts of the country under the regime's control and others under direct or indirect foreign occupation or influence. This ceased to be a domestic crisis almost as soon as it erupted, with regional and outside parties getting involved and backing various opposition groups, either politically or militarily.

One must not forget the bleak episodes involving foreign extremists slipping into Syria to join the fundamentalist outlaws who filled the vacuum left by the regime to set up an abhorrent,

dystopian society. Likewise, documented atrocities committed by the regime — including the use of chemical weapons — will continue to warrant investigation, accountability and a final reckoning.

Syria's stalemate exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in all parts of the country, as underlined by the aftermath of February's devastating earthquake. Furthermore, regional and global geopolitical shifts altered the views of how best to approach the Syrian crisis. What most Arab leaders agreed upon was that the current "status quo politics" was unsustainable against a backdrop of shifting priorities, needs and challenges.

What is important to note here is that the process of rehabilitating the Syrian regime is only the beginning. The step-by-step approach is open-ended and it will take years before a true closure to the Syrian tragedy is reached. Meanwhile, the core of the new approach is based on finding a working Arab formula that fulfills UN resolutions on Syria and previous understandings and frameworks under other tracks such as Geneva and Astana, while achieving national reconciliation. It is a tall order and the Arab League's track record in conflict resolution is disputed at best.

One thing to note here is that any genuine approach to resolving the crisis in Syria, which includes committing to political reforms, the return of refugees and displaced people, dismantling the drug-smuggling network and ending the

foreign presence on Syrian soil, all while preserving Syria's territorial integrity and sovereignty, among others, must rest on a reciprocal formula. This means that the regime must end its cryptic response to the Arab initiative and should, at some point soon, reveal where it stands on

of nonstate players. But it is likely to be a long time until he signals any concessions on critical issues such as writing a new constitution for Syria or even talking to the opposition. The latter even appears to have disappeared from the scene. There is also the Syrian Kurdish matter, including their demands for self-rule and the presence of US troops on their territory.

The fact that key Arab partners of the US, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and the UAE, are supporting Syria's political rehabilitation sends a strong message to Washington that its policy in Syria has failed and is currently inert.

such issues.

This is where a number of Arab countries made their reservations. And this is the public position of other key players, such as the EU and the US, with some variations.

For Damascus, outlining its position on the above issues is pivotal if the new Arab approach is to be given a lifeline. Assad is unlikely to abandon his Iranian allies, although he may commit to symbolic gestures regarding the pres-

ence of nonstate players. But it is likely to be a long time until he signals any concessions on critical issues such as writing a new constitution for Syria or even talking to the opposition. The latter even appears to have disappeared from the scene. There is also the Syrian Kurdish matter, including their demands for self-rule and the presence of US troops on their territory.

The new Arab momentum has to be taken in light of the historic rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran

Washington's response to this latest diplomatic breakthrough has been pragmatic and reserved. While the US says that Syria has not earned the right to rejoin the Arab League, it adds that it understands what its Arab allies are trying to do, which is to jump-start a political solution in Syria. The fact that key Arab partners of the US, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq and the UAE, are supporting Syria's political rehabilitation sends a strong message to Washington that its policy in Syria has failed and is currently inert.

The new Arab momentum has to be taken in light of the historic rapprochement between Riyadh and Tehran and its implications for the wider region, including Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. A wider perspective must include Russia's mounting pressure to end the Syria-Turkiye rift, which could be decided by the outcome of the Turkish presidential election next week.

Turkish election

With less than a week left before the crucial May 14 elections in Turkiye, there is a wide range of speculation about whether President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his coalition partners will be able to survive. The public opinion polling companies give contrasting figures about the possible outcomes.

The competition will take place between the incumbent president and Kemal Kilicdaroglu, the leader of a coalition of opposition parties. It looks as if it will be a tight contest, though Kilicdaroglu seems to be ahead by a slight margin. However, there are other complicating factors. There are two additional presidential contenders, Muharrem Ince and Sinan Ogan. Neither of them are likely to receive more than 5 or 6 percent of the votes. They have put forward their candidacies for the presidency in order to negotiate concessions before the second round of the election with Erdogan or Kilicdaroglu if the first round ends up being inconclusive.

There is also a difference between Ince's attitude and that of Ogan. Ince has publicly announced that he is against Erdogan, but this does not mean that he will support Kilicdaroglu.

Ogan is expected to get half of his votes from Erdogan supporters and the other half from the opposition. As the day of the elections approaches, voters may assess their choices more meticulously. Therefore, Ince's support may go further down to 3 or 4 percent and Ogan's to 1.5 or 2 percent.

Another important observation is that Erdogan has built a consolidated unity within his party. We do not know whether the six-party coalition that forms the opposition — plus the support extended by the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party, known as the HDP — will be able to demonstrate the required solidarity if and when they come to power. Will they end up resorting to a fight for their share of the political prizes?

Meral Aksener's Good Party lurched for a brief period at the beginning of March. This will leave a scar in the minds of the public. As for the splinter parties such as former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu's Future Party or former Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan's Democracy and Progress Party, their support might not go beyond 2 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively. These two parties have concentrated their efforts on Istanbul. There is little chance for them in the metropolitan constituencies such as Istanbul, Ankara or Izmir. They might also focus their efforts on the small provincial constituencies, where they can identify an outstanding candidate and mobilize all their efforts to get them elected.

It appears that the six-party opposition coalition could not come up with a common strategy that would guarantee to defeat the ruling AKP party.

The AKP decided late on to act together with the Free Cause Party, known as HUDAPAR, which has connections with the Iranian Hezbollah and which committed brutal assassinations in southeast Turkiye. The same AKP fought with HUDAPAR several years ago. Its cooperation with that party today must have cast some shadows on the cooperation between the AKP and the far-right Nationalist Movement Party, which decided not to run on the same list as this Hezbollah-tainted party. This became its most visible disagreement with the ruling AKP.

The pro-Kurdish HDP remains the kingmaker, but whether its support will be enough to save the opposition from defeat is a question that is full of uncertainties.



Civil wars are getting longer and more difficult to resolve

Kerry Boyd Anderson

The recent outbreak of fighting in Sudan has highlighted the terrible human and economic toll of civil wars. Sudan is hardly alone. Depending on how one defines civil war, there are between 10 and 100 ongoing today. According to the Geneva Academy, the Middle East and North Africa region has the highest number of civil wars, followed by Africa.

Defining the term civil war is tricky, but generally it refers to a conflict that occurs mostly within the borders of a state and in which most of the belligerents are residents of that state. There are different types of civil war and each conflict has its own unique characteristics. A state may have more than one civil conflict at a time. Despite these variations, multiple research projects over the last 30 years have found commonalities among civil wars.

Civil wars typically last much longer than wars between states and recent research suggests that the average duration of civil wars has been lengthening in recent years. The Economist recently reported that the average length of a civil war was nearly 20 years in 2021, compared to an average of 13 years in 1985. Other research by scholars and aid organizations has also found that civil wars are lasting longer.

What factors are driving civil wars to last for so many years? The Economist identified several reasons, including complexity, criminality, climate change, deteriorating global norms and the spread of violent religious extremism. Research from other sources supports those findings and adds other useful points. For example, civil wars are more likely to end through clear military victory than negotiation so, when belligerent groups are unable to defeat and disarm each other, conflicts are more likely

to last longer.

An extensive body of research has demonstrated that civil wars are more likely to endure when there are multiple groups involved. Researchers have found that civil wars that end through negotiation tend to be shorter, but negotiating a durable settlement with multiple belligerents is very difficult. Even ending a war through clear military victory is more difficult when many armed groups are fighting.

A related problem is foreign involvement. Academic research has found that interventions by foreign countries in support of one or more parties in a civil war likely extends the length of the war and increases the death toll. One reason is that foreign powers, who do not bear the true costs of the war, can continue providing resources to belligerents who might otherwise have been unable to continue fighting. Foreign countries' interests can also complicate negotiation efforts. During the Cold War, Soviet and US involvement in proxy wars contributed to their length; today, the involvement of global or regional powers plays a similar role.

Long-running civil wars often devolve into war economies, in which armed groups have financial incentives to continue fighting. These actors can make money through extortion and other means. They often benefit from controlling natural resources such as mines or crops that are used for drugs. Once a war economy is entrenched, ending the war becomes even more difficult.

Other factors contribute to some civil wars. Stanford University's James Fearon, who has conducted significant research on the subject, wrote in 2004 that "sons of the soil" wars that typically involve land conflict between a peripheral ethnic minority and state-supported migrants of a dominant ethnic group are on average quite long-lived." When religious extremism intersects with armed conflict — such

as in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and parts of the Sahel — armed groups often become increasingly brutal and unwilling to negotiate. Climate change is a major risk multiplier that contributes to the likelihood of a civil war occurring, as well as complicating efforts to resolve conflict.

At times, the UN has played a significant role in helping to end some internal wars, but when there is paralysis in the UN Security Council its ability to take significant action is hampered. In general, when there is a lack of a willing, capable and trusted third party who can help lead negotiations and monitor agreements, resolving wars is much harder.

It also can be difficult to determine when a civil war truly ends and another one begins. Is the current fighting in Sudan the start of a new potential civil war or is it the continuation of a series of internal conflicts? Did the current war in Yemen start in 2014 or is it the latest stage in a series of wars going back decades or longer? Similar questions could be asked of countries such as Myanmar, Lebanon and Ethiopia, among others. When is it a lasting peace and when is it a pause between wars?

Just as experts have significant information about factors that make civil wars likely and make them longer or more brutal, they also have knowledge of ways to help end wars. Civil wars that end through negotiation are likely to be shorter, while there are historical lessons to help negotiators, such as including women and civil society voices and involving a third-party mediator that can provide some security during combatant demobilization.

However, in situations where belligerents have the incentives and resources to keep fighting — especially if they receive foreign assistance — ending wars is extremely challenging. As always, civilians are caught in the crossfire, often left with little choice except to try to flee, as many Sudanese are attempting today.

Khader Adnan, the most unifying figure in Palestine

Ramzy Baroud

Khader Adnan was not a "terrorist" with "Israeli blood on his hands," as pro-Israeli propagandists have been repeating in the news and on social media in the last week. If the former Palestinian prisoner, who died in his Israeli cell last Tuesday following 87 days of uninterrupted hunger strike, was directly involved in armed resistance, the story would have had a completely different ending. Armed Palestinian resistors are either assassinated or detained and tried by Israeli military courts, usually sentenced to prolonged terms in Israeli prisons following brief trials that lack any fairness or due process.

Adnan was a charismatic leader, but not an actual fighter. He inspired Palestinians from his humble home in the village of Arraba, southwest of Jenin, which, along with Nablus, is the home of Palestine's toughest resistance.

Adnan had a mathematics degree from the University of Birzeit, graduating in 2001. However, due to repeated arrests by Israeli occupation forces, Adnan, then a young man in his early 20s, was denied the opportunity to pursue a master's degree from the same university in the West Bank.

Expectedly, Adnan was also an agent provocateur by the standards of the Palestinian security apparatus. In 1999, he was arrested and interrogated by PA security forces for leading a student protest against the visiting French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin. During a speech at Birzeit University, Jospin had lashed out at Palestinian and Arab resistance. To his surprise, a skinny young student in the audience protested, hailing the resistance while speaking out against Western duplicity. Shortly afterward, the French leader was escorted out of the university as angry students pelted him with rocks and shoes. That was the real danger — and power — of Adnan, who, despite repeat-

ed Israeli attempts to charge him for supposed terrorist activities, was only held for prolonged periods in so-called administrative detention — a law designed to silence Palestinian academics, intellectuals and activists who play leadership roles in their own communities.

Adnan, however, could not be silenced. Unlike his previous arrests by Israel, Adnan's final detention on Feb. 5 was different. Israel, this time around, wanted to charge him with incitement to violence and membership of an illegal organization. A conviction of this nature would ensure the outspoken man would spend more than five years in prison.

But why now? A brewing armed rebellion in the West Bank, particularly in the northern regions, where Adnan had much moral authority and influence, meant that his freedom could prove costly for Israel. While armed Palestinian fighters are being killed by Israel at a high rate in Nablus, Jenin, Jericho, Bethlehem and Hebron, the rebellious political leadership is also being sidelined through arbitrary detentions and drummed-up accusations. Indeed, a new leadership has been sprouting throughout the Occupied Territories, offering an alternative not only to the PA, but also to the factional leaderships that seem to operate exclusively around party lines. Though Adnan was affiliated with Palestinian Islamic Jihad, he was a member of the new nonfactional political movement that sought common ground among all Palestinians, regardless of geography, politics or ideology.

From the Israeli viewpoint, releasing Adnan would have set a precedent — the same way that Adnan had forced it to set a precedent many years ago, when he weaponized hunger strikes to gain his freedom. Also, Israel did not want Adnan back on the streets, leading mass protests against the Israeli occupation, speaking of resistance and protesting those who collaborated with the Israeli military.

China-Afghanistan-Pakistan to jointly expand CPEC to Afghanistan: Wang Wenbin

News Desk

BELJING: The foreign ministers of China-Afghanistan-Pakistan reaffirmed their resolve to harness Afghanistan's potential as a hub for regional connectivity and their commitment to trilateral cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and jointly expand China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Wang Wenbin said on Tuesday.

The three foreign ministers agreed in this regard during the 5th China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' dialogue held in Islamabad, he said during his regular briefing.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari chaired the dialogue while State Councillor and Foreign Minister Qin Gang and Acting Foreign Minister of the Afghan Interim Government, Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi attended the dialogue.

This is the first foreign ministers dialogue among the three coun-

tries since the profound change in Afghanistan in 2021 and it marked the resumption of the mechanism.

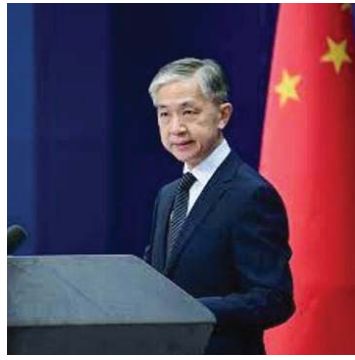
Wang Wenbin said that the three ministers had candid in-depth exchange of views on good neighborhood, mutual trust, security cooperation, counterterrorism, connectivity, trade and investment and reached common understandings.

A joint statement was issued at the end of the dialogue.

He said that the three parties resolved to further deepen and expand cooperation in security, development and political domains and agreed to coordinate and cooperate on security, organized crime, drug smuggling etc.

The foreign ministers stressed on the need of not allowing any individual group or party including the TTP and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) to use their territories to harm or threaten national security and interests or conduct terrorist actions.

All three sides underscored the need to refrain from interference and to



promote Afghan peace, stability and reconstruction.

They reaffirmed their resolve to harness Afghanistan's potential as a hub for regional connectivity and their commitment to trilateral cooperation and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and jointly expand China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan.

The three countries will push forward connectivity, infrastructure

in norms and standards, explore facilitating measures for the movement of people and trade and a greater strength and cooperation in agriculture, trade, energy, capacity building, etc.

The three ministers called upon the international community to engage constructively with Afghanistan.

"They urged relevant countries to lift unilateral sanctions and return overseas assets for the benefit of Afghan people and create opportunities for prosperity in Afghanistan," he added.

He said that as State Councillor and Foreign Minister, Qin Gang noted, China through China-Afghanistan-Pakistan trilateral channel is ready to strengthen policy coordination, enhance strategic mutual trust and step-up counterterrorism and security cooperation.

China is also willing to strengthen development cooperation and three countries jointly could set an example of cooperation among neighbors on hotspot issues and promote regional stability and prosperity, he added.

Musadik Malik discusses steps to boost Pakistan's energy productivity with senior US officials



News Desk

WASHINGTON: The visiting Minister of State for Petroleum, Musadik Masood Malik, Monday discussed with senior U.S. officials ways and means to enhance productivity in the energy sector and plug Pakistan into Global Value Chains, the cross-border networks that bring a product or service from conception to market.

During a meeting with Verinda Fike, Regional Director for the Indo-Pacific at the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and Tanvi Madhusudan, Country Manager for the Indo-Pacific Region at USTDA, Musadik Malik also discussed various ideas to ensure energy security, affordability and sustainability in the wake of challenges like climate change and its socio-economic impact on Pakistan, according to a press release issued by the Pakistani embassy.

As a result, the two sides agreed to develop a roadmap for pursuing new businesses in the green and renewable energy sector both in public and private sector, the press release said, adding that the US side would provide financial and technical expertise for undertaking feasibility studies for mutually agreed projects.

A delegation of Pakistani businessmen would be visiting the United States along with their counterparts from Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand to study methane abatement technologies and conversion of bio-methane into fertilizers during the first quarter of the next year, the press release said.

The US side, it said, showed "great interest" in pursuing projects related to green ammonia, green hydrogen and renewables in Pakistan. In this regard, Musadik Malik reiterated that Pakistan, in collaboration with the US, would like to trailblaze the transition towards clean and green energy in the developing world.

The minister invited the US side to visit Pakistan at the earliest to explore the possibility of undertaking joint ventures and projects in the energy sector, including exploration and tapping of its onshore and offshore energy assets.

He assured that his office would serve as facilitator for US investors for expeditious implementation of new business ideas.

"Red tapism would be turned into red carpet," the minister remarked.

Premature births claim a million lives yearly worldwide; UN report

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: A "silent emergency" that is claiming one million tiny lives born premature each year requires concerted action to swiftly improve children's health and survival, according to a new report released by UN agencies and partners on Wednesday.

Almost 45 per cent of the 13.4 million pre-term births in 2020 happened in five countries — Pakistan, India, Nigeria, China and Ethiopia — the report, entitled, 'Born too soon: Decade of action on preterm birth', said.

Produced by a range of agencies, including the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), with its Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), the report outlines a strategy forward to address this phenomenon, which has been long under-recognized in its scale and severity.

"Progress is flattening for maternal and newborn health, as well as the prevention of stillbirths," PMNCH Executive Director Helga Fogstad said. Gains made are now being pushed back further through the devastating combination of COVID-19, climate change, expanding conflicts and rising living costs, she warned.

"By working together in partnership — governments, donors, the private sector, civil society, parents, and health professionals — we can sound the alarm about this silent emergency," she said.

This means bringing preterm prevention and care efforts to the forefront of national health and development efforts, building human capital by supporting families, societies, and economies everywhere, she added. Preterm birth rates have not changed in any region in the world in the past decade, with 152 million vulnerable babies born too soon from 2010 to 2020, the report showed.

Preterm births occur earlier than 37 weeks of an expected 40-week full-term pregnancy.

The report included updated estimates from WHO and UNICEF, prepared with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, on the prevalence of preterm births.

Steven Lauwerier, Director of Health at UNICEF, noted that every preterm death, created "a trail of loss and heartbreak".

"Despite the many advances the world has made in the past decade, we have made no progress in reducing the number of small babies born too soon or averting the risk of their death. The toll is devastating. It's time we improve access to care for pregnant mothers and preterm infants and ensure every child gets a healthy start and thrives in life."

Preterm birth is now the leading cause of child deaths, accounting for more than one in five of all deaths of children occurring before their fifth birthday, the report said. Preterm survivors can face lifelong health consequences, with an increased likelihood of disability and developmental delays. Too often, where babies are born, determines if they survive, the report found, noting that only 1 in 10 extremely preterm babies survive in low-income countries, compared to more than nine in 10 in high-income nations.

The report showed gaping inequalities related to race, ethnicity, income, and access to quality care, determine the likelihood of preterm birth, death, and disability, even in high-income countries.

Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa have the highest rates of preterm birth, accounting for more than 65 per cent of global cases. Other factors are also making an impact, increasing risks for women and babies everywhere. For example, air pollution is estimated to contribute to six million preterm births each year, the report showed.

At the same time, nearly one in 10 preterm babies are born in the 10 most fragile countries affected by humanitarian crises, according to a new analysis in the report.

Across the world, groups for affected families of preterm birth have been at the forefront of advocating for access to better care and policy change and supporting other families, the report showed.

In addition, the past decade has also seen a growth of community activism on preterm birth and stillbirth prevention, driven by networks of parents, health professionals, academia, and civil society.

UN agencies, including the UN Population Fund (UNICEF), WHO, and UNICEF, are calling for a set of actions to save lives: boost investments in newborn health, accelerate implementation of national policies, integrate efforts across sectors, and support locally led innovation and research to support improvements in quality of care and equity in access. "Ensuring quality care for these tiniest, most vulnerable babies and their families is absolutely imperative for improving child health and survival," said Anshu Banerjee, Director for Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing at WHO.

Appreciation

King Abdulaziz University's students participated in the 48th Geneva International Exhibition of Inventions.



Global 'Blue Deal' urgently needed to protect, invest in the ocean: UNCTAD

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: The ocean can provide vast opportunities for developing countries to build more innovative and resilient economies, but climate change, pollution and overfishing threaten the livelihoods of some three billion people who rely on it for food and income, according to a new UN report.

The UN Trade and Development body UNCTAD's Trade and Environment Review 2023, published on Monday, analyses the world's \$3-6 billion ocean economy, and assesses how human activity and multiple global crises have significantly impacted sectors like fishing, seafood, shipping and coastal tourism.

The report, presented at the 3rd UN Trade Forum in Geneva, calls for a global trade and investment "Blue Deal" to sustainably use the ocean — home to 80 per cent of all life.

"The ocean economy offers many opportunities. We must strike the right balance between benefiting from the ocean and protecting its resources," UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General Pedro Manuel Moreno said.

The report highlights two particularly promising sectors for sustainable development — seaweed farming and plastics substitutes.

The global market for seaweed has more than tripled in two decades, increasing



from \$4.5 billion in 2000, to \$16.5 billion by 2020.

Seaweed doesn't need fresh water or fertilizer to grow, UNCTAD points out. It can be farmed in many developing countries for food, cosmetics and biofuels, and provides an alternative to plastic. Around 11 million tonnes of plastics flow into the ocean each year.

There are many other sustainable materials that could be used to make eco-friendly versions of the straws, food wrapping and other plastic products we consume daily, said UNCTAD. Abundant materials include bamboo, coconut husks, banana plants and agricultural waste.

The world traded about \$388 billion in plastics substitutes in 2020 — just one third the amount traded in plastics made from fossil fuels.

The report calls for governments and businesses to boost funding for the research and development of emerging sustainable sectors in the ocean economy.

It urges companies to invest in developing countries to bolster their technology, skills and productive capacities, so both can capitalize on sustainable marine development.

Investing in emerging ocean sectors could help developing countries to diversify their ocean exports. The global export value of ocean-based goods, such as seafood and port equipment, and services including shipping and coastal tourism was estimated at \$1.3 trillion in 2020.

The COVID-19 crisis revealed the potential and resilience of some sectors and the extreme vulnerability of others.

Governments, the report says, should include the goal of promoting a diverse and sustainable ocean economy in crisis recovery strategies and climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

An estimated \$35 billion of government subsidies go to fishing activities around the world.

A significant share — about \$20 billion a year — could contribute to overfishing by enhancing the fishing industry's capacity through, for example, fuel subsidies or financial incentives to buy bigger boats.

With 34 per cent of global fish stocks below levels that are biologically sustainable, the report urges countries to urgently ratify the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, adopted on June 17 last year.

The agreement, which is a big step in addressing harmful subsidies, prohibits support for illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, bans support for fishing overfished stocks, and ends subsidies for fishing on the unregulated high seas. It will enter into force when two thirds of the WTO's 164 members deposit their "instruments of acceptance".

Similarly, the report calls for governments to adopt and ratify the Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction agreement of March 4 this year.

Better known as the High Seas Biodiversity Treaty, the agreement will create tools for the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from marine genetic resources and establish internationally protected areas in our ocean.

It's estimated that an investment of \$2.8 trillion today in four sustainable ocean solutions — conservation and restoration of mangroves, decarbonization of international shipping, sustainable ocean-based food production and offshore wind production — would yield net benefits of \$15.5 trillion by 2050.

Without a global Blue Deal, such benefits and the targets of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, on life below water, will be much harder to reach. "Now is the time to set a new course by investing more in building a sustainable ocean economy," Moreno said.

Scores of countries uniting against American hegemony



Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Tuesday said the world is uniting against the US hegemony for a better future which will result in the US's demise and the birth of a new world order.

Many countries cannot tolerate the political, military, economic, technological and cultural hegemony of the US and want a new global system that can keep their interests safe and insulate them from US interference, he said.

With the US's foreign policy failures, its domestic rifts, and the China-led de-dollarization initiative, the current global landscape finds itself in a state of turmoil which will be settled down after China emerges victorious from the conflict, he added.

Dr Murtaza Mughal said that since becoming the world's most powerful country, the US has acted more boldly to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, pursue, maintain and abuse hegemony, advance subversion and infiltration, and willfully waged wars, bringing harm to the international community.

The US has not only instigated regional disputes but directly launch wars under the guise of promoting democracy, freedom and human rights. Washington has always abused export controls, forced unilateral sanctions upon others and repeatedly used dollar as a weapon resulting in widespread chaos and disaster in many countries.

The US exercises double standards and places its self-interest first while conveniently walking away from international treaties and organizations when it suits her and it is the biggest obstacle to a world free of chemical weapons.

The United States seeks to deter other countries' scientific, technological and economic development by wielding monopoly power, suppression measures and technology restrictions in high-tech fields.

The US also monopolizes intellectual property in the name of protection. Taking advantage of the weak position of other countries, especially developing ones, on intellectual property rights and the institutional vacancy in relevant fields, the US reaps excessive profits through monopoly.

ADB sees Pakistan prospering with momentous structural reforms

ISLAMABAD: A top official of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has said that Pakistan could secure a brighter future despite the existing challenges on various fronts by persuading the rigorous reforms agenda and improving the public sector management.

"As long as Pakistan puts its internal things in a proper order, I think there is no reason why Pakistan should not be prospering," Director General of Central and West Asia Department Yevgeniy Zhukov said while talking to APP on the sidelines of ADB's 56th annual Board of Governors meeting that concluded last week in South Korean city - Incheon. He said Pakistan should be doing quite well, adding "If the public sector governance is improved and the government in place brings reforms, I think the future of Pakistan should be quite bright."

ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa while inaugurating the four-day moot had assured the bank's continued support for the incumbent government's critical and structural reforms at a time when the country recently witnessed devastating floods caused by climate change.

Solar energy start on 12th May at Expo, Lahore

News Desk

LAHORE: 2nd International Solar Energy Meet (ISEM) & IEEP IREM Expo (Pakistan's Premium Electronics and Electrical Exhibition) will start from Friday (May 12) here at Expo Center Lahore which will be attended by the local and international energy & power sector experts, primarily working in renewable power with focus on solar power generation.

According to the details, the expo will be held May 12-14 from the platform of White Paper Summits. The expo will be inaugurated by the Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Eng. Khurram Dastgir Khan.

Besides the expo, WPS (White Paper Summits) in a strategic partnership with IEEP (The Institution of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Pakistan) will also organize a conference with 11 expert speakers as one of the main events of the three days in which these



speakers will share their Case Studies, Technical Presentation and Latest Insights on the problems and solutions addressing the Power and Renewable Energy Sector of Pakistan.

The sessions will be attended by the IEEP members and Technical Delegates. The conference will include active Q&A sessions, networking programs and B2B networking

to facilitate much needed access to a wealth of industry leading knowledge, information exchange and actionable takeaways.

More than 150 stalls are booked including over 30 by the international exhibitors after the government of Pakistan's favoring policies towards solar power generation which attracts the foreign investors to come to Pakistan. Besides, over 120 local exhibitors will also be displaying their products during the three days Solar show.

The organizers are expecting over 8000 attendees during the three days event and including the top international and local exhibitors, acclaimed technical expert speakers. The event will provide unlimited business networking opportunities, besides B2B deals.

The organizers believed that the ISEM is the ideal meeting place for global and local stakeholders, C-level executives, leading industry experts, manufacturers and suppliers, deci-

sion makers, policy makers and government officials who are shaping the future of the solar energy sector in Pakistan. ISEM will focus on Off-Grid and On-Grid Solar PV Applications, Solar Financing, Solar Investments, PV Modules & Hybrid Systems, Battery and Storage Technologies, Inverters and Solar Structural Systems.

IEEEP IREM Expo will focus on Power Transformers, Power Technology, Capacitors, Batteries, Heavy Duty Cables, Power Distribution Equipment, Wind Energy, Hydropower, Bioenergy, Bio Gas, BioFuel, Hydrogen, GeoThermal Energy, Solar Energy and more.

The Premium events are organized by White Paper Summits, one of the leading business Event Organizers (Summits, Exhibitions and Trainings) in the Middle East region with its headquarters based in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. The regional office of White Paper Summits is established in Karachi, Pakistan.

Watermelons

RAWALPINDI: Vendor displaying the watermelons to attract the customers at Jhanda Chichi.



Photo: Online

South Punjab is Very important Region for Wheat and Cotton Production: Saqib Ali Zafar

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: South Punjab Secretariat is on a mission to develop the agricultural sector and to get the best cotton production.

Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt. (Retd) Saqib Zafar visited the Central Cotton Research Institute (CCRI) and Agriculture Research Center on Tuesday. Secretary Agriculture South Punjab Saqib Ali Ateel and other officials were also accompanied with him. On the occasion of briefing given by agricultural scientists, Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Capt.(Retd) Saqib Zafar, while expressing his views, said South Punjab is a very important region in terms of wheat and cotton production and the best production of cotton can become the ladder of prosperity for the country. He described the neglect of agricultural research areas as unfortunate and said that it was the need of the hour to fund

institutes doing research on seeds of various crops. He expressed regret over the financial situation of CCRI and said that recommendations will be sent Government to improve the financial condition of CCRI. The Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab said it is very important to bring the research institutions related to agriculture and food, under the administration of the province and the federation, on one page. He announced to hold joint conference of research institutes of agriculture, fisheries, food and forest and said that scientists and vice chancellors of agricultural universities form all over Punjab will be invited to participate in conference.

He also inaugurated Pesticide Quality Control Laboratory set up at a cost of Rs.30 million rupees. Through the incinerator installed in the laboratory, agricultural poisons will be destroyed in an environment friendly manner.

Pakistan can achieve self-sufficiency in potato seed production through aeroponics. Dr. Ghulam

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's potato sector is set to undergo a major transformation with the introduction of aeroponic potato farming, a modern technique that has the potential to revolutionize the industry. The country's rapidly growing population and the need for food security have intensified the demand for sustainable and efficient agricultural practices that can boost crop yields while minimizing environmental impact. Aeroponic potato farming presents a promising solution to these challenges, offering a soil-less method of cultivating potatoes that increases yields and reduces water and pesticide usage. With this innovative technique, Pakistan can ensure a consistent supply of fresh, high-quality potatoes while achieving sustainable and efficient agricultural practices.

The signing ceremony was graced by the presence of H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, who served as the chief guest. During his speech, he highlighted the collaborative efforts between Pakistan and Korea, including the joint potato seed production project which is progressing at an accelerated pace. He also revealed that there are several other projects in the pipeline



which will be launched soon. Furthermore, he expressed his commitment to fostering greater cooperation between the two countries by offering training opportunities in agriculture for Pakistani professionals to enhance their skills and knowledge.

Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman of PARC, emphasized the importance of developing aeroponic potato seeds for Pakistan. At the TCP signing ceremony, he explained that conventional potato plants yield only five tuber seeds, while aeroponic plants can produce 50 to 60 seeds each. Pakistan cultivates potatoes on about 300,000 hectares of land but imports 15,000 to 20,000 tonnes of potato seeds each year due to the poor quality of domestic seeds. This puts a strain on farmers who cannot afford

high-quality imported seeds, resulting in lower yields. However, with the implementation of the aeroponic potato seed project, Pakistan could annually save Rs 2-3 billion and achieve self-sufficiency in potato seed production. Dr. Ali thanked the government of the Republic of Korea for their financial and technical assistance in the potato sector.

Dr. Aish Muhammad, the Project Coordinator, reported that the project aims to lower potato production costs and enhance yields by supplying quality seed potatoes at affordable prices. This will also lead to self-sufficiency in seed potato supply in Pakistan. The project will develop a sustainable seed potato production system using aeroponic infrastructure and trained manpower.

Naveed Qamar holds meeting with American Business Council

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Syed Naveed Qamar, Federal Minister for Commerce, held a meeting with the American Business Council to discuss various matters of mutual interest, including the Federal Budget Proposal for the fiscal year 2023-24.

During the meeting, the Minister listened attentively to the concerns and suggestions put forward by the American Business Council regarding the budget. The representatives of the council highlighted the specific issues and areas of concern related to trade and commerce.

Syed Naveed Qamar assured the council that their concerns would be duly addressed. He directed the officials present to carefully note down the concerns that fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Commerce and incorporate them in

the summer. The remaining concerns were to be compiled as a proposal and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance for consideration.

The Minister reiterated the government's commitment to creating a conducive business environment and promoting trade and investment. He emphasized the importance of addressing the concerns raised by the American Business Council in order to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between the two countries.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with the Minister assuring the American Business Council of the government's willingness to collaborate and find suitable solutions. Syed Naveed Qamar expressed his optimism for continued cooperation and partnership to further enhance trade and economic ties between Pakistan and the United States.

Nutrition International and Government of Pakistan launch NourishMaa

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN: Nutrition International, in partnership with the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination (MoNHSR&C) and provincial health departments launched a campaign - NourishMaa - to improve maternal nutrition in Pakistan by building capacities of healthcare providers (HCPs) and frontline health workers (FHWs) in six selected districts that report poor maternal nutrition indicators.

"Improving the knowledge and capacity of healthcare providers to address maternal nutrition issues and promote a collective responsibility approach is the need of the hour," said Mirza Nasir ud Din Mashhood Ahmad, Special Secretary, MoNHSR&C. Endorsing the NourishMaa

campaign and committing to its effective implementation, Dr. Ahmad referenced the Pakistan National Maternal Nutrition Strategy 2022-27, which calls for increasing awareness about maternal nutrition among individuals, families, communities, healthcare providers, policymakers and the public at large.

According to the National Nutrition Survey 2018, it is estimated that 42% of Pakistani women of reproductive age (WRA, 15-49 years) bear the triple burden of malnutrition, with half of all pregnant women being anaemic, and 38% of them being overweight and obese. Additionally, one in every two (54%) adolescent girl (10-19 years) is anaemic in the country. High rates of malnutrition among WRA and adolescent girls, coupled with underlying complications arising from early marriages, closely spaced pregnancies

and maternal malnutrition exacerbate a vicious cycle of high morbidity and mortality, leading to adverse maternal and child health outcomes. The NourishMaa campaign, developed to support the Pakistan Maternal Nutrition Strategy 2022-27, aims to help address these issues by leveraging the critical role of HCPs and FLWs.

The key objective of the campaign is to raise awareness about the importance of maternal nutrition and improve the capacities of health workers in public and private sectors, key opinion leaders (KOLs) and other stakeholders to advance maternal nutrition interventions in Pakistan. The campaign aims to achieve some specific outcomes including improved knowledge among HCPs and FHWs on maternal nutrition, effective engagement of key HCPs on maternal nutrition, and improved knowl-



edge and motivation among KOLs for accelerating action towards enhancing maternal nutrition at the national and provincial levels.

The event was attended by over 100 participants including Ms. Berenice Guimont Fitz Second Secretary, Devel-

opment Canadian High Commission to Pakistan, Ms. Zeina Sifri, Senior Program Officer - Maternal, Newborn & Child Health and Gender Equality Division, Dr. Sabin Nasir, Additional Director Operations, IRMNCH&NP Punjab, Dr. Farhana Memon, Addition-

al Director General RMNCH, DoH, Sindh, Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Shoro, Secretary General, Pakistan Medical Association, Prof. Dr. Tazeen Fatima Munim, Secretary General Society of Obstetricians & Gynecologists Pakistan and many others.

Pakistan's World Cup-winning captain Imran Khan detained

A Sports

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan captain and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan was arrested by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

The World Cup-winning captain, who later emerged as a renowned politician was taken into custody by Rangers personnel, who were acting on the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) warrant, from the premises of Islamabad High Court where the former premier had gone to seek bail in multiple cases registered against him.

According to the NAB notice, Khan's warrants were issued on May 1 by NAB chairman Lt Gen (retd) Nazir Ahmad Butt.

In a statement, Inspector General of Police, (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said that Imran Khan was arrested in the Al-Qadir Trust case, adding that



the situation is under control.

In a tweet, Fawad alleged that Imran had been "abducted" from the court premises while a score of lawyers and

general people had been "tortured".

Meanwhile, Islamabad police further said that Section 144 had been imposed in the federal capital and rejected the

PTI's allegations that people were tortured.

According to initial reports, the PTI chairman has been taken to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) office in Rawalpindi.

Protests erupt in several cities. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has announced protests across the country following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan.

The appeal was made from the official Twitter handle of the PTI.

Hundreds of PTI workers took to the streets in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, Multan and other cities to record their protest against the arrest of the former premier.

Police have arrested several PTI workers in Islamabad who have blocked the Kashmir highway.

In Karachi, both lanes of the Sharea Faisal were blocked after PTI MNAs and MPAs blocked the roads.

Lionel Messi's move to Saudi a 'done deal': Sources

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Argentine superstar Lionel Messi, who is currently representing PSG in Ligue 1, will play in Saudi Arabia next season under a "huge" deal, a source with knowledge of the negotiations told AFP on Tuesday.

"Messi is a done deal. He will play in Saudi Arabia next season," said the source, speaking on condition of anonymity and without naming the club.

"The contract is exceptional. It's huge. We are just finalising some small details," the source added.

Asked about the comments, Lionel Messi's current club Paris Saint-Germain simply noted that he remains under contract until June 30.

A separate PSG source said: "If the club had wanted to renew his contract, it would have been done earlier."



However, he returned to training with PSG on Monday six days after being suspended for going on an unauthorised trip.

"Leo Messi returns to training Monday morning," tweeted the club along with a photo of the 35-year-old in action.

His return makes it likely he will feature in PSG's home match with relegation-threatened Ajaccio next Saturday.

PSG hold the whip hand in defending their Ligue 1 title, a six-point lead over

Lens with four matches remaining.

He was suspended by the Qatar-owned club after failing to turn up for training last Monday.

Instead, the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner travelled to Saudi Arabia without PSG's permission to fulfil commitments as part of a contract with the country's tourist office.

Messi subsequently apologised in a video posted on Instagram to his 458 million followers.

"I had organised this

trip to Saudi Arabia having cancelled it previously. This time I couldn't cancel it. I am sorry for what I did and I wait to see what the club decides to do."

The affair has made it increasingly unlikely that Lionel Messi will remain at PSG beyond this season, when his two-year contract with the club expires.

The 35-year-old World Cup winner was suspended by Qatari-owned PSG last week for an unauthorised trip to Saudi, where he is a tourism ambassador.

Lionel Messi's expected arrival in Saudi Arabia follows in the footsteps of his arch-rival Cristiano Ronaldo, who joined Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr in a massive deal in January.

Ronaldo's agreement to June 2025 is said to total more than 400 million euros (\$439million), making him the world's highest-paid athlete according to Forbes.

World Cup winner and Olympic champion Fazal-ur-Rehman passes away



Sports Desk

ABBOTTABAD: Eminent Olympic champion and World Cup winner Lala Fazal-ur-Rehman, popularly known as Billa Lala, passed away here on Thursday. He was 84.

Fazal-ur-Rehman, who made his international debut for Pakistan in 1965 against Indonesia, went on to become a legend of the game as he enjoyed a prolific career, decorated with two gold medals and a silver.

Fazal represented Pakistan in two Olympics in 1968 and 1972 and had the honour of winning the gold medal for his nation in his first and a silver in his second global event. Meanwhile, Fazal also partook in the inaugural Hockey World Cup in 1971 and won the second gold of his iconic career.

The funeral prayers of the legendary hockey player will be offered at Banda Phagwarian here on Friday.

Fakhar reacts hilariously after winning ICC Player of the Month

A Sports

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan opener Fakhar Zaman shared a hilarious response after he was named the ICC Player of the Month for April 2023 on Tuesday.

The left-hander won the ICC Player of the Month award for his outstanding performances in Pakistan's recent home series against New Zealand.

Fakhar overcame the tough competition from emerging New Zealand batter Mark Chapman and Sri Lanka spin wizard Prabath Jayasuriya to clinch the award.

The 33-year-old, however, was in a state of disbelief after winning the award since it was a neck-and-neck race between him and Kiwi batter Chapman, who remained

the leading run-getter in the T20I series during New Zealand's tour of Pakistan.

"Jis tareeqay se Chapman bhaine hame T20I me koota tha, mujhe to laga usko hi mile ga," Fakhar wrote on Twitter.

(The way Chapman thrashed us in the T20I series, I thought he would win this award)

"But grateful to all the voters and fans for rooting out for me," he added. New Zealand's Chapman scored 290 runs in five T20I games in Pakistan, including two fifties and a match-winning century.

He scored an unbeaten 104 off 57 deliveries, laced up with 11 boundaries and four sixes to power the Blackcaps to a series-levelling victory in the final T20I.



Fakhar Zaman, on the other hand, scored back-to-back centuries in the first two ODIs between Pakistan and New Zealand and made his claim to the Player of the Series award and a host of individual records.

He became the fastest batter not just from the country but from Asia to complete 3000 ODI runs and just the fourth Pakistan batter after Saeed Anwar, Zaheer Abbas and Babar (twice) to hit three centuries in three straight

games.

Fakhar Zaman played a marathon knock of 180 not out – the highest by any Pakistan batter in a successful run chase – in the second ODI in Rawalpindi to help the Green Shirts chase down their second-highest total in ODIs. He displayed similar exploits in the first match at the same venue where he scored 117 to lead the way for Pakistan in their 289-run chase.

Following his run-scoring spree, Fakhar also moved to the no.2 spot behind skipper Babar Azam on the ICC ODI Men's Players' Rankings. The left-hander started the month with a rapid 47 in the first T20I in Lahore against New Zealand, playing a part in the home side's thumping 88-run victory.

'Hosting international events is our right' Sarfaraz Ahmed

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed has come out in support of the country's hosting right of the 2023 Asia Cup – scheduled later this year –, claiming, it is 'our right to host international events'.

The wicket-keeper batter said every major cricketing nation had toured Pakistan since the return of international cricket to its shore, adding, there was no excuse left for any team refusing to come to Pakistan.

"Our players and law enforcement agencies made tireless efforts to bring cricket back to Pakistan," he said on Tuesday during the inauguration of Jinnah College Cricket Stadium here in Karachi.

"Many international teams have visited Pakistan so I don't think there is any excuse left for any country not to send their team to our country."

Moreover, Sarfaraz Ahmed stressed



that Asian Cricket Council and International Cricket Council should take measures to bring all the teams to Pakistan for the international tournaments

scheduled in Pakistan.

The 35-year-old also urged India to visit Pakistan for the upcoming Asia Cup 2023 since the people of the country eagerly

wanted to see the blockbuster rivalry on their home soil.

"Pakistan is a great host. India should come to Pakistan," he said.

It must be noted here that the fate of the upcoming Asia Cup hung in balance after India refused to send their team to Pakistan in October last year on political grounds and has since been trying to shift the tournament to a neutral venue.

Earlier, a report emerged that the two cricket boards were gradually moving towards a compromise and had nearly agreed to host India's matches on a neutral venue while the rest of the tournament will be played in Pakistan.

As per the latest development, however, the BCCI has refused the hybrid proposal for both events and once again demanded to shift the Asia Cup entirely from Pakistan.

The two rival boards will further discuss the matter within the ACC platform to decide the fate of the six-team event.

First Deaf one day cricket championship, 2023

Tahir Malik

LAHORE: First Deaf one day cricket championship, 2023 has started at Lahore. The President PDCA Mian Irfan Miraj inaugurated the Championship at Punjab University, New Campus, Lahore.

On this occasion Irfan announced that championship matches has been playing at Punjab University new campus, New Itfaq cricket ground and Shah Faisal Cricket ground, Lahore while the final will be played on 13th May, 2023 at, LCCA near Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.

Mian Irfan Miraj further said that to hold this deaf cricket championship the deaf cricket will further flourish and in future we will continue to hold more events of deaf cricket. He said that there are Eight teams are taking part in the championship which include Zalmi, United, Qalandars, Sultan, King, Gladiators, Night Riders, and jaguar and we have selected the every team on merit and we selected that players who performed well in the previous tournaments. Mian Irfan Miraj, President Pakistan Deaf Cricket Association, Secretary, Kumail Kazmi, and all the Executive members PDCA thanked to Pakistan Cricket Board, Sponsors Nestle, Mcdonald's, BCN Group and Pepsi, they all played vital role to organize this championship with us. Irfan hoped that PCB will continue cooperate with PDCA in future and our sponsors will continue the support Deaf cricket through sponsorship. On the first days Sultan, United, and Jaguars won the matches while one match was tie.



Pegula upset with Madrid organisers after finalists denied speeches



News Desk

FLORIDA, US : World number three Jessica Pegula has criticised Madrid Open organisers after the American and her fellow women's doubles finalists were not allowed to make speeches at the trophy ceremony.

Pegula and Coco Gauff lost the women's doubles final 6-1 6-4 to Victoria Azarenka and Beatriz Haddad Maia on Sunday and none of the players were given the chance to address the audience. The men's doubles finalists were allowed to do so following their match a day earlier.

"What happened in Madrid, it was really disappointing ... I had a feeling something was going to happen," Pegula told reporters on Tuesday ahead of the Italian Open.

"Did I think we were not going to be able to speak? No. I've never heard of that ... in my life. I don't know what century everyone was living in when they made that decision." Reuters has contacted organisers for comment.

BBC Sport quoted organisers as saying of the decision: "The tournament will not comment on the matter." Gauff said the issue was not about the speech itself.

"I have a lot of finals, so it's not about that," she told reporters. "It's more about the principle behind it, so this can't happen again for future girls, take the opportunity away from them." Azarenka said on Twitter that it was "hard to explain" to her son Leo that she was not able to speak at the trophy ceremony.

Avalanche captain Landeskog to miss entire 2023-24 season

Sports Desk

FLORIDA: Colorado Avalanche captain Gabriel Landeskog will have a cartilage transplant in his right knee this week and is expected to miss a second consecutive National Hockey League season (NHL), the team announced on Tuesday.

The 30-year-old Swedish forward, who already sat out the entire 2022-23 regular season and playoffs after arthroscopic knee surgery last October, will undergo the latest procedure on Wednesday in Chicago.

Landeskog also had knee surgery in March 2022 but returned for the post-season and played an instrumental role as Colorado went on to win the Stanley Cup, which was the last time he was on the ice in a gametime situation.

"It's a long time away from the game, but I'm confident in the player I am. I'm confident in the athlete that I am," Landeskog told reporters during a video call. "And I know that I can get myself ready, and I know, with the right guidance and with the right people around me, I'm confident that I'll get back out there and make a big impact on the ice."

The injury stems back to a playoff game in September 2020 when Landeskog was cut by a team mate's skate which led to him having a minor procedure.

Landeskog was selected by Colorado with the second overall pick of the 2011 NHL Draft and has recorded 571 points in 738 games. He also won a silver medal with Sweden at the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

Asia Cup 2023 update: Next 48 hours crucial as PCB chief holds talks with ACC in Dubai

The next 48 hours are crucial for deciding the fate of Asia Cup 2023 as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Management Committee Chairman Najam Sethi arrived in Dubai on Tuesday to conduct talks with officials of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) in a bid to resolve the deadlock on the tournament's venue.

The talks will likely decide the fate of the Asia Cup 2023, which is set to be hosted by Pakistan later this year.

It must be noted that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has refused to send the Indian team to Pakistan for the Asia Cup and is keen to ensure that the event is held at a "neutral" venue.

However, the PCB does not want to host the entire event outside Pakistan since doing so would affect its efforts to bring back international cricket to the country.

The BCCI is also unlikely to accept the hybrid model proposed by the PCB, which would have given India the option to play their matches at "neutral" venue.